



Minutes
Second General Assembly Meeting of the *IncoNet EECA*
Vienna, 12-13 February 2009

The 2nd General Assembly Meeting of the *IncoNet EECA* project was organized by the Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI) at the premises of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) in Vienna. Representatives of all the institutions in the IncoNet EECA consortium attended the meeting. The list of participants is attached as Annex I.

George Bonas in his capacity as IncoNet EECA project coordinator chaired the meeting.

Opening addresses were made by George Bonas, Sabine Herlitschka, Director, Division of European and International Programmes at FFG, Yves Maisonnay, Scientific Officer of the European Commission responsible for the IncoNet EECA, and Klaus Schuch, Executive Manager at ZSI.

The Agenda of the meeting is attached as Annex II. The different Work Packages and Tasks were presented by the respective Work Package Leaders and co-Leaders. Presentations that were made using slides can be downloaded from the project's Website under: <http://www.inco-eeca.net/en/173.php#GAM>

Review of the Work Packages and the Tasks involved (in the order of the Agenda). Presentations by the Work Package leaders and/or co-leaders on the progress of their respective Work Packages (progress, delays, need for changes, planning, deviation in budget).

1. WP 1 “Enhancing bi-regional S&T Policy Dialogues”

The progress report was given by the WP leader (Joern Sonnenburg, DLR)

Tasks 1.1-1.3 ‘Policy Dialogue Platforms’

Most of the work under these tasks has been dedicated to consultations with stakeholders in view of the launching of the Platforms. Such consultations included in particular contacts with the French EU Presidency and the European Commission, as well as discussions with relevant authorities of other EECA and EU MS/AC at the occasion of several meetings and events.

During the deliberations it was decided to proceed to the launching of the Platform through an invitation by the French Minister of Higher Education and Research to her counterparts to nominate representatives for a first meeting to be held in Athens end of November/early December 08. To this end a draft invitation letter was prepared, to be proposed to the Minister's cabinet. In parallel, preparatory work was underway for the preparation of a first draft of Terms of Reference for the Platforms.

Due to political circumstances (i.e. Georgian conflict) the time schedule for the implementation of the three planned Policy Dialogue Platforms couldn't be realized as planned and the invitation letter was not sent. At the beginning of October the overall process was stopped since at a meeting with high level EC officials a different approach was proposed: instead of a formal launching of the Policy Dialogue Platforms the idea was introduced to organize as a first step a Stakeholders Conference dedicated to the investigation of the necessary means for an increased EU-EECA S&T cooperation and the establishment of the PDPs.

In this context, the WP partners exchanged views on the possible profile for such a Conference and, as a result, an outline on the scope, the content and the organizational details was proposed to the European Commission in December 2008 and was duly accepted and supported. The Conference has been scheduled for June 2009 and the expenses will be mainly covered by the approx. 40000 € saved from the postponement of the PDP meetings. The draft budget shall be prepared in due time.

During the meeting of the General Assembly, the concept note was circulated to all the partners of the consortium for comments until Friday, 20 February 2009. In addition, the WP leaders stressed the fact that the assistance of all IncoNet EECA partners would be essential in identifying suitable persons to whom to address the invitations to the Conference.

2. WP 3 "Strengthening the participation of EECA in FP7"

The progress report was given by the WP leader (Joanna Stalewska, IPPT-PAN)

Task 3.1 'Knowledge based support for SICA in the Thematic Priorities'

There have been considerable delays in the implementation of this Task since the time schedule for the (annual for most Themes) revisions of the Work Programmes was different than initially foreseen (Spring – early Summer every year). At the same time the contacts made with relevant Directorates through the dissemination to them for comments of a consolidated version of the document, '*Support for the identification of suitable Specific International Cooperation Activities (SICAs) in various FP7 Themes*' were characterized by delays in the replies and the often diverging views these had for the implementation of the Workshops. Only two directorates expressed an explicit interest for these Workshops (Health, Transport) while a third one (Food, Agriculture, Fisheries, Biotechnologies) expressed an interest for the organization of a Brokerage Event as part of Task 3.2. It has been thus decided to proceed with the organization of the first series of Workshops with or without the direct support of the Directorates. In this context, the first series of workshops was re-scheduled for the second year of the project as follows:

- 'Health': 28-30 April 2009. This workshop will take place in Chisinau, Moldova, organized by ASM;

- 'Transport': June 2009. This workshop will be held in Kyiv, Ukraine, organized by NIP;
- 'Nanotechnologies': September 2009. This workshop to be organized in Sofia, Bulgaria, by BAS;
- 'Environment': September 2009. This workshop in Athens, Greece, by ICBSS;
- 'Energy', 'ICT': Autumn 2009. Venue and organizer to be decided between the partners in the Task.

The WP3 Leader formally declared its readiness to be involved in the activities of Task 3.1., if the project coordinator finds it useful for the implementation of the work foreseen.

Task 3.2 'Increased participation of EECA in the Core Activities of FP7'

a) Information Days

One Information Day took place during the first year of the IncoNet EECA in Minsk, Belarus, on 16 September focusing on the fields of 'Energy' and 'Environment' (organized by BelISA). Another Information Day which was scheduled for Tbilisi was postponed due to the Caucasus crisis.

For the second year of the project four information days have been provisionally scheduled as follows:

- Information Day on 'Environment': June 2009. To be held in Tbilisi, Georgia, and organized by GNSF;
- Information Day on 'Energy': 8 October 2009. To be held in Kyiv, Ukraine, and organized by NIP;
- Information Days in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan: To be organized by InExCB-Kz and IUCP-T respectively during October 2009;
- Information day in Moscow: the final timing is still under discussion between WP3 Leader and Russian Partner (HSE). The event may take place still this year combined with another event already planned or will be organized within 2010.

b) Brokerage events

During 2008 one Brokerage Event was organized on 2-3 December 2008, in Astana, Kazakhstan by InExCB-Kz. The Brokerage Event concentrated on the thematic 'Food, Agriculture, and Biotechnology' and brought together interested stakeholders from both EECA and EU countries in order to promote synergies.

For 2009 two Brokerage Events are being scheduled as follows:

- The first one will take place in Warsaw, Poland, on 17-18 September, by IPPT-PAN, and will focus on 'Nanotechnologies'.
- The second one was initially scheduled to be organized by GNSF. However, due to internal financial constraints, GNSF decided to withdraw from the organization of this event. Consequently, CIT took over the responsibility to hold the event in Yerevan, Armenia, in October, on the field of 'Environment'. The necessary re-allocation of funds from GNSF to CIT was also decided.

During the General Assembly, a discussion was made on the need to provide in advance information of forthcoming Brokerage Events to all IncoNet EECA partners in order to promote these events to their countries' research communities and to ensure participation.

c) The concept note on a 'proactive dialogue between NCPs in the EU and the EECA countries' (Deliverable 3.6) prepared by IPPT-PAN and FFG (WP co-leader, WP4) will be delayed until September 2009 due to the fact that the preparation of the input required for this deliverable is very much depending on activities foreseen to be realized in 2009 under WP4.

Task 3.3 'Increased participation of EECA in the 'People', 'Ideas' and 'Capacities-SMEs' programmes of FP7

The inventory of host institutions for EU researchers has been completed and is available on the website/webportal. The inventory will be presented in a Deliverable format by the end of February. The workshop on barriers for the incoming and outgoing mobility from/to EECA resulting in "Recommendations on how to increase the brain circulation between EU and EECA" is going to be held in Moscow, Russia, in September 2009.

3. WP 5 "Analyses, Monitoring and Review"

The progress report was given by the WP leader (Anna Pikalova, HSE)

Task 5.1 'Improving S&T Indicators'

Under this task a draft report on the current status of S&T indicators in EECA countries was prepared and evaluated through the Quality Assurance Process where it was decided that a considerable revision was necessary. The issue of the revision of the report was subsequently discussed during a meeting that was held in Vienna in November 08 together with the preparation for the next steps, i.e. the elaboration of a 'draft generic proposal for the funding of the S&T Indicators improvement'

The revised report on the current status of S&T indicators has been prepared and will be presented as a deliverable (5.1) by the end of February 2009. With regards to the generic proposal for funding, this will be presented at a later date with a delay caused by the richness of the analytical material and pertinent feedback from all partners from EECA countries.

Task 5.2 'Mapping of key Institutes'

There are considerable delays in this task and additional work is needed to improve and enrich the inventory of key research institutes in EECA countries. During the GA it was decided to send out a letter to the Regional Correspondents asking for information on additional institutes in their countries. In addition, it was decided to include in the inventory a short profile of each institute highlighting the main areas of expertise and research capabilities. The improved report is expected as a deliverable (5.5) by the end of April 2009.

During the General Assembly, it was decided to give the partner institute Archimedes the lead of this Task. In addition, the Research Council of Norway (RCN) informed the consortium its intention to withdraw from this task. The 2 p-m allocated to RCN for this task will be shifted to Archimedes for additional activities under Task 5.3 (see below).

A reference was made to the ongoing BILAT RUS and BILAT UKR projects, which put an emphasis on Key Institutions as well. Synergies should be exploited by linking the respective tasks (PT-DLR will take care to create the links).

Task 5.3 'S&T cooperation patterns'

An expert meeting with the participation of all partner organizations in the Task was held in Kyiv on 14 May 2008 in order to discuss and develop a methodology for the analysis and review of multilateral (i.e. EUFP) and bilateral activities between EU MS, AC and EECA countries. The first draft of the deliverable (5.6) "Inventory of EU-EECA S&T cooperation patterns, including also the methodological approach" was prepared and sent for quality control. After review of the deliverable it was decided to improve its quality. For this purpose another expert meeting was organized in Moscow on 14 November 2008. During this meeting it was decided to improve the methodological approach and the overall quality of the deliverable.

At the General Assembly it was decided that Archimedes would assume the leadership for this task and responsibility to implement the revised methodology and improve the quality of deliverable 5.6. To this end, Archimedes will provide instructions to the Task partners for the next steps. The deliverable is expected to be completed by June 2009 in time to be presented at the Stakeholders Conference (organised under WP1).

With regards to the annual monitoring reports on EECA participation in FP7 (deliverable 5.7), the HSE informed the consortium that it does not have access to the necessary data. Given the withdrawal of TUBITAK from this activity, Archimedes has taken over the responsibility for its implementation.

Since Archimedes has assumed extra responsibilities within Task 5.3 it has been decided to re-allocate p-m from other partners involved in the WP. As stated above, RCN has withdrawn from Task 5.2 and the 2 p-m will be re-allocated to Archimedes. There has also been an inquiry (pending response) to TUBITAK for its willingness to hand over part of its p-m. In addition, DLR stated that it will assist Archimedes in the workload through synergies from other projects and in particular BILAT-RUS.

Task 5.4 'Analysis of national policies towards global challenges'

In the first year a common methodological approach and appropriate templates were developed and implemented in order to collect information on national policies and implementation measures addressing global issues. Towards this end an international workshop was organized in Ljubljana at which several INCO-NETs participated. There, a decision to focus on climate change/global warming and its impact as a „global issue“ was taken. An information system (following the example of ERAWATCH) on RTD programmes tackling climate change in the INCO-NET third partner countries was built up and shall have also an awareness raising effect on the importance of STI for global issues/climate change policies of all relevant sectors. In addition a database has been programmed and is accessible via the internet since October 2008. It was agreed to start filling in the database as of January 2009 with the Academy of Sciences of Moldova (ASM) assuming the leadership. The data collection will continue until June 2009.

4. WP 2 "Coordination with other EU policies"

The progress report was given by the WP leader (Rene-Francois Bernard, ENQHEEI)

There have been considerable delays in the implementation of all the Tasks under this WP and the deliverables due during the first year of implementation of the project have been postponed to the second. Following an internal consultation of the WP (Co-) Leaders

with the Task Leaders within WP2, a revised workplan for its implementation was presented and agreed upon.

Task 2.1 'Coordination with the ENP / Four Common Spaces with Russia'

Delays have occurred in this Task since the initially planned strategy had to be revised while at the same time there was a shift in personnel within the lead partner DLR. Nevertheless, the analytical paper on S&T as part of ENPI (deliverable 2.1) is progressing and will be ready by the end of March 2009. The Regional Workshop to explore synergies with the ENPI will be held in September 2009, in Chisinau, by ASM.

Task 2.2 'Coordination with the DC Instrument'

Delays have also occurred in this Task. The first draft of the analytical paper on S&T as part of DCI (deliverable 2.7) was prepared and sent for quality control. The revised draft was prepared by the task leader. However, there was still need to include in the paper information from the interviews at the DC offices in Brussels which will be carried out by TUBITAK as soon as possible. After incorporating this information the deliverable will be completed. This is expected at the end of March 2009.

Task 2.3 'Coordination with the LLL Programme'

There is a need to develop a clear methodology for this Task. This will be done by the Task leader by the end of February 2009 and will be presented to the partners in the WP. It is expected that the analytical paper on the use of LLL to S&T cooperation (deliverable 2.12) will be prepared by the end of March 2009.

Task 2.4 'Coordination with CIP'

The situation is very similar to what is written for Task 2.3. After the development of a clear methodology, the analytical paper 'Better use and contributions from S&T cooperation to CIP' (deliverable 2.14) will be prepared by the end of March 2009.

5. WP 4 "Supporting the NCPs/NIPs in EECA countries"

The progress report was given by the WP leader (Lena Koval, NIP)

Tasks 4.1-4.5

The work under these Tasks is progressing smoothly. As already planned, a methodological standard for the review of EECA – NCP/ NIP structures (interview guide, quality assurance), a core curriculum for a 3 days training of EECA NCPs/ NIPs (four basic training concepts, quality assurance) and a concept for the networking among EU and EECA NCPs/ NIPs were developed. Furthermore, an overview of FP7-NCP projects was made available to EECA partners in order to promote synergies.

These results (an interview guide for the review of NCP/ NIP structures, basis concepts for the trainings) will be used to implement between February and June 2009 the review of NCP/ NIP structures (interviews, analytical report with recommendations, workshop for national authorities discussing the recommendations) and organise NCP/ NIP training workshops of three days in the EECA countries. The exact dates for the interviews and the training workshops have been set.

Regarding the training visits of EECA NCP/NIP staff in EU NCPs these will start in autumn 2009.

6. WP 6 “Quality, Links, and Sustainability”

The progress report was given by the Task leaders (Desiree Pecarz, ZSI, Stefan Klumpp, DLR, George Bonas, ICBSS)

Task 6.1 ‘Quality of the activities’

The Task leader for 6.1 presented the system and workflow of the Quality Assurance Plan (QAP), which was prepared on time and constitutes the basis for the Quality Assurance of the Deliverables of the project. Since there has been a re-arrangement of many of the activities it was suggested for the Task leader to send an email to WP and Task leaders requesting revised and confirmed dates for all the forthcoming deliverables in the second year of the project.

In view of the preparation of the mid-term SWOT analysis, ZSI made a presentation of the results of an initial SWOT analysis for the first year of implementation of the project which acts as a pilot for the mid-term SWOT analysis. Through this presentation a number of issues was discussed in plenary with regards to the implantation of the project, and a decisions was taken for the WP leaders and co-leaders to jointly prepare a vision paper of their respective WPs focusing on their roles and responsibilities, and the sharing of the workload and send it to the project coordinator by Friday, 27 February 2009. In addition, DLR with the assistance of the ICBSS offered to provide a quarterly update of all IncoNet EECA activities to the members of the consortium.

Task 6.2 ‘Links with other activities targeting EECA’

An inventory consisting of: i) IncoNet EECA related EU-funded projects of third parties, ii) important institutions dealing with research management and cooperation issues and targeting EECA countries, iii) EU-links concerning research cooperation, was successfully established and will be updated continuously (Deliverable 6.2).

Based on an analysis of the IncoNet EECA related EU-funded projects 28 relevant projects were identified and contacted to participate actively in the planned EU-EECA Project Coordination Board. The first “Meeting of Coordinators of projects targeting Eastern European and Central Asian countries” took place on 18 June 2008 in Bonn.

Task 6.3 ‘Sustainability monitoring’

During the first year of the project there has been a drafting of the inventory of activities and structures that have been or will be developed and benefit from the IncoNet EECA. For each of them the key stakeholders have been identified (e.g. national authorities, the structures themselves, the main beneficiaries, etc.). These stakeholders will be contacted for interviews during the second year of the project through a dedicated questionnaire which will be prepared by the Task leader and uploaded at the project’s website. The interviews will take place during the second half of 2009 and the mid-term report will be prepared shortly afterwards.

7. WP 7 “Communication, Dissemination activities, Conferences”

The progress report was given by the Task leaders (Olaf Heilmayer, DLR, Bulent Olcay, TUBITAK)

Tasks 7.1 and 7.2 ‘e-content management and Central Information Office’

Work is progressing smoothly in these Tasks. The Web site of the project is operational since February 08, and the Web portal since August 08, while the Central Information Office (CIO) is already functioning. In this context, a meeting of the Regional Correspondents of the CIO took place in Bonn (April 08).

During the General Assembly it was agreed that all partners should do their best to promote the web portal by linking the address to their websites and disseminating information to other relevant contact they may have. It was also agreed that there is a need for intensification of the flow of information uploaded (events, deliverables, etc.), as well as a decentralized system for uploading information on the Intranet with automatic notification when new information appears. DLR which has the overall responsibility for the website and webportal will inquire whether these suggestions are feasible.

Task 7.3 ‘Conferences’

The organisation of ‘EECA Sessions’ in major EU events presenting the S&T landscape in the EECA countries is behind schedule despite the fact that the IncoNet EECA partners have provided the task leader TUBITAK with a number of possible events. The methodology for the screening of suitable events is completely missing and the General Assembly requested the Task leader TUBITAK to proceed with the development of one by Monday, 2 March 2009 otherwise there are fears for failure in 2009. ZSI and DLR have offered (if asked) to provide guidance since it has expertise in these issues.

8. Management issues

a) First periodic report of the IncoNet EECA to the European Commission

The project coordinator made a short presentation with regards to the first periodic report which is due by the end of February, and thanked the project partners for their contributions. At the same time, he informed the WP leaders and co-leaders that the ICBSS would request the enrichment of several of the WP/Task reports. The deadline for the updated reports will be Monday, 23 February 2009.

b) Financial Issues

The project manager made a brief presentation on the distribution of the pre-financing and in particular the deviation from the ‘pro-rata’ rule that was agreed by Written Consultation. In addition, the issue of re-allocation of funds in WP3 from GNSF to CIT and in WP5 from RCN and possibly TUBITAK to ARCHIMEDES was highlighted. Finally, some clarifications were made with regards to the completion of the individual Financial Statements (Form Cs). During the discussion that followed the issue was brought up of the inefficient allocation of p-m per partner in certain tasks. It was agreed that the WP leaders/co-leaders would forward in writing to the Project Coordinator any suggestions they had for the re-allocation of funds in their respective WPs with

appropriate justification. The deadline set for these suggestions is Monday, 16 March 2009.

c) **Review of the calendar** *for 2009*

The calendar of events for 2009 was presented. A revised version including the modifications introduced during the General Assembly meeting is attached to these minutes (Annex III). The partners were invited check carefully the calendar and inform the Project Coordinator for potential mistakes or omissions.

9. Concluding remarks

The Coordinator encouraged the participants to further enhance targeted communication among them in order to develop the optimum synthesis of their competences and avoid unnecessary cross-mailing. He reiterated that under the overall guidance of the WP leaders/co-leaders, the Task leaders and co-leaders are the ones responsible for developing the methodology, consulting their partners, assigning duties to partners, collecting data and compiling draft deliverables, consulting their partners again for comments on the drafts, and forwarding the consolidated version to the Quality Control Process or the project coordinator.

Finally, the Coordinator expressed on behalf of all the participants his sincere thanks to the colleagues from ZSI and FFG for the efficient and friendly organization of the meeting and for their hospitality in Vienna.