

Fact sheet

SEE-ERA.Net

July 2009



Project Title: Southeast European Era-Net
Web Page: www.see-era.net
Project Start: 01.09.2004
Project Duration: 60 months
Project Coordinator: Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI)
Contact Person in the IB: Ralf Hanatschek (ralf.hanatschek@dlr.de)

Projectpartner

	Name	Akronym	Land
1	Centre for Social Innovation (Koordination)	CSI	Austria
2	Ministry for Science and Research	BMWF	Austria
3	Ministry for Education and Science	MON	Bulgaria
4	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	MAE	France
5	National Centre for Scientific Research	CNRS	France
6	International Bureau of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research at the German Aerospace Centre	PT-DLR	Germany
7	General Secretariat for Research and Technology	GSRT	Greece
8	National Office of Research and Technology	NKTH	Hungary
9	National Authority for Scientific Research	MECT	Romania
10	Ministry for Education, Science and Sport	MSZS	Slovenia
11	Ministry of Science, Education and Sports	MZOS	Croatia
12	Ministry of Education and Science	MON-MK	F.Y.R. of Macedonia
13	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina	MVP	Bosnia & Herzegovina
14	Ministry of Education and Science	MPIN	Montenegro
15	Federal Ministry of Education and Research	BMBF	Germany
16	Ministry of Education and Science	MASH	Albania
17	Ministry of Science and Technological Development	MS	Serbia

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

The objectives of SEE-ERA.NET are

- to enhance research cooperation in Europe by fostering integration of Southeast Europe into the growing European Research Area
- to add value to existing bilateral S&T agreements through multilateral coordination
- to improve interregional research cooperation following the principles of the Stabilisation and Association Process in Southeast Europe
- to contribute to the EU-Balkan countries Action Plan in Science & Technology adopted at the Thessaloniki Ministerial Conference in 2003

Active cooperation of the International Bureau

Together with the BMBF the International Bureau is the leader of work package 4 which aims at the “Discussion and Identification of Strategic Initiatives” In this context the International Bureau successfully drafted the concept of the joint call for proposals by developing the administrative procedures and selecting of the thematic areas for the call. In addition a White Paper and an Action Plan have been developed. The White Paper gives strategic recommendations for connecting the research systems of Southeast Europe to the European Research Area by indentifying opportunities for developing S&T policy strategies, fostering of institutional reforms, institution building and infrastructure development in the Western Balkan countries

Status and interim project results

Sept 04 – Dec 05: Information exchange on

- Existing uni- and bilateral funding programmes and agreements incl the evaluation of their Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT analysis)
- The research capacity of the West Balkan region and the SEE collaboration needs between all the participating SEE-ERA.NET partners

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.

Source: International Bureau of the Federal Ministry for Education and Science (BMBF)