

Project number 226160 – BS-ERA.NET

BS - ERA.NET

Networking on Science and Technology in the Black Sea Region

Instrument: Coordination and Support Actions (Coordinating type)

Deliverable 1.3

Analysis of EU-Bi-regional and Intraregional RTDI Initiatives and Comparison with Initiatives in the Black Sea Region

Due date of deliverable: month 8

Actual submission date: month 12

Start date of project: 1 January 2009

Duration: 3 years

Lead beneficiary for this deliverable: The International Bureau of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research at the German Aerospace Centre (DLR), with the assistance of the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)

Project co-funded by the European Commission within the Seven Framework Programme (2007-2013)

Dissemination Level: PU

PU = Public

PP = Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services).

RE = Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services).

CO = Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services).

TABLE OF CONTENT

Executive Summary	3
1. Introduction.....	3
2. Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in RTD	4
2.1 Role and structure of the Monitoring Committee (MoCo)	4
2.2 Instruments.....	5
2.3 Governance	5
3. The EU-Western Balkan countries cooperation	6
3.1 Role and structure of the Steering Platform	6
3.2 Instruments.....	7
3.3 Governance	8
4. The Nordic Cooperation in research	8
4.1 Nature of cooperation/objectives	8
4.2 Instruments.....	9
4.3 Governance	10
4.3.1The Nordic Council.....	11
4.3.2The Nordic Council of Ministers	11
4.4 Lessons learned from Nordic Cooperation	12
5. The Black Sea Region	13
5.1 The BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Science and Technology.....	13
5.2 Governance of the Working Group on Cooperation in Science and Technology (WG S&T).....	13
5.3 Instruments.....	14
6. Analysis and conclusions	16
6.1 Bi-regional schemes	16
6.2 Intraregional schemes	17
6.3 Conclusions.....	18
ANNEX.....	20

Executive Summary

In this Report, three initiatives underpinning the Political Dialogue for specific regions are presented: the Monitoring Committee for Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in RTD (MoCo), the Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan countries, and the BONUS Programme (Joint Baltic Sea Research Programme). The comparison and the analysis show that all of them are well established initiatives with sustainable governance structures and regular meetings and a secretariat. Furthermore, they are all supported by the European Commission. Considering the situation in the Black Sea Region, it is discussed whether a similar approach could be chosen and durable structures could be established to support the Policy Dialogue.

1. Introduction

This Report was produced in the frame of Work Package 1 ("Systematic Information Exchange on National and Multilateral initiatives in the Black Sea Region) of the BS-ERA.NET project and relates to Task T1.2 "Analysis and interpretation of the identified RTDI national and regional Programmes, including similar initiatives within EU".

Information was gathered from official documents, reports, internet sites and personal communication.

In a first step, Policy Dialogue activities in S&T between the EU and neighbouring regions, (either EU-funded activities or initiatives of Member States/Associated Countries) are described in order to provide examples that could be adapted to the Black Sea Region. Therefore, regional cooperation initiatives at high political level such as MoCo (Monitoring Committee for Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in RTD), the Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan countries and BONUS EEIG (Baltic Organizations' Network for Funding Science, a European Economic Interest Grouping) serve as a model in this report.

In a second step, existing initiatives in the Black Sea Region are portrayed.

Finally, after having presented these initiatives and looked at the situation in the Black Sea Region, a short conclusion analyses and highlights the conditions and structures favourable for the sustainable functioning of such regional activities and shows ways how this could be implemented for the Black Sea Region.

2. Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in RTD

2.1 Role and structure of the Monitoring Committee (MoCo)¹

Since the launching of the 'Barcelona Process' by the Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers in November 1995, as well as in the context of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) launched

in 2008, a "Monitoring Committee for Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in RTD" (MoCo) has been established in 1995 and plays a central role in monitoring and stimulating the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in RTD. MoCo has convened 13 times in the timeframe 1995 - 2009 and, among others, played a key role in the implementation of activities targeting the Mediterranean Partner Countries² in the successive EU Framework Programmes.

In the context of the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council "Barcelona process: Union for the Mediterranean" (COM(2008)319final of 20.5.2008), MoCo adapted its functioning to the new landscape in order to reinforce its role, and contribute efficiently to the implementation of the objectives of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in the area of research and innovation.

With a view to promoting the development of a Euro-Mediterranean scientific area and thereby to supporting the sustainable development of the Mediterranean region, the MoCo:

- acts as a forum for the exchange of information, views and recommendations on RTD policy in the Mediterranean region, and establish a common information base on this subject;
- identifies issues of regional importance to be addressed by RTD and requiring cooperative Euro-Mediterranean activities;
- proposes concrete actions to be taken in the context of the UfM, the bilateral cooperation activities between countries represented in the MoCo, or the exchange of information at national level;
- monitors, and comments on RTD policies, developments and activities in the Euro-Mediterranean context;
- communicate/exchange information with the Joint Permanent Committee of the UfM based in Brussels, the Senior Officials Meeting (Foreign Affairs) and the Joint Secretariat based in Barcelona, as well as with the Strategic Forum for

¹ Annex A: Guidelines for the functioning of the Monitoring Committee for the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in RTD (MoCo), as adopted by the members of the MoCo in Cyprus on 12 and 13 December 1996, and as amended in Vienna, Austria on 30 June 2006, in Istanbul, Turkey on 7-8 November 2008 and in Casablanca, Morocco on 16 and 17 November 2009

² Under the Barcelona process: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian authority, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey. Under the UfM: Libya and Mauritania also participate.

International Cooperation with respect to its opinion on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in RTD;

- supports and prepares the Ministerial Meetings on Research and Higher Education;
- reports to the Ministerial Meeting on Research and Higher Education for issues concerning science and technology.

High-level representatives from the research administrations of the 43 countries participating in the UfM, as well as representatives of the European Commission participate in the MoCo.

2.2 Instruments

In order to support the bi-regional policy dialogue and priority setting, FP7 provides funds to a specific type of projects (INCO-NETs) one of which the '*Mediterranean Innovation and Research Coordination Action – MIRA* (<http://www.miraproject.eu/>) is dedicated to the Mediterranean region. The project MIRA:

- Supports the functioning of MoCo, providing funds for the organization of its meetings and for the functioning of a Secretariat to ensure continuity between the meetings;
- Organizes a series of activities for the identification of research priorities of mutual EU-MPC (Mediterranean Partner Countries) interest (e.g. Thematic Workshops), as well as activities for an increased participation of researchers from the MPCs in FP7 (e.g. Info Days, training sessions, etc.).
- Implements studies for the monitoring of the participation of MPCs in FP7.

In addition to the INCONET MIRA, other projects like the Era-Net ARIMnet focus on enhancing the co-operation in particular fields of mutual benefit and interest (here: mainly agriculture).

2.3 Governance

The policy dialogue forum of the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in RTD is the Monitoring Committee for Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation (MoCo). The Committee meets usually once a year, under the responsibility of the EU Member State holding the chairmanship of the EU Council, which also sets the Agenda in consultation with the UfM co-presidency and with the European Commission. The meetings are held

'traditionally' alternatively in an EU Member State and in a Mediterranean Partner Country. All decisions are in principle taken by consensus.

In the context of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), MoCo will also act as the Senior Officials Forum for the Ministerial Meetings on 'Higher Education and Research' on issues concerning science and technology. The next meeting will be convened in Slovenia on 25-26 April 2010.

3. The EU-Western Balkan countries cooperation

3.1 Role and structure of the Steering Platform

The issue of EU enlargement in the direction of the Western Balkan countries (WBC) is high on the political agenda of the European Union. The EU-Western Balkan countries cooperation in R&D is based on the EU-Balkan Countries Action Plan on S&T adopted at the Ministerial Conference in Thessaloniki in 2003, which was endorsed by Ministers at the General Affairs Council in March 2006. During the Austrian EU Council presidency in 2006, the Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan countries ("Steering Platform") was established. Especially the activities of the SEE-ERA.NET project, running from September 2004 until August 2009, contributed very much to the establishment of the Steering Platform through the development of strategies for joint activities highlighted in the White Paper³ and the Joint Action Plan.

The Steering Platform plays a central role in stimulating, monitoring, and supporting the cooperation in research and technological development between the countries of the European Union (EU 27), associated countries to the Seventh European Framework Programme for RTD (FP7) and the WBC.

With a view to promoting the implementation and development of European research cooperation and thereby also supporting the technological and economic development in the WBC⁴, the Platform will:

- Act as a forum for exchanging information and views, elaborating recommendations on the RTD policy and coordinating needs, suggestions and proposals in and towards the WBCs, especially regarding the Framework Programme;
- Monitor RTD policies and developments including interactions with innovation and higher education, and intervene with specific recommendations, if deemed necessary;

³ Rost et al. 2007: White Paper on Overlaps, Gaps and Opportunities in view of the Extension of bilateral RTD Programmes and Initiatives towards Multilateral Approaches. *Transition Studies Review* 14 (2) 2007, Springer, 205–261.

⁴ Annex B: Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan countries: Guidelines for the functioning of the Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan countries. Thessaloniki, 2007. (<http://www.wbc-inco.net/doc/2487.html>)

- Propose concrete actions to be taken in the context of furthering the EU-WBC cooperation on RTD and the bi- and multilateral cooperation activities;
- Identify issues of mutual importance to be addressed in the context of the Platform;
- Seek synergies with other instruments, organisations and stakeholders to strengthen the research capacity in the Western Balkan countries.

The Steering Platform is composed by high level senior officials of the Science Ministries of the EU 27, the countries associated to the Framework Programme and the Western Balkan countries (most of the Western Balkan countries are now associated to the Framework Programme).

3.2 Instruments

The Steering Platform was supported at its beginning by the information office of the Steering Platform, playing the role of secretariat and organising body of the Platform. The Information Office assisted the implementation of the Steering Platform on Research for Western Balkan Countries by the

- establishment of a documentation service for the Steering Platform members, consisting of a web-based content management system comprising all S&T documents relevant for the policy dialogue as well as a contact database,
- production of analytical support studies and materials consisting of S&T Country Reports of all Western Balkan countries, thematic analytical studies on urgent issues which arise during the policy dialogue and a synopsis between identified needs and available instrumental offers to identify spaces for improvement of the RTD relations,
- delivery of a tailor-made communication service for the Steering Platform members in format of a quarterly electronic news journal providing regular updates on the deliberations of the group, relevant S&T issues.

The Information Office was followed in 2008 by the EU funded project WBC-INCO.NET (Coordination of Research Policies with the Western Balkan Countries). This project furthermore supports the Steering Platform in the facilitation of interaction between the Western Balkan countries, the EU Member States, states associated to the Framework Programmes for RTD and the European Commission. It enhances integration of the WBC in the European Research Area and assists in developing the relationship between the EU and the WBCs in the area of science and technology (S&T). WBC-INCO.NET is a strategic project designed to deal with European, multilateral and regional issues of science and technology policies in and with the WBC.

Also strongly related to the Steering Platform is the SEE-ERA.NET PLUS project, an EU funded networking project with the aim to implement a Joint Call of all partners involved, receiving an additional top up budget by the European Commission. The project has started in April 2009 and the Joint Call has been published on September 1, 2009.

3.3 Governance

The meetings of the Steering Platform are being held bi-annually, co-chaired by the current presidency of the EU Council, the EU Commission and one Western Balkan country. They are organised and prepared by WBC-INCO.NET which constitutes the operational arm of the Platform. The guidelines of the Steering Platform are presented in Annex B of this report.

4. The Nordic Cooperation in research⁵

4.1 Nature of cooperation/objectives

The Nordic Cooperation in R&D is part of a broader, long-standing cooperation in the Nordic area. This area consists of Sweden Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Finland, as well as the autonomous regions of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Aaland. The institutional set up goes back to the establishment of the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers (see 4.3.1 and 4.3.2).

Currently, the Nordic R&D Cooperation is organised under NORIA (Nordic Research and Innovation Area). It involves Nordic research institutions, fixed-term research programmes, Nordic Centres of Excellence (NCoE), grant schemes and coordination of major infrastructure investments.

The programmes have partly been established through bottom-up processes. Their management practice is often aimed at opening national programmes or constituting long lasting activities of joint efforts. The most important programmes are:

- BONUS Programme (Joint Baltic Sea Research Programme)
- The Nordic Energy research Cooperation,
- NOVA – the Nordic Forestry, veterinary and Agricultural University Network,
- The Nordic research and Education Area in Agriculture and Forestry,
- The Nordic Centres of Excellence,
- Nordic Centre Union.

⁵ Remoe, S.O. 2008: Nordic co-operation and ERA: Lessons for international co-operation in S&T. report from a learning and exchange process with the Nordic S&T system. European Commission, DG RTD, D2, Brussels, January 2008.

4.2 Instruments

The core instrument of the Nordic cooperation is the BONUS Programme (Joint Baltic Sea Research Programme). It is managed by the Programme Secretariat of BONUS EEIG⁶ (Baltic Organizations' Network for Funding Science - a European Economic Interest Grouping) which was founded by the nine Baltic Sea States, comprising eight European Union States (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and Poland) and the Russian Federation. It is an executive body and was established by Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2137/85 by the Member States.

The objective of BONUS is to form a network and partnership of key agencies funding research aiming at deepening the understanding of conditions for science-based management of environmental issues in the Baltic Sea.

The goal is to enhance the capacity of the Baltic Sea science community to respond to the objectives, goals and research needs described under Themes 1-7 of the BONUS-169 Science Plan. The goal will be achieved by creating the necessary structures for the programme governance and management, for networking, information flow and data archiving and exchange, as well as for capacity building and synergistic use of marine research infrastructures.

Integral parts of these structures include forming the 'Baltic Organizations' Network for Funding Science' (BONUS) via establishing the legal entity of an 'European Economic Interest Grouping' (EEIG), creating inter alia: thematic and crosscutting clusters of consortia; a governance, management and supporting advisory structure; a web portal and an internal data inventory to facilitate the extensive exploitation of results achieved within the programme; a joint education and training plan; and a mechanism for shared use of research infrastructures and facilities.

An important foundation for achieving the goal lies in work already done by the BONUS ERA-NET project having published a Joint Call, in the existing regional scientific associations, biennial Baltic Sea Science Conferences, ICES Baltic Committee with its Working Groups, the Baltic University Programme, ongoing EC funded research projects, integrated projects, networks of excellence and various EC and Nordic funding instruments to enhance mobility of researchers and training activities.

⁶ Hopkins C.C.E., J. Thulin, J.G. Sutinen, K. Kononen, P. Snoeijs, S. Johansson & H.-O. Nalbach 2006. BONUS-169 Baltic Sea Science Plan and Implementation Strategy. BONUS Publication No. 5. (www.bonusportal.org)

4.3 Governance

The Programme governance and support, funding and implementation systems are:

- The BONUS-169 Programme Steering Committee (PSC) is presided by the BONUS-169 Chairman and comprises senior officers of the national research funding and management institutions of the nine participating States. The PSC is the highest authority of BONUS-169, forming its decision-making body and governing its dedicated legal structure.
- The Programme Secretariat, headed by the Executive Director, to implement the decisions of the PSC and act as the principal representative of the programme to both the European Commission and the national funding agencies. The Secretariat is responsible for the overall coordination and monitoring of the programme activities, including: a) Organizing Calls and evaluations; b) Carrying out the everyday management of the programme; c) Implementing the programme communications strategy; d) Ensuring timeliness and quality of outputs; e) Preparing progress reports and annual programme reports, and overseeing the preparation of all substantive and operational reports required; f) Preparing terms of reference for any engaged consultants, contractors and technical personnel; g) Managing the overall budget, and chairing appropriate administratively related management meetings connected with the smooth running of the programme; h) Supporting the work of the programme's internal bodies: Advisory Board, Project Evaluation Panels, Forum of Consortium Leaders, Data Management Steering Group, Forum of Infrastructure Managers, Forum for Training and Education, etc.; i) Supporting networking among the members, internal bodies and projects; j) Liaising with collaborating national and international activities and organizations to ensure maximum synergy and cooperation, avoiding unnecessary duplication, and also ensuring continued funding and political commitments; and k) Periodically reporting to the PSC and the European Commission on the progress and financial aspects of the programme.
- The Advisory Board (AB) to support the PSC and Secretariat. Its members are scientists of high international reputation and include representatives of relevant stakeholders (e.g. HELCOM, ICES). The role of the AB is to provide independent advice, guidance and recommendations, and strategic planning regarding scientific and policy related issues of the programme. These include advising on the objectives, priorities and direction of the programme, and on ways of strengthening the programme's performance and delivery. The AB also provides counsel on capacity building, networking, and the relevance of the work to achieve the objectives of the programme, and acts as advocates of the programme. It may contribute in reviews and evaluations of research proposals and progress reports, and advise on their merits.

- Systems for measuring progress, success and impacts of individual projects and project clusters;
- *Ad hoc* forums and panels, steering/working and technical groups, workshops, and conferences as required.

4.3.1 The Nordic Council⁷

The Nordic Council was formed in 1952. The Council has 87 elected members from the member countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden as well as from the three autonomous territories the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. The members of the Council are members of the national parliaments, who are nominated by their respective political party. There is thus no procedure for direct election to the Nordic Council.

The Nordic Council, which is led by a Presidium, has held an ordinary Session every autumn since 1996. Special sessions on specific themes are organised in between. On-going political work in the Nordic Council is conducted through committees and party groups.

The Nordic Council is managed by a Secretariat which shares its premises with the Secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers in Copenhagen. Moreover, the Nordic Council has national secretariats in the Nordic parliaments, attached to the delegations of the respective countries.

The total annual budget for the Nordic Council is about DKK 30 million, and slightly more than DKK 900 million for the Nordic Council of Ministers. More than one third of the Nordic Council of Ministers' budget it is used to fund the Nordic institutions. Several institutions are funded fully or partially in this way. The Nordic governments as well as sources completely outside the public sector are direct financial contributors.

The Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers share personnel, finances and service departments. Information activities are managed by a joint communications department.

4.3.2 The Nordic Council of Ministers

The Nordic Council of Ministers, formed in 1971, is the forum for Nordic governmental co-operation. Overall responsibility for the Nordic Council of Ministers lies with the respective Prime Ministers. In practice, responsibility is delegated to the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation (MR-SAM) and to the Nordic Committee for Co-operation (NSK), which co-ordinates the day-to-day work of the official political Nordic co-operation.

⁷ www.norden.org

Despite its name the Nordic Council of Ministers consists, in fact, of several individual councils of ministers (MR). Most of the Nordic ministers for specific policy areas meet in a council of ministers a couple of times a year. The Chairmanship of the Council of Ministers, which is held for a period of one year, rotates between the five Nordic countries. Decisions made in the Council of Ministers are unanimous. Issues are prepared and followed up by the various Committees of Senior Officials which consist of civil servants from the member countries.

The Nordic Prime Ministers meet regularly, often before meetings of the European Council, in the circle of European heads of state and government. The ministers for foreign affairs and defence hold their regular meetings outside the formal framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

4.4 Lessons learned from Nordic Cooperation

Focusing on the example of the Nordic Cooperation, some broad and general lessons can be derived from the Nordic Cooperation for regional initiatives with the EU⁸:

- The Nordic Cooperation is characterised by the formation of dynamic, flexible and light-footed structures; the amount of money is typically small, and aims at bringing added value and excellence to the existing national structures;
- The Nordic Cooperation is not aimed at replacing international cooperation strategies from the national institutions or policies, but rather complements them;
- The fixed geometry of the member countries present in (almost) all initiatives is balanced by the flexibility by the instruments chosen which create variable geometries at project level;
- Launching new and often complex initiatives needs to be built on broad acceptance, being guided or based on broad political agendas;
- A top down element and predefined topic needs to be in place for international cooperation and network building;
- Continuous collection of information in knowledge and information on the countries and regions in question is vital to success for the launching of international cooperation.

At a more detailed level, lessons learnt for the coordination of policy approaches with Third countries can be summarised by these four pillars:

- Developing a coordinated cooperation strategy; the common ground building on national policy objectives vis-à-vis partner countries as well as the drivers and the barriers for coordinating policy action have to be defined;

⁸ Remoe, S.O. 2008: Nordic co-operation and ERA: Lessons for international co-operation in S&T. report from a learning and exchange process with the Nordic S&T system. European Commission, DG RTD, D2, Brussels, January 2008.

- Setting-up joint instruments; major instruments and respective good practice for implementing joint activities as well as structural arrangements for different measures have to be identified;
- Establishing efficient governance structures and the procedures for priority setting and monitoring should be outlined:
- Implementing impact assessment; indicators and tools for evaluation have to be discussed.

5. The Black Sea Region

5.1 The BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Science and Technology

The Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)⁹ currently includes twelve Member States situated around the Black Sea and in Southeast Europe. It was established in 1992 as a regional initiative and developed into a fully fledged international organization. The BSEC covers a wide range of areas of cooperation among which, Science and Technology (S&T) has always had a prominent role due to the considerable research potential in the countries of the region and its undeniable contribution to sustainable development and economic growth.

The BSEC organisational structure provides for sectoral Working Groups covering every important field of activity. The Working Group on Cooperation in Science and Technology (WG S&T) is the BSEC subsidiary body in charge of all issues concerning cooperation in this field. The WG S&T is a permanent forum responsible for:

- Preparing the meetings of Ministers responsible for S&T
- Negotiating the successive "BSEC Action Plans on Cooperation in S&T"
- Monitoring the progress of the Action Plans
- Screening the applications to the *Project Development Fund (PDF)*
- Exploring synergies with the European Commission
- Exchanging information on ongoing and planned regional and national activities.

5.2 Governance of the Working Group on Cooperation in Science and Technology (WG S&T)

⁹ For further information see: <http://www.bsec-organization.org>

The WG S&T consists of representatives of all BSEC Member States. According to established practice, the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat (BSEC PERMIS) as well as the BSEC related bodies (Parliamentary Assembly, International Centre for Black Sea Studies, Business Council, etc.) systematically take part in the WG S&T meetings, while the European Commission, other organizations and countries take part as observers. The WG S&T meets in principle on a bi-annual basis. It operates under the guidance of a Country Coordinator, appointed for a two-year term, and it is chaired by the rotating Chairmanship-in-Office of the Organization. The decisions in the WG S&T are taken by consensus. The aim is to strengthen the regional cooperation in the fields of scientific research and technological development as a major driving force of dynamic and sustainable economic growth and prosperity for the peoples of the Black Sea region.

In early April 2010 the second five-year action plan for cooperation in science and technology was adopted by Ministers from the countries of BSEC. The new action plan for the period 2010-2014 focuses on S&T actions and specific activities related to human resources, research infrastructures, capacity building and innovation.

5.3 Instruments

5.3.1. The Project Development Fund (PDF)

The BSEC PDF¹⁰ was established upon the resolution of the Seventh Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Tirana, 25 October 2002) for the purpose of facilitating the elaboration and promotion of projects with high regional cooperation and development impact in the BSEC region. The PDF promotes regional cooperation in various fields corresponding to those covered by the BSEC Working Groups, including Science and Technology. The screening of the applications is done by the respective Working Group of BSEC, often through consultation of external experts, and the final decision is taken by the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials to which all the retained applications converge.

The PDF is financed through contributions of the BSEC Member States. The maximum amount of funds allocated to a project is up to 30000 € for a period of 1 years. Despite the relatively limited funding possibilities of the PDF (in terms of funds per project and of global envelope), its political significance is high since it constitutes a 'real common pot'.

5.3.2. The BSEC Hellenic Development Fund (BSEC-HDF)

The BSEC-HDF¹¹ established upon the resolution of the 18th Meeting of the Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States (Kyiv, April 17, 2008) is

¹⁰ For further information see: <http://www.bsecprojects.com>

¹¹ Ibid.

financed through Development Aid funds of the Hellenic Republic. The BSEC-HDF is a flexible mechanism targeting the following specific key areas of regional cooperation: transport, renewable energy sources, environmental protection, business cooperation and trade facilitation, tourism, as well as culture.

5.3.3. Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation (BST)

In order to promote regional cooperation and good governance in the wider Black Sea region, The German Marshall Fund of the United States established the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation¹². BST provides grants to local and national NGOs, to governmental entities, community groups, policy institutes and other associations in the Wider Black Sea Region to implement projects in the three programmatic areas of the Trust: civic participation, cross-border initiatives and Eastern Links.

5.3.4. Projects and initiatives in the Black Sea Region

Several other projects and initiatives running in the Black Sea Region address cooperation in the field of Science and Technology:

- **The S&T International Cooperation Network for Eastern European and Central Asian countries (IncoNet EECA)** is a project coordinated by the ICBSS and funded through the 7th Framework Programme for Research of the European Community (FP7)¹³. The IncoNet EECA envisages activities aiming at an enhanced policy dialogue and cooperation between EECA countries and the EU in science and technology and at an increased participation of researchers from these countries in FP7. Ten out of the twelve BSEC Member States are participating in the IncoNet EECA project.
- **The Black Sea Research Network (BSRN)** is an action-focused and multidisciplinary network of policy-oriented research institutes that develop research programmes on issues of importance to the political, social and economic development of the Black Sea region.¹⁴
- **The Black Sea Universities Network (BSUN)** was founded for the purpose of developing educational, scientific, and cultural cooperation and exchanges among the universities of the BSEC Member States and other institutions with similar concern¹⁵.
- **The Black Sea Scene** is a scientific network of leading environmental and socio-economic research institutes, universities and NGO's from the countries around the Black Sea established in the frame of the EU funded project Black Sea

¹² For further information see: <http://www.gmfus.org/blacksea/index.cfm>

¹³ For further information see: <http://www.inco-eeeca.net>

¹⁴ For further information see: http://icbss.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=20&Itemid=34

¹⁵ For further information see: www.bsun.org

SCENE.¹⁶ It stimulates scientific cooperation, exchange of knowledge and expertise, and strengthens the regional capacity and performance of marine environmental data and information management.

- **The Black Sea Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution** is an intergovernmental body which develops environment programmes to define strategies and identifying hot spots for which investment interventions are needed.¹⁷ It functions under the Danube River Protection Convention (DRPC) and the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (Black Sea Convention).

6. Analysis and conclusions

In the previous chapters four different regional cooperation schemes in the field of Science and Technology have been presented, with emphasis of their policy dialogue and governance specificities. In this chapter, an analysis of their similarities, differences and key characteristics will be presented, together with suggestions for possible developments in the Black Sea region that could be supportive of the activities of the BS-ERANET project and of the forthcoming joint call for proposals.

6.1 Bi-regional schemes

Two of the aforementioned cooperation schemes, namely the '*Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in RTD*' and the '*EU-Western Balkan countries cooperation*' are typical bi-regional schemes involving on one hand the EU Member States as a whole and on the other hand countries in two neighbouring regions.

Specific policy dialogue platforms are supervising the RTD cooperation activities in each of the two bi-regional schemes, namely the Monitoring Committee for the Euro-Med cooperation (MoCo) and the Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan countries. In addition to the EU Member States and the countries in the respective regions, the European Commission was one of the key actors in the establishment of the two Platforms, and currently is a full member and a key player. Moreover, the European Commission is supporting the functioning of the two Platforms through dedicated projects under FP7 ('MIRA' and 'WBC-INCO.NET') that not only provide funds for the functioning of the Platforms but also for analyses and studies that feed the discussions in the Platforms.

Throughout the successive EU Framework Programmes dedicated funds were addressed to the two respective regions (and still are in FP7, but to a lesser extent). The content of the associated actions, as well as the ways of their implementation and

¹⁶ For further information see: <http://www.blackseascene.net>

¹⁷ For further information see: <http://www.blacksea-commission.org>

dissemination, are among the major items on the meeting's agenda of the two Platforms.

The two Platforms also devote efforts to create synergies with other than FP initiatives and instruments of the EU, such as MEDA, IPA and ENPI but with limited success. Finally it is worth noting that despite the numerous bilateral cooperation programmes that exist between many EU MS and countries in the respective regions, these programmes have never been systematically addressed by the Platforms.

6.2 Intraregional schemes

The two other examined regional cooperation schemes are typically intraregional.

The '**Nordic cooperation**' in research exclusively involves EU Member States and Associated countries. It is a long lasting cooperation that developed its own research programme (BONUS) funded through contributions of the participating countries. A specific secretariat exists for the programme, which is governed by a Steering Committee involving the participating countries. The European Commission is not part of the Committee.

The '**Black Sea Economic Cooperation**' (BSEC) is a political and economic organization of 12 countries around the Black Sea, in which three EU Member States and one Associated Country participate. Science and Technology is among the priorities of the cooperation and therefore a specific Working Group on Cooperation in S&T exists. In addition to the BSEC Member States, the European Commission participates in this WG as an observer.

The BSEC developed its own fund (the Project Development Fund – PDF) as a 'real common pot' for the support of joint activities in the form of small feasibility studies. This fund is not dedicated to S&T but several projects in that field benefited from it until now.

However, the numerous bilateral cooperation programmes that exist between the countries of the region are not addressed by the BSEC Platform.

There are no specific activities of the Framework Programme addressing BSEC but ongoing projects of 'horizontal' (i.e. non-thematic) character are encompassing most of the BSEC Member States. Among them the following activities can be mentioned:

- The **IncoNet EECA** project, which includes policy dialogue activities between the EU and the 'broader Black Sea region' (i.e. up to Central Asia) and few activities dedicated to BSEC;
- The **BS-ERA.NET** project, which has as a key objective the launching of a joint call for proposals, dedicated to joint research projects.

Another intraregional initiative that should be mentioned here is the project SEAS-ERA.NET funded under FP7 (in the Environment Theme). It includes the four following

Sea Basins: Mediterranean, Baltic, Atlantic, and Black Sea. Within the Black Sea part of the project it is intended to develop a joint programme dedicated to environmental topics. This is a similar initiative constituting a cooperation opportunity.

6.3 Conclusions

A formal bi-regional policy dialogue platform EU – Black Sea Region, similar to the MoCo and to the Steering Platform on Research for the WBC, does not exist. Such a Platform involving representatives of the respective research administration organisations could be very beneficial for the S&T cooperation in general and, moreover, for the launching of a joint call that demands an increased coordination and commitment.

Since the establishment of such a Platform is currently not envisaged, synergies with the existing structures and in particular with the BSEC Working Group on cooperation in S&T, could be an option to be explored.

The BS-ERA.NET consortium already made a first step in opening the collaboration and exchanging information with two main initiatives:

- ERA.Net RUS (by fulfilling in close collaboration some of the project activities, such as exchanging and collecting information on the national R&D programmes);
- BSEC (by involving the Deputy Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS in the project activities as a member of BS-ERA.NET Advisory Board).

Other possible synergies will be analysed and developed during the project lifetime:

- Information of the BSEC Working Group on cooperation in S&T about the envisaged launching of a joint call;
- Meeting of Joint BSEC Working Group on cooperation in S&T / BS-ERA.NET / joint call stakeholders at the margin of the formal Working Group or BS-ERA.NET meetings.

At a more operational level, and in particular in view of the launching of the joint call, the exploration of the following possibilities could be of interest:

- Participation of the BSEC Project Development Fund (PDF) in the joint call;
- Participation of the BSEC Hellenic Development Fund in the joint call;
- Participation of the Black Sea Trust (BST) in the joint call.

For the exploration of such synergies and possible joint actions, close coordination with the BSEC Country Coordinator for S&T should be established. Since during the next four years, the Hellenic Republic and Turkey will act as Country Coordinators for S&T through research administrations/institutions that are also partners in the BS-ERA.NET project (GSRT and TUBITAK respectively), such coordination can be highly facilitated. In addition, the International Centre for Black Sea Studies, another BS-ERA.NET

partner, in its capacity as BSEC related body can be instrumental in the development of synergies.

ANNEX

A: Steering Platform scope (as of 3rd Meeting of the Steering Platform in Thessaloniki (Greece) on October 29, 2007 was the adoption of Guidelines for the work of the Platform.

Preamble

In the context of the Communication “The EU and the Western Balkans: strengthening stability and prosperity” (Com (2006) 27 final of 27.1.2006) of the European Commission, and as a follow-up to the EU-Balkan Countries Action Plan on S&T adopted at the Ministerial Conference in Thessaloniki in 2003 and endorsed by Ministers at the General Affairs Council in March 2006, the Steering Platform (“the Platform”) plays a central role in stimulating, monitoring, and supporting the cooperation in research and technological development between the countries of the European Union (EU 27), associated countries to the Seventh European Framework Programme for RTD (FP7) and countries of the Western Balkans (WBCs).

The Western Balkan countries’ Ministries responsible for Science and Technology fully endorse this initiative of the European Commission, considering it a Forum of utmost importance for the accession and integration of the WBCs to the European Research Area.

Mission Statement

The Platform facilitates the interaction between the Western Balkan countries, the EU Member States, the candidate and potential candidate countries and other states associated to the Framework Programmes for RTD and the European Commission. Its main objective is to support the enhanced integration of the WBCs in the European Research Area. It is a strategic body to deal with European, multilateral and regional issues of Science and Technology policies in and with the WBCs. It acts as an information exchange centre, clearing house for joint ideas and activities, and coordination forum for needs, suggestions and proposals of the WBCs to the European Commission, the EU27, candidate and potential candidate countries and the countries associated to FP7 (AC) and vice versa. In this spirit, the Platform continues and intensifies the progress achieved under the EU-Balkan Countries Action Plan on Science and Technology.

Duration

The Platform shall continue until the accession of the Western Balkan countries to the EU.

Scope of the Platform

With a view to promoting the implementation and development of European research cooperation and thereby also supporting the technological and economic development in the Western Balkan Countries, the Platform will:

- Act as a forum for exchanging information and views, elaborating recommendations on the RTD policy and coordinating needs, suggestions and proposals in and towards the WBCs, especially regarding the Framework Programme;
- Monitor RTD policies and developments including interactions with innovation and higher education, and intervene with specific recommendations, if deemed necessary;
- Propose concrete actions to be taken in the context of furthering the EU-WBC cooperation on RTD and the bi- and multilateral cooperation activities;
- Identify issues of mutual importance to be addressed in the context of the Platform;
- Seek synergies with other instruments, organisations and stakeholders to strengthen the research capacity in the Western Balkan countries.

The procedural guidelines foresees some general provisions such as meetings twice a year, operation on consensus, use of English language, etc.

Membership

Members are the EU Member States, the Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries; the Countries associated to the 7th European Framework Programme (FP7) and the European Commission.

Nomination of delegates is made by the governments of the member states of the Steering Platform. The level of participation should be up to the governments. Government should nominate two persons committed to WBC issues (participation should depend on the agenda). The European Commission will be represented by a senior official from the Service responsible for international scientific cooperation between EU and WB countries. Other involved services of the European Commission will be associated where appropriate to the Commission's delegation.

In addition to the members the Steering Platform is open, ex officio, to the participation of a representative of the Information Office of the Platform / WBC-INCO.NET; and the Coordinator of the South-East European ERA-NET (SEE-ERA.NET).

The Steering Platform is also open to the participation upon invitation of the chairs of:

- Representatives from other organisations and stakeholders;
- Experts on a case-by-case basis.

Each member's delegation may be accompanied by experts.

The Platform should have in principle three Co-Chairs, the European Commission, one representing EU Presidency, another one from a Western Balkan country. In general, invitations will be issued by the hosting country in cooperation with the other co-chairs. The WBC Co-Chair will be nominated from the Western Balkan countries. Once designated, he/she should act in the general interest of the Platform and no longer as a country representative.

The task of the Co-Chairs is to co-prepare and conduct meetings and act as a moderator(s) for the discussions.

The Co-Chairs will call the meetings at least one month in advance.

Information and Reporting

The WBC-INCO.NET will provide extensively support in acting as a service platform and an operational arm of the Steering Platform.

Meetings

The Platform shall meet twice a year, preferably every 6 months. The dates and venue of meetings shall be set by the Platform at its preceding meeting (taking into account the WBC-INCO.NET logistics). The Platform may decide to convene additional ad hoc meetings whenever needed.

Meetings shall be typically hosted by the EU Presidency or a Western Balkan country, back to back to WBC-INCO.NET Steering Board meetings until this project will expire in 2011.

Agenda

The Agenda shall be proposed by the Co-Chairs. Any member/participant of the Platform may propose items for the agenda. The draft Agenda and any document related to a meeting of the Platform shall be sent to the members at least 2 weeks in advance. The Agenda shall be approved by the Platform at the beginning of each meeting.

Minutes

The minutes will be drafted in the framework of the WBC-INCO.NET project and proposed by the Co-Chairs. They shall summarise the discussions held and the conclusions, and shall list all proposals made as well as report shortly on previous

activities and the implementation of proposals still relevant. All members of the Platform will have the right to give feedback on the draft minutes within 2 weeks of receipt.

Cost of meeting

The Platform has no budget.

The members are responsible for meeting their travel and subsistence expenses of their delegates and their experts participating in a meeting of the Platform. Local organisational costs shall generally be covered by the host country.

Adopted at 3rd Steering Platform Meeting in Thessaloniki.