International NCPs Workshop
Promoting the International Dimension of Horizon 2020

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Report on *International Cooperation around the World* (Part I)

- Summary of presentations (speedy-quick)
  - Quick points from EC presentations
  - General insight from NCP presentations

- Some comments (maybe provocative)
First, summary of EC talks

• Objectives of EC’s international strategy:
  – Strengthening the **Union**’s excellence and attractiveness in research and innovation and its economic and industrial competitiveness
  – Tackling **global** societal challenges, such as food and energy security and climate change
  – Supporting the Union’s **external policies**
• NCP guiding principles and standards

• Core tasks:
  – Informing and awareness raising of H2020 opportunities
  – Assisting, advising and training
  – Signposting and cooperation

• http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/support/national_contact_points.html
• NCPs should link **beyond NCP networks**. E.g. INCO projects, EEN, Europe Centres, science counselors and EEAS delegations

• Summary of calls that target international cooperation: [http://incontact.etag.ee/topics](http://incontact.etag.ee/topics)
• International Cooperation page: http://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp
• Horizon 2020 manual: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/cross-cutting-issues/international-cooperation_en.htm
• CIRCABC “Horizon 2020: Open to the World” interest group, https://circabc.europa.eu/
General insight from NCP presentations

• NCPs and NCP activities are part of a broader political and policy landscape
  – National ST&I priorities and programmes
  – S&T Agreements and Dialogues (with EU and Member States)
  – Different ministries, agencies, institutions also have an interest in collaboration with EU
  – Regional initiatives (e.g. ASEAN, LAC, MED)
  – Some level of national alignment with H2020
NCP structures

• NCP Coordinator is usually within Ministry
• But, to have (solely) high-level NCPs for thematics doesn’t work
  – Also need “technical” NCPs who understand the thematic specifics, call details and rules
• Work with numerous other multipliers (institutional and thematic)
NCP activities

• Promotion and dissemination of information
• **Training** (NCPs and multipliers)
• Consulting with individuals/organisations (rules, proposal development, etc.)
• Liaising between different **stakeholders**
• **Translation** of H2020 information (language translation, but also from Euro-speak to local paradigms)
• Strengthening local and **regional** activities and coordination
NCP challenges

• Need to **monitor activity**, especially proposals (need data on success and rejection)

• Other countries are increasingly competing for international collaboration attention (RF note: multi-lateral/multi-regional collaboration often has higher impact)

• **Perception** of difficulty of engaging with H2020

• Many European researchers **don’t know** the rules about third country participants
• NCPs are not paid for their time (generally)
• Lack of seed funding in order to build projects
• Strong interest in accessing thematic NCP networks, to:
  – Build thematic relationships
  – Get more detailed call information
  – Develop connections in order to join consortia
Comments

• Language: many of the first H2020 calls were clearly focused on local *Euro-centric* problems, which discouraged third country participation

• Language: *innovation* focus can similarly discourage some third country participants (most of whom are from public research actors)

• Learn from high-income third countries in FP7: clearly explain the *value to Europe* for your participation (and funding)
• Consider the financial and knowledge **leverage**, and use this to gain political support (15-20x leverage of local financial investment is common)

• The *science* that you bring to a project is essential, but your **soft assets** are equally important (e.g. networks and relationships)

• Encourage EU participants to **reach out** to their third country colleagues, & vice-versa
• Value of being an **expert evaluator**:  
  – Inside knowledge and insight  
  – Personal connections with others in your field  
  – Not exclusive for senior researchers
“Try a thing you haven't done three times.
– Once, to get over the fear of doing it.
– Twice, to learn how to do it.
– And a third time to figure out whether you like it or not.”
– Virgil Thomson, composer (USA)
Thank you

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