



Policy Stakeholders Conference

"EU-EaP STI cooperation in addressing Climate Change"

STI International Cooperation
Network for Eastern
Partnership Countries



Yerevan, Armenia,
15-16 May 2014

Conclusions



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IncoNet EaP is a project funded under the 7th European Framework Programme for Research - project number 609528. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.



PREFACE

The IncoNet EaP Project aims to support the advancement of the bi-regional STI policy dialogue between the EU MS/AC and the Eastern Partnership countries, with an explicit focus on the Societal Challenges that have been identified to be of mutual interest for the two regions, namely Climate Change, Energy and Health. In particular the project will identify actions and stakeholders and will implement innovative pilot activities to strengthen the coordination and impact of the individual actions.

The IncoNet EaP envisages the organization of three Policy Stakeholders Conferences (PSCs) to bring together policy makers, representatives of the research community and representatives of the private sector in order to address specific problems that countries in the region face and that are of mutual interest and benefit, as well as to take stock and showcase best practices regarding EU-EaP innovation cooperation, discuss concrete innovation cooperation projects, and promote networking/matchmaking. Each PSC will be dedicated to one of the three Societal Challenges and will also address horizontal issues such as innovation, instruments, mobility, etc. as cross cutting topics.



INTRODUCTION

The IncoNet Eastern Partnership Policy Stakeholders Conference (PSC) that took place in Yerevan on 15-16 May 2014 was the seventh in a series of similar successful forums for policy dialogue between stakeholders organized in the framework of the predecessors IncoNet projects (IncoNet EECA and IncoNet CA/SC). The focus of the Conference was on the EU-Eastern Partnership Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation in addressing Climate Change.

The main goal of the Conference was to formulate recommendations on the enhancement of the STI cooperation in addressing Climate Change issues which could be integrated in the current and forthcoming agendas and funding instruments by the relevant STI actors, such as the EC (DG RTD, DG DEVCO), other international donors and the national administrations in the EU MS& AC and the EaP countries.

To meet this goal, the Conference provided an overview of the international policies, initiatives and programs

targeting the region starting from the multilateral UN driven initiatives and large EU-funded projects and coming to bi-lateral EU-EaP projects and the recent national EaP programmes.

In addition, the Conference provided the opportunity for bringing together a good number of projects from the region as best practice examples with the aim to create synergies among them for future cooperation activities in H2020 and beyond.

The event gathered more than 100 policy makers and representatives of the academic and scientific communities from eleven EU MS& AC and all of the EaP countries. Representatives of the EU Delegation in Armenia, as well as representatives of the other international organizations i.e. UN/UNDP, RECC and of NGOs and civil society initiatives active in Climate action attended the conference.¹

A. State of Affairs: needs and opportunities

A significant number of policies, initiatives and programmes addressing Climate Change are implemented in the EaP region with various level of involvement of the local scientific communities.²

The EU is present through programmes and projects providing funding for research and capacity-building, as well as technical aid in dealing with Climate Change issues, in particular via the FP/H2020 and the ENPI instruments.

More than 20 FP7 projects involving the EaP region and addressing the topic of Climate/Environment are ongoing or have been recently completed. ENPI has a dedicated policy support project addressing the issues of mitigation and adaption in the ENP East countries (Clima East) and is also funding ecosystem based pilot projects (pastures, forestry, and peatland management) in the recipient countries. In addition, there are other sectoral ENPI programmes with clear climate action

angles.

Other international donor organizations (the UN institutional family, the WB, the OECD etc.) are providing support through their dedicated initiatives. More than 130 UN funded projects are ongoing (or have been recently completed) providing assistance to the countries region on Climate Change related issues.

Climate Change adaptation ranks as a priority at the national level as reflected in the national strategies and programmes implemented by Ministries and agencies of the EaP countries dealing with Environmental issues.

Fragmentation and sustainability

The considerable multilateral and bilateral efforts employed by various international and national actors in the EaP region towards the accomplishment of the “Post-2015” goals (reduced greenhouse gas emissions, increased share of renewable energy, proper climate risk management and adaptation planning) often result in fragmentation. In this regard, three main challenges

have been highlighted:

A necessity for an increased coordination and for closer synergies among the various policy initiatives, international donors, national administrations and research entities.

Coordination and synergies among the above mentioned actors are seldom envisaged from the design stage of the programmes/projects. This often results in a duplication of efforts and a lack of effective exploitation of the already achieved results.

Regional (cross-border) cooperation in climate action could be further enhanced. Donors have emphasized this aspect of climate action (especially with regards to adaptation where the issues are not constrained by country borders). However, institutionalized multi-country cooperation remains at rather low level despite the shared history and common second languages.

A need to ensure sustainability and accessibility to the research performed under the projects funded for the region.

Research in addressing CC issues is usually conducted in the frame of externally funded projects which have a limited lifetime. The opportunities for continuation of research once the international funding ceases are very limited.

Solid scientific data needed for evidence-based policy making

Joint policy initiatives on Climate Change need to be based on a sound scientific input i.e. on comprehensive and comparable scientific data.

The mapping of the Climate Change policies³ implemented in the FP7 Promitheas-4 project shows the gaps in terms of scientific data. The mapping provides a comprehensive overview of the policies in four of the EaP countries and shows what the needs are

in terms of improving the Greenhouse gas inventory and system for reporting and verification. The results of the study is indicative of the common challenges the countries are facing.

Climate Change research is conducted rather dispersedly and often results are either not accessible (considered property of the donors) or if open, they are not sufficiently integrated/considered in the development of national and regional strategies.

In this context, the Conference highlighted the essential role of research in supporting evidence based policy making, such as in the planning of the future economic developments to include choices regarding climate adaptation, strategies for transformation to a low-carbon based economy and for protection of rural and low income population etc.

Need for studies and monitoring from the region

A major weakness was identified in all the EaP countries with regard to the Climate monitoring systems. This is partly due to insufficient institutional resources, to the

low R&D national spending, the low wages for the involved researchers, the lack of dedicated infrastructure etc.

Currently such activities are mostly supported by international assistance projects, which are however short-term and unfortunately do not succeed in their limited duration to build the necessary research capacity for the long run.

In particular, further studies and monitoring are needed in order to address the following areas:

- Reliable models for assessing water resources vulnerability and particularly groundwater resources monitoring system;
- Remote methods for monitoring the ice fields, snow cover, snowmelt characteristics and flood forecast;
- Monitoring and combating soil degradation and salinization under CC;
- Monitoring of changes in mountainous ecosystems, natural grasslands and pastures and wetlands;
- Study of activation of landslides under climate change,

- Agriculture sector adaptation and mainstreaming the CC aspect in mid and long term planning,
- Human health and epidemiological situation monitoring.

Research networking addressing Climate Change

A good number of opportunities for the EaP researchers have been identified that could be further exploited, in particular the scientific networks created via the FP7 projects PROMITHEAS-4, PERSEUS, IASON, RERAM etc. How such research results are incorporated into policy making on the national and regional level remains a challenge.

Opportunities for direct exchanges among researchers, in particular in view of participation in H2020 calls, are supported through two main tools under the *IncoNet EaP* project: the twinning grants for clustering of scientific projects and institutions and the grant scheme for participation in H2020 Brokerage and networking

events.⁴

In addition, innovation support instruments are available for interested EaP stakeholders - such as different types of Innovation trainings, mobility and capacity building schemes promoted by the Climate Knowledge Innovation Communities. The *IncoNet EaP* project offers in this sense funding for missions of EaP relevant stakeholders to the EU Innovation Platforms and vice-versa.

B. Recommendations

Setting-up an effective coordination mechanism

In order to improve the synergies of the Climate Change actors and programmes targeting the EaP region, it was proposed that a “permanent networking facility” could be created, based on the model already in place for the Balkan countries.⁵

The facility would represent a coordinating point for all the stakeholders and funding initiatives on Climate Change addressing the countries of the region and

would also keep them connected beyond the lifetime of the projects.

The first steps towards providing the institutional set-up for the facility could be explored in cooperation with the EaP Panel on Research and Innovation, given its major role in facilitating the STI cooperation with the EaP countries.

Establishment of a Regional Research Competence Center

With the aim to provide solid scientific data to the policy making the participants proposed setting-up an Eastern Partnership Regional Research Competence Center to address the current needs and gaps in data on Climate Change from the target countries.

The regional research center would respond to the EaP countries requirements (providing specific data, performing monitoring activities etc.), would follow the emerging needs from international negotiations on Climate and would also ensure accessibility to the research results on a regional level. In addition, it could

provide trainings and other capacity building activities for the EaP researchers.

Nevertheless, for such a scenario a medium to long-term commitment and coordination in terms of political support, but also in terms funding would be required from the countries of the region.

As a first step, it was proposed to exploit the opportunities in the current H2020 calls that are of mutual interest to the EU and EaP, in particular those found under the topic “Fighting and adapting to Climate Change”, the call “Climate Services for Europe” (10/03/2014; R&I action, 10-15 mln EUR/project, 25 mln EUR) which has been identified to address the need for the provision of trust-worthy science-based climate information.

Improve the link between research institutions and administration

Essentially for an evidence-base policy making, national research organizations have to be involved in the preparation of Climate Change related national reports

and country studies, as well as to coordinate with the related research sectors e.g. energy, agriculture and health.

A more structured cooperation between research and national administration e.g. in a form of agreement or contract with provision of adequate funding on a medium to long-term basis would be a way to ensure the necessary continuity and sustainability for the Climate Change related needs in monitoring and research.

Creation of a common calendar of activities for the region

Last, but not least, in order to improve the communication between the relevant stakeholders, a common calendar of events/activities of the current initiatives and projects (EC- DG RTD and DG DEVCO, UN, national administrations) was proposed.

Such a service would help ensure no competing events/activities are running in parallel targeting the same groups of stakeholders. This service could be integrated in the already existing calendar of events on

the IncrEAST portal (www.increast.eu).

C. The way forward

The EU-EaP STI cooperation in addressing Climate Change necessitates an integrated approach to include also cooperation with stakeholders beyond the STI sector, such as the national sectorial ministries, the civil society and the international donor organizations.

The EU and the EaP countries have already paved the way for joint actions on Climate Change. Such examples have been highlighted by the FP7 and ENPI projects presented at the Conference. There is enough room to further expand synergies in particular by taking advantage of the current opportunities in the H2020.



The PSC was organized by:

NAS-RA



RCISD



CeRISS



¹ All presentations given during the event are available online: <http://inco-eap.net/en/399.php>

² A mapping of projects and stakeholders active in the region is implemented by the IncoNet EaP and a data base of projects will be made available online: <http://increast.eu>. The Clima East's climate policy oriented project database is available already at: <http://www.climaeast.eu/partner-countries/armenia>.

³ See summary here:
http://inco-eap.net/_media/2_Perspectives_Black_Sea_region_under_FVA.pdf

⁴ More details on the application procedure can be found here: <http://www.inco-eap.net/en/401.php>

⁵ The networking facility *Balkan GeoNet* is coordinated by the University of Novisad



PROJECT INFORMATION

IncoNet EaP “STI International Cooperation Network for Eastern Partnership Countries”

Website: www.inco-eap.net

Project duration: September 2013 - August 2016

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CeRISS - Centre for Regional and International STI Studies and Support
(Greece, www.ceriss.eu)



Administrative Coordination:

ZSI - Centre for Social Innovation
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Imprint:



International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)
www.icbss.org

Address:

4 Xenophontos Str. 10557 Athens, GR

Director General:

Dr. Zefi Dimadama

PRINTING AGENCY:

www.printnow.gr

ATHENS, GREECE 2015