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Factsheet: International participation in Horizon 2020

A key element of Horizon 2020

International cooperation in EU research and innovation programmes is important in order to strengthen the EU's excellence in research, to tackle global challenges jointly and to support EU external policies. International cooperation will be promoted under Horizon 2020.

Many of our international partner countries are investing more and more in research and innovation and cooperation will help European research to reach full potential. Active and more strategic international cooperation on research will also contribute to achieving EU policy objectives.

A new international strategy

Funding for international cooperation will be more focussed to:

- promote competitiveness;
- target 'Societal Challenges' identified in Horizon 2020; and,
- support external European policies.

The new international cooperation strategy will differentiate between three country groupings:

- industrialised and emerging economies (which will only receive funding under specific conditions);
- enlargement and neighbourhood countries [eligible for automatic funding] and,
- developing countries (eligible for automatic funding).

Association Agreements

Association to the Framework Programme has been an important feature of international research cooperation. This is the closest form of cooperation, which has been implemented with some non-EU European countries. It involves formal participation in the programme and a financial contribution to the budget. In return organisations and researchers in the country have equal rights to participation as their EU counterparts.

Association will continue to be important in Horizon 2020, but does not continue automatically with countries that were associated to the current Framework Programme 7 (FP7). Association agreements must be renegotiated under Horizon 2020. These will be targeted at future EU candidate countries and other countries close to the EU.

International Cooperation under FP7

Cooperation with third countries has been an important element of the Framework Programmes so far. Currently third countries account for some 6% of partners in FP7 and the top international partner countries are the USA and the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa).

Top participating international countries in FP7 to date		
Country	Number of organisations in successful FP7 projects	EU funding
Russia	452 organisations in 281 projects	€54.9 million
USA	369 organisations in 287 projects	€36.4 million
India	254 organisations in 164 projects	€34.6 million
China	369 organisations in 237 projects	€30.1 million
South Africa	195 organisations in 158 projects	€27.5 million
Brazil	235 organisations in 166 projects	€26.5 million

International dimension of the European Research Council ([ERC](#))

The European Research Council (ERC) gives research grants to the very best, creative researchers of any nationality, age and theme to work in Europe. One of the ERC's objectives is to fight the 'brain drain – retain excellent European researchers and attract the best talent worldwide. Top researchers of any nationality can therefore carry out their ERC-funded research, as long as they are based in Europe or in any of the associated countries.

After seven completed calls, over 2,200 researchers are being funded by the ERC, including some 144 nationals of a non-ERA country (6.4 per cent of the total – ERA countries are Member States or those associated to the programme). The high-quality of the ERC's evaluation procedures also relies on top-level international peer reviewers, with more than 12 per cent of them from non-ERA countries.

The ERC is planning an international strategy for 2012 to further improve Europe's attractiveness for researchers from all over the world. Some of the measures implemented in the past include extra funding for researchers moving from a non-EU country (additional €500000 euro for Starting Grantees and €1 million for Advanced Grantees). Also, one or several team members can be based in a non-EU country if justified by the project.

Marie-Curie Actions help to enhance international cooperation

The Marie-Curie Actions promote inter-sectoral and international mobility and knowledge-sharing. They equip researchers with entrepreneurial and innovation skills for the labour market. By attracting non-European researchers, they also enhance international cooperation. Marie Curie Actions will continue to facilitate the mobility and exchanges of researchers and innovation staff between EU and non-EU universities, research institutions, companies and other actors. The programme, open to researchers of any nationality and to organisations located in any country of the world, allocated 25%-30% of its budget to the International dimension in the 7th Framework programme, allowing the training and career development of researchers from more than 120 different nationalities, 25% of them being non-EU researchers coming to Europe.