

Project no.:

Project acronym: **FOOD-N-CO**

Project title: **Cooperation Network of National Contact Points with a special focus on Third Countries in the areas of Food Quality and Safety and Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology**

Instrument: **Specific Support Action**

Thematic Priority: **TP5 – Food Quality and Safety**

Deliverable 6

Report based on the Questionnaires on problems, needs, ICP structure and experience regarding the participation of INCO-countries in Food research

Due date of deliverable: **Month 3**

Actual submission date: **Month 3**

Start date of project: **February 1st, 2006**

Duration: **3 years**

Organisation name of lead contractor for this deliverable: **Partner 12, Ministry of Scientific Research, Technology and Development of Competency, Tunisia**

Project co-funded by the European Commission within the Sixth Framework Programme (2002-2006)		
Dissemination Level		
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)	

I. Basic information on the ICP organization

The formal tasks of the representative organisations are very spread in general, covering all research development aspects, particularly collaboration, information and relation with European research projects.

The staff situation of the ICP varies between no directly involved in the ICP and some person with different specificity and few time was reserved to tasks related to the contact point.

The infrastructure is formed at least by one computer with internet access, and individual e-mail address.

The principally used tools to provide information about European research cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology are the organizations' website and their mailing lists. In addition, some ICPs have the capacity to organize information days.

Generally, statistics are not part of the service provided by the Contact Point.

Only in South Africa exists national incentives to support researchers to submit proposals to the EU Framework Programme.

The assistance provided regarding the EU FPs concerns most of the aspects cited under question 8 in the Inventory of Learning Needs, however, cost-planning, help with the contract negotiation, preparing reports and maintaining contact with the Commission on behalf of the clients are the less developed areas where more experience is needed.

Apart from the participating INCO organizations there are no other organizations in the country that deal with the Framework Programme except for some universities and research centres that participate indirectly in the Framework Programme.

Many of the INCO partners could mention at least one person from their country who has been involved as evaluator during FP5/FP6, a few ICPs have been personally participated as evaluators..

Based on the information provided by the ICPs it can be stated that there are significant differences between the INCO organizations. However, in general it can be stated that there is a need to have specialised permanent staff dedicated to the ICP role with well-equipped offices.

II. Networking

Contacts and international network is relatively developed and cover all levels.

The information obtained by question 11 if any national researchers have participated in FP Food Agriculture and Biotechnology appeared not exhaustive and elaborated and may be need directly communication from EU to ICP. Only Chinese ICP, which was well equipped, provided a precise information.

Not all INCO countries have well developed information flows both at national and international level.

The National and International information flow was more developed to scientists and R&D institutions thus R&D or industrial associations, groupings in the food area and Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) appeared less contacted.

The most important information sources regarding the EU Framework Programme are the Cordis Website, maintaining contacts with EC officers and NCPs of EU/ non EU countries, participating at conferences, browsing newsletters, networking with partners in FQS projects, personal contacts, R&D partners and emails alerts.

90% of the information disseminated by the ICPs is electronic. All participant countries have national research programmes or specific research project in the area of Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology.

Independently with developed contact with international networks; the national information about Food Agriculture and Biotechnology needs a big effort to be available. Thus, contact will be developed and encouraged with all participants mainly with industrial associations, groupings in the food area and (SMEs).

III. Inventory of learning needs

The following issues: legal issues, IPR issues, EU added value, Ethics, Gender and using of software tools provided by EC (CPF Editor, EPPS, etc.) need training to ameliorate the knowledge of the ICP representatives..

The preferred types of capacity building are good practise examples of the work of European organisations dealing with the FPs; workshop-type training by experienced FOOD-N-Co partners; practical exercises and exchange of experience with FOOD-N-Co project partners.

The ICPs need to deepen their knowledge in all the important fields that is advisable for them to better accomplish their role as an ICP. The highlighted fields are consortium building, proposal preparation, negotiation issues, project management, legal and financial issues, contractual issues and any specialities FAB of the thematic priority.

The preferred types of network building are information days with the participation of EU researchers and visiting EU governmental organizations in the FQS/ FAB area and EU R&D institutions.

The mostly mentioned services that ICPs would like to offer to researchers and industry are sensitising about the added value to participate in the EU research projects; disseminating actual information on priority areas, on types of instruments used, assistance in partner search and project preparation by explaining the procedures and rules of participation in FPs. ICPs are also interested to be trained on how to manage a project once it is approved, mainly from the financial point of view through info days, training sessions, and establishing national liaison officers' network. Furthermore, they are interested in the issue of early warning regarding call information and better knowledge of consortia development.

The effectiveness in FP advisory activities could be increased if the ICP would be well informed and trained about the rules, procedures and partner search. The coordination between NCPs/ICPs and research organisations/ universities/ SMEs could be improved by frequent training of ICPs/NCPs in order to have available, well-organized and structured information.

ICPs would need to be provided by better access to information on opportunities, networking with European NCPs needs to be improved. by focussed and target training on managing.

ICPs need more resources and capacity building (more training on financial and legal issues) to be able to establish an infrastructure counting, at least, with one full time administrative person.

In other remarks, the ICP hopes to well understand all the procedures for participating in the FPs by training of local researchers and the production of appropriate of information materials; and expect to get more knowledge and experience by participating in this project.

In addition certain aim is to develop better systems in order to enable the Third Countries to play a greater role in shaping the FPs.

The inventory shows that knowledge on important issues such as legal, IPR, EU added value, ethics, gender and software tools is significantly low, therefore they require considerable efforts to reach an acceptable level. At the same time knowledge on consortium building,

proposal preparation, negotiation issues and project management is almost insufficient to allow an efficient ICP activity, particularly in FP advisory and coordination of the different contributors to Food Agriculture and Biotechnology projects (research organisations, universities, industrial associations, SMEs...).