

Fact sheet

SEE-ERA.Net Plus

July 2009



Project Title: Further integrating key research institutions form Southeast Europe into the European Research Area

Web Page: www.see-era.net

Project Start: 01.04.2009

Project Duration: 46 months

Project Coordinator: Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI)

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Projectpartner

	Name	Acro- nym	Country
1	Centre for Social Innovation (Koordination)	ZSI	Austria
2	Federal Ministry of Science and Research	BMWF	Austria
3	Ministry of Education and Science	MOeS	Albania
4	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	MVP	Bosnia & Herzegovina
5	Ministry for Education and Science	MON	Bulgaria
6	Ministry of Science, Education and Sports	MZOS	Croatia
7	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	MAE	France
8	Ministry of Higher Education and Research	MESR	France
9	Federal Ministry of Education and Research	BMBF	Germany
10	Project Management Agency of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research at the German Aerospace Centre	PT-DLR	Germany
11	General Secretariat for Research and Technology	GSRT	Greece
12	Ministry of Education and Science	MON-MK	F.Y.R. of Macedonia
13	Ministry of Education and Science	MPIN	Montenegro
14	National Authority for Scientific Research	ANCS	Romania
15	Ministry of Science and Technological Development	MSTD	Serbia
16	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology	MHST	Slovenia
17	The Scientific and Technological Research Council	TÜBITAK	Turkey

General information about ERA-NETs

ERA-NETs are one of the instruments of the European Commission to stimulate the cooperation of research funding institutions or programme managers. The objective of the instrument is to strengthen the coordination of research activities of the EU Member States and the countries associated to the European Framework Programme for Research to overcome the fragmentation of the European Research Area. The participants of ERA-NETs are ministries, research funding agencies or programme managers that coordinate national or regional programmes (e.g. project management agencies).

The ERA-NET instrument exists since the 6th Framework Programme (2002-2006), under which 71 (thematic) ERA-NETs were supported. Only a few ERA-NETs are horizontal, i.e. international ERA-NETS that target the cooperation with a selected third country.

An ERA-NET can include the following activities:

- Systematic exchange of information and best practices with the aim of enhancing the communication between the project partners.
- Strategically targeted activities that develop an evaluation of the options and barriers for cooperation and lead to the development of complementarities and joint objectives of national and regional research projects.
- Implementation of joint activities (e.g. clustering of nationally and regionally financed research programmes), utilization of multinational evaluation processes, joint training measures or the mutual opening of national infrastructures.
- Transnational research activities, e.g. the formulation of joint strategies and work programmes or the implementation of joint calls for research funding. National funding sources of different Member States can be pooled for this.

In the 7th Framework Programme (2007-2013) ERA-NETs were developed further to ERA-NETs PLUS, for which a common funding pot should be established and additional funding can be obtained from the European Commission ('top-up funding' for joint calls).

Project description

SEE-ERA.NET PLUS is based on the ongoing SEE-ERA.NET project and its Regional Programme for Cooperation with South-East Europe (ReP-SEE), which was developed to enhance S&T cooperation with the Western Balkan Countries (WBC).

In essence, SEE-ERA.NET PLUS is the next step in further integrating the Western Balkan Countries (WBC) and its key research communities into the European Research Area (ERA). It will further enhance the coordination of bilateral R&D cooperation with the WBC and lift it up to an activity at European level. By joining forces and by pooling financial resources, the SEE-ERA.NET PLUS consortium will bring critical mass to bear. The SEE-ERA.NET PLUS consortium consists of seventeen partners from fourteen different countries (Austria, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Turkey). It involves the relevant R&D programme owners from the involved countries, which are ministries or agencies responsible for science, technology and/or research. SEE-ERA.NET PLUS supports:

- Executing R&D with WBC following strategic priorities at European level;
- Continued integration of bilateral RTD initiatives into multilateral, jointly agreed, activities with high synergetic impact;
- Reducing duplication of effort across Europe, and avoiding development of unnecessary parallel solutions;
- Strengthening research communities from new Member States and WBC and preparing them for participation in FP7;
- Satisfying the need for R&D cooperation in the SEE region, as proven by huge interest in the Pilot Joint Call of SEE-ERA.NET.

Objectives of SEE-ERA.NET PLUS

The main objective of SEE-ERA.NET PLUS is to launch and implement one joint call for trans-national research proposals, thereby supporting the implementation of the first pillar of ReP-SEE. With a call budget of currently approximately EURO 3.5 Mio, it is planned to fund around 20 transnational research projects in the SEE-region.

Specific scientific priorities will be chosen for the scope of the call, based on the regional collaboration needs of the participating countries and considering the priorities of the 7th EU Framework Programme on Research and Technological Development (FP7). A careful se-

lection of scientific priorities will help to combine the two goals of enhancing cooperation with the WBC on the one hand and of fostering scientific excellence on the other.

Active cooperation of the International Bureau

- Drafting the concept of the joint call for proposals (development of the administrative procedures and the selection of the thematic areas for the call)
- Since the Call Secretariat is located at PT-DLR, PT-DLR and BMBF are responsible for the implementation of the Joint Call

Status and interim project results

The pre-announcement of the Joint Call has been published. Please visit <http://plus.see-era.net/pjc/index.html> for details

Jan - Oct 06: Preparations for the first call for proposals (SEE-ERA.NET Pilot Joint Call)

- **Joint Implementation Agreement (IA)** on the Pilot Joint Call (PJC) for RTD proposals incl a joint funding and (peer) reviewing strategy → **dedicated to scientific excellence**
- **All 14 participating countries sign** the IA and agree to participate in the PJC with national contributions (the original plan was that only a few countries join in with moderate financial contributions)
- **International call for tender** → technical assistance for the Pilot Joint Call (**PJC**) - **Central Administrative Body (CAB)**:
 - Programming of an **online Project Application Management Tool**
 - **Development of a new evaluators' database** ◊ for further use, but restricted access to the SEE-ERA.NET project partners' peer review activities
 - External administrative support for **transparent and fair assessment procedures** (peer review: project proposals)

Nov 06 – Aug 08: The SEE-ERA.NET Pilot Joint Call

- PJC launch in Nov; the call was open until end of March
- The SEE-ERA.NET National Contact Point system: **NCP training** with representatives of the Central Administrative Body
- Thematic conferences as **networking opportunities for researchers from 14 European countries** before the deadline, organised in three West Balkan countries
- **Evaluators' database** (peer review of the PJC applications):
- registration of **1262 evaluators**, of whom **580 match** the keywords of the PJC
- June 07: **Decision on the evaluated proposals**: Meeting of the Steering Board in Brussels
- 321 eligible proposals after first check from 1437 research teams (oversubscription)
- Funding of **26 research and networking projects, and 5 summer schools**
- Monitoring of project results by Aug 08 (external expert)

March 07 – Sep/Oct 08: The SEE-ERA.NET White Paper and the Joint Action Plan

- **BALKAN MISSION**: lobbying missions in the 6 Western Balkan countries and in the EC for the **White Paper, Joint Action Plan** & and the Regional programme **ReP-SEE**

◇ As part of the Joint Action plan: **Regional Programme for Cooperation with Southeast Europa (ReP-SEE):**

PILLAR I: Joint RTD projects: next call with approx €2.625 Mio national contributions*

PILLAR II: Accompanying Measures: to be developed in 2008/09

PILLAR III: Young Scientist Programme: to be developed in 2008/09

PILLAR IV: Innovation Programme

November 08 – August 09: **Implementation of a Pilot Regional RTD Programme**

Funding of cooperation projects with Southeast Europe

Through the first SEE-ERA.NET "Pilot Joint Call for Research Proposals" more than 160 research teams from all participating countries in 32 selected projects will receive funding for cross-national research and networking.

The projects involve three thematic areas:

- o Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology; sub area: Sustainable production and management of biological resources from land, forest and aquatic environments
- o Information and Communication Technologies; sub area: Applications Research
- o Environment; sub area: Environmental Technologies

This call is funded by national contributions from the 14 participating countries (Austria, Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia).

321 eligible project proposals involving 1437 research teams were submitted until the deadline for the call on March 31, 2007, including 739 teams from the Western Balkan countries. This clearly shows the need but also the potential for more scientific cooperation with the Western Balkan countries.

For more details and statistics of the call please take a look at: <http://www.see-era.net/pjc/index.html>).

Finally 26 research and networking projects and 5 summer schools have been funded under the Pilot Joint Call of SEE-ERA.NET

These encouraging results are one reason for the development of a new research-funding programme - the Regional Programme for Cooperation with South-East Europe - ReP-SEE. This programme will provide several calls for proposals with increased budget for funding scientific cooperation in the EU and the Western Balkan countries.