

# **2nd FOOD N CO Meeting Brussels, 10-13 July 2006**

**The work of a NCP organisation: Getting  
organised for European RTD cooperation**

**Manfred Horvat**

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# Contents Module 1

## A reminder: Guiding Principles for NCPs

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- **Cooperation between NCP networks**
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# **EU National Contact Points (NCPs)**

**Networks for Information and Assistance for  
Proposers in EU RTD Programmes**

**Guiding principles for setting up systems of  
National Contact Points (NCP systems) for the  
6th/7th EU Framework Programme on  
Research and Technological Development**

# Why EU RTD NCPs?

- **The EU RTD Framework Programme (FP)**
  - ⇒ is not just a funding scheme for EU RTD
  - ⇒ is an instrument supporting the EU R&T policies
  - ⇒ follows strategic objectives in selected areas
  - ⇒ applies specific rules
- **There is a need for information and assistance**
  - ⇒ for potential participants
  - ⇒ for contractors in ongoing EU projects
- **EU National Contact Points (NCPs)**
  - ⇒ established by national or regional authorities
  - ⇒ information and training by European Commission

# Basic Principles for the NCP System

- **Variety of architectures**
  - ⇒ centralised or decentralised systems
- **involving different actors**
  - ⇒ ministries, specialised agencies, universities, research centres, private consulting companies
- **assuring transparency & equal access**

## Unifying elements:

- **competence in all specialities of the EU FP**
- **coherence of approach**
- **high level of services**
- **networking at national and EU level**
- **contributing to European Research Area**

# Recommended tasks of NCPs

## Basic requirement:

- **Develop the client base!**

## Main tasks:

- **Informing, awareness raising**
- **advising and assisting**
- **training**
- **signposting**

# Informing, awareness raising

- **Circulate general and specific information**
  - ⇒ Calls for Proposals, possibilities and rules for participation
- **organise promotional activities with EC**
  - ⇒ infodays, seminars, conferences, newsletters, Web sites, fairs, etc.
- **raise awareness for general EU objectives**
  - ⇒ e.g. participation of women, science and society, science and ethics
- **raise awareness for other programmes**
  - ⇒ e.g. EUREKA, COST

# Advising, assisting, training

- **Explain the modalities for participation**
  - ⇒ new and traditional funding schemes
- **advise on administrative & contractual issues**
  - ⇒ responsibilities of partners, costs, rights & obligations in consortium, IPR
- **assist in partner search**
  - ⇒ CORDIS partners, NCP network, IRC network
- **stimulate participation of new partners**
- **organise training seminars on EU RTD**
  - ⇒ for intermediaries and other different target groups
  - ⇒ on specific topics
- **advise in project management**

# Signposting

- **Inform Commission about planned NCP activities and events**
  - ⇒ involving Commission staff
- **signpost to other EU network services**
  - ⇒ e.g. IRCs, EICs
- **give feedback to the Commission**
  - ⇒ experiences from implementing FP6/FP7
- **signpost to national or regional funding and support organisations where appropriate**

# Target groups of NCPs

- **Companies - industry and SMEs**
- **universities**
- **non-university research organisations**
- **other organisations** (e.g. cities, regional authorities, hospitals, associations)
- **new actors, end-users and less-favoured regions**
- **intermediaries and multipliers**

# Characteristics of NCP organisation(s)

- **Becoming centre of expertise of EU RTD**
- **independency and impartiality**
- **adequate human resources and equipment**
- **knowledge of the research landscape**
- **reaching the research community**
- **proactively providing services to all actors**
- **having skills in RTD management & financing**
- **becoming an active and accepted partner of the international system for partner search**
- **co-ordinating actors of the national system**

# Co-operation between networks

- **Co-operation with organisations in other countries, covering the same field of activity**
- **co-operation with other EU networks at national and regional level**

# Role of participating states

- **Setting up the structure of national system for information and assistance for EU RTD**
- **nominating organisation(s) of the system**
- **foreseeing a co-ordination mechanism**
- **following up NCP performance**

# Role of European Commission

- **Recognising NCPs as preferential contacts**
- **publishing NCP on CORDIS**
  - ⇒ <http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/ncp.htm>
- **information on work programmes, Calls, etc.**
- **training on themes & management**
- **organising awareness & information actions**
- **helping in partner search (e.g. CORDIS)**
- **supporting NCPs in promotion activities**
- **funding for special support measures**
- **promoting trans-national networking of NCPs**

# Quality of service, performance of NCPs

- **National/regional/institutional authorities monitor performance & quality of services**
- **transnational exchange of experiences and best practice**
- **benchmarking between NCPs**
- **twinning between newcomers and experienced NCPs**

# Contents Module 2

## Developing NCP Strategies

- **Defining NCP objectives & starting conditions**
- **Start up activities**
- **Strategic networking**
- **Annual planning and reporting**

## Defining NCP objectives, e.g.

- to support the implementation of the EU RTD Framework Programme in your country
- to enhance your country's participation in EU RTD activities
- to support the co-ordination of national and international research and technology activities and policies

# Identifying the starting conditions

- **Assessing the possible benefits from and potential for participation in FP7**
  - ⇒ Participation in EU RTD activities is not an aim in itself
  - ⇒ identify benefits for your possible participants
  - ⇒ identify the promising parts of FP7
  - ⇒ cross check with existing potential
- **Define target groups**
  - ⇒ institutions, persons
- **Check potential of available NCP staff**
  - ⇒ stay realistic ...

# Start up activities, e.g.

- **Staffing** and staff development
- **Developing the client base**
  - ⇒ defining target groups, identifying persons
- **developing a communication strategy**
  - ⇒ How to reach your clients
  - ⇒ choose the right formats of information
  - ⇒ stay realistic
- **Starting with core activities**
- **utilizing support from strategic partners**
  - ⇒ National and international networking

# Staffing and staff development

- **Assess knowledge, capabilities and skills of your staff - in the organisation & in the network**
  - ⇒ professional background
  - ⇒ practical experience
  - ⇒ development potential
  - ⇒ check conformity with NCP requirements
- **prepare a staff development plan**
  - ⇒ in house training
  - ⇒ training abroad
  - ⇒ staff placements in partner organisations
- **consider division of labour**
  - ⇒ develop specialisation

# Identifying target groups

- **Prepare a *draft* research and technology landscape**
  - ⇒ universities and non university research organisations
  - ⇒ innovative companies - large companies, SMEs
  - ⇒ other organisations (e.g. ministries, city or regional authorities, hospitals, technology centres)
- **identify possible „champions“**
  - ⇒ you need show cases!
- **identify existing proposers and successful partnerships in FP6**
  - ⇒ collect information on practical experience
  - ⇒ identify and analyse problems of proposers

# **Core strategies: Capacity building - developing the client Base**

## **Extending and nurturing the database:**

- **utilizing existing databases, catalogues and directories as well as insider knowledge of Economic Chambers, branch and sector organisations, universities, scientific societies and associations, etc.**
- **participants in information events, seminars, conferences, fairs and exhibitions**
- **Developing the client base has to remain a continuous effort!**

# Develop a communication strategy 1

- **How to best reach your target groups? Which communication means and channels to use?**
  - ⇒ homepage, email
  - ⇒ printed information
  - ⇒ information and training events
  - ⇒ individual advise
- **defining the format and level of information**
  - ⇒ what is needed and/or expected by the target audience
- **developing a realistic portfolio of communication means**
  - ⇒ in conformity with your personnel potential

# Develop a communication strategy 2

- **Get your information on CORDIS**
  - ⇒ [http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/third\\_countries.htm](http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/third_countries.htm)
- **Become visible as a possible partner country**
  - ⇒ website, e.g. Slovenia <http://www.rtd.si/eng/Default.asp>
- **utilize existing partnerships**
  - ⇒ universities, research organisations
  - ⇒ Other cooperation programmes
- **establish contacts to other NCPs**
  - ⇒ develop strategic partnership, twinning

# Starting core NCP activities

- **disseminating information** on EU & Int. RTD
  - ⇒ mailing information
  - ⇒ organising information days & training seminars
- **assistance & coaching for proposers**
  - ⇒ explaining basic principles of FP proposals
  - ⇒ checking project idea vs. Programme and Call
  - ⇒ ensuring eligibility (formal criteria)
  - ⇒ checking for clarity of presentation
  - ⇒ advice for fulfilling all evaluation criteria
- **monitoring the participation in the FP**

# Strategic networking

- **Partners at home**

- ⇒ ministries and other authorities
- ⇒ economic chambers or other representations
- ⇒ rectors conference, academy of sciences
- ⇒ universities, reesearch organisations and sci. societies
- ⇒ EU member states embassies in your country
- ⇒ individual experts, evaluators, etc.

- **Partners abroad**

- ⇒ European Commission, INCO Directorate, JRC, etc.
- ⇒ NCP partner organisations
- ⇒ partners of your national organisations: other collaborative programmes, partnership agreements, unilateral & bilateral government programmes
- ⇒ your country's embassies abroad

# Developing your network

- **Develop a spirit of collaborative learning and mutual support**
  - ⇒ make optimal use of scarce resources
- **start defining coordination and cooperation - division of labour**
  - ⇒ where to act individually, where in cooperation with other partners
- **define success as a success of the whole network**
- **organise everyday communication and regular meetings**

# Annual planning and reporting

- **Define activities**
  - ⇒ organisational and staff development
  - ⇒ developing the client base
  - ⇒ preparing and disseminating information
  - ⇒ organising events
  - ⇒ offering individual advise
- **develop a feedback and monitoring system**
  - ⇒ Collect client feedback regarding services
  - ⇒ prepare and analyse statistics on activities
  - ⇒ distinguish between inputs and outputs
  - ⇒ define indicators of success
  - ⇒ consider the most important results

## Summary 2

- **The EU FP is all about cooperation - at national and at EU level**
- **the EU FP is a complex system difficult to promote - but it pays off**
- **you have to get organised to become successful in the EU FP**
- **starting NCP activities in a newcomer country is hard work - but one mostly underestimates the potential and the benefits of EU RTD activities**
- **EU FP: the „avantgarde“ of international R&D cooperation**

# Contents Module 3

## Competence and Skills Requirements of NCPs

- **People - the basis of NCP success ...**
- **working at interfaces**
- **expertise and understanding**
- **communication!**
- **managing an interfacial organisation**

# An NCP organisation's success ...

... is based on excellent people with ...

- practical experience and expertise in R&D and/or business
- understanding innovation processes and the specific role of collaborative EU RTD activities
- research management and marketing knowledge, capabilities and skills
- business (SME!) & market insight/understanding
- communication skills, the ability to moderate meetings and to organise promotion actions

# **NCPs are working at interfaces**

**It is all about collaboration & communication!**

- **National - European - international**
- **nat. administration - European Commission**
- **government - private sector - intermediaries**
- **university - non-univ. research organisations - industry/SMEs – administration - others**
- **science and society**
- **gender issues**
- **Being strong and reliable in networking!**
- **Coping with the challenges of „intercultural“ management in the broadest sense!**

# Expertise of EU RTD activities

- **Understanding the basic EU policy principles**
- **knowing the structure and contents of FP6:**
  - ⇒ Framework programme, Specific Programme, Workprogrammes
- **knowing how the EU FP works:**
  - ⇒ Rules for Participation
  - ⇒ Calls for Proposals
  - ⇒ Evaluation and Selection
- **knowing „How to prepare proposal?“**
  - ⇒ Guide for Proposers, Evaluation manual, Model contract, IPR...
  - ⇒ Legal and financial issues
  - ⇒ project management

# Understanding research & innovation

- **Practical experience in academic or industrial research is a most valuable background**
- **having a strong interest in R&D & innovation**
- **knowing the national research landscape**
- **understanding the thinking of researchers in order to reach them - and to be accepted**
- **R&D and innovation as complex interactive processes - the role of collaboration**
- **understanding the importance of project management in collaborative R&D**

# **Creating awareness, providing information, training and advise**

## **It is all about communication!**

- **The only thing you can offer is competence: a balanced mixture of knowledge & personality**
- **you have to be able to transmit the basic messages and information in a clear way**
- **overcoming prejudices and mis-information**
- **reducing the complexity of the EU Framework Programme and making it „digestible“**
- **be prepared to listen and to respond sensibly to proposers and their ideas**

# Organising, marketing, promoting

## Managing an interfacial organisation

- **„Translating“ the complex EU RTD information**
  - ⇒ processing and editing, coping with „Euro-speech“
  - ⇒ preparing information material
- **organising information campaigns**
  - ⇒ utilizing different information channels
- **event management**
  - ⇒ small training seminars
  - ⇒ large conferences
- **efficient organisational & financial management**

# Summary

- **NCP work requires a spectrum of knowledge, capabilities and skills**
- **being competent regarding contents**
- **being convincing regarding communication**
- **being efficient regarding management**
- **becoming an accepted and respected expert and partner at national, European and international level**
- **being effective regarding national success in the EU RTD activities**

**Thank you for your attention!**

**Prof. Manfred Horvat**

**Vienna, Austria**

**Tel: +43 (0)664 4543 165**

**Email: [manfred.horvat@gmx.net](mailto:manfred.horvat@gmx.net)**