




EU-EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA - Gateway for ICT Research and Innovation

Welcome!

Dear Reader,

We are very pleased to introduce you to the first issue of the EECA Newsletter!

Through our portal www.eeca-ict.eu and this periodic Newsletter we will keep you informed about our progress.

Thank you for your interest in our work!



EECA-2-HORIZON Coordinator
Kostas Bougiouklis
bougiouklis@qplan.gr



EAST-HORIZON Coordinator
Raphael Koumeri
rcoum@planet.gr

The effort to enhance EU-EECA R&I collaboration in ICT

Over the last few years, the European Commission has undertaken particular efforts to bring closer the scientific and industrial communities from the European Union and the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) countries and strengthen their cooperation. In the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) a number of Support Actions have been funded under FP7 putting the centre of gravity on reinforcing Research, Development & Innovation strategic partnership between the EU and the EECA region.

Two new complementary projects, EAST-HORIZON and EECA-2-HORIZON, are now leading the way in this area. Funded under the FP7-ICT programme, they form a Cluster whose aim is to exploit the legacy of the previous initiatives and further enhance EU-EECA collaboration in the field of ICT, especially within the new EU framework for international collaboration for Research and Innovation, HORIZON 2020.

What does the Cluster do?

The Cluster focuses on highlighting and promoting emerging opportunities for international collaboration under R&I programmes funded by the European Commission (i.e. HORIZON 2020) and EECA countries. This approach has two related goals:

1. To stimulate innovative technological and industrial groundbreaking ideas and concepts that will meet current and future needs on a global scale, and
2. On the basis of these ideas, to nourish partnerships between EU and EECA ICT actors.

Four (4) ICT sub-areas are targeted, which aim to strengthen collaboration with relevant European Technology Platforms (ETPs), and will be at the center of the Cluster activities:

1. Photonics
2. High Performance Systems
3. Big Data, Software and Services
4. Interactive Content, Media and Creative industries

How does the Cluster work?

The Cluster partners will focus their efforts to:

1. Increase awareness on emerging opportunities for international cooperation under both EU and EECA R&I programmes
2. Link and bring together leading ICT research and industrial actors from both regions in areas of mutual interest and added value for EU - EECA cooperation
3. Support the policy dialogue and cooperation between the EU and EECA countries, contributing to the setting up of joint initiatives and enhancing their ICT RDT&I collaboration.

These efforts entail various actions such as workshops, networking events, training seminars, etc. and tools, such as an informative website, helpdesk, on-line database of EECA ICT actors' R&I profiles etc.

What are the Cluster's expectations?

The conclusion of the project is expected to lead to increased awareness concerning the Horizon 2020 programme, an increased number of submitted proposals and above all, synergies between industry and Research communities from both the EU and the EECA that will transform into strategic partnerships.






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EAST-HORIZON TRAINING & INFORMATION EVENTS

What are EAST-HORIZON training & information events?

The EAST-HORIZON project is organising open training and information events in East European and Central Asian countries (EECA). The goal of these training workshops is to introduce to all interested parties - representatives of companies, universities and research institutes, organizations etc. – the European Research and Innovation programme Horizon 2020 and provide information on the opportunities in the ICT field offered by the programme, by describing step by step the necessary procedures in order to submit a proposal.

In order to meet participant needs, EAST-HORIZON training workshops feature two parts. The first part is dedicated to providing information on Horizon2020 opportunities as well as administrative and financial issues. The second part focuses on developing, discussing and evaluating participants' proposal ideas and supporting networking among researchers in specific objectives of HORIZON 2020 related to open calls.



Cluster Training Workshop scheduled/organized

[Georgia, Tbilisi, 11-12/09/2014](#)

[Moldova, Chisinau, 15-16/09/2014](#)

[Ukraine, Kyiv, 18-19/09/2014](#)

[Belarus, Minsk, 23-24/09/2014](#)

[Armenia, Yerevan, 30/09-01/10/2014](#)

[Kazakhstan, Almaty, 23-24/10/2014](#)

[Russia, Moscow, 27-28/10/2014](#)

[Azerbaijan, Baku, 14/11/2014](#)

Uzbekistan, Tashkent, "Date soon to be announced"

Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek, "Date soon to be announced"



Training Workshops conducted so far

Several Workshops have already been successfully held by EAST-HORIZON, and more are scheduled to follow. The Project's aim is to provide information on the HORIZON 2020 programme to as many people as possible.

Regarding the events already held attendance was high, with participants from various fields, including academic institutions and organisations, private companies, SMEs, NGOs, being introduced to Horizon 2020 potential opportunities. Participants had the opportunity to become familiar with the overall programme (structure, goals, rules and requirements) and to express their concerns, ideas and questions regarding proposal structure and submission. They also had the chance to interact with other participants and European experts, thus making a useful first step in terms of networking and partnership.

In addition, during the events, participants had the opportunity to present their ideas, thus creating room for further dialogue and allowing trainers to understand the participants' main worries and difficulties concerning Horizon 2020. This feedback will allow future workshops to be more focused on those parts which seem more complicated such as the concepts of collaboration and innovation.






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1st EAST-HORIZON training workshop, Tbilisi, Georgia

The EAST HORIZON training workshop, took place on the 11th and 12th of September 2014 at the premises of the Tbilisi State University (TSU).

The International Center for Advancement of Research Technology and Innovation – ICARTI, as a partner of EAST-HORIZON was responsible for the organization of the event at a local level. ICARTI prepared, in collaboration with EECA-2-HORIZON partners, the appropriate agenda and invitation for the event and made all relevant logistic arrangements.

Invitations were sent to 40 representatives from: the private and public sector, academia, EC NCPs in Georgia, Universities, Governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Also an invitation to the event was uploaded on the TSU website. Follow up and personal contact by the local partner ICARTI played an important role in stimulating interest in the project. Thirty-six people attended the training and received detailed information on the Horizon 2020 programme.

The Training Team, consisting of experienced trainers from PLANET S.A and European Experts from Athens Technology Center – ATC, chose to dedicate the first training day to the overall presentation of the programme (structure, goals and rules for participation) and to prepare participants for the proposal writing steps to follow. This was perceived as a valuable session since it gave participants a comprehensive and “easy-to-understand” introduction to the Horizon 2020 programme. Georgian participants showed great interest in the information shared and raised several interesting questions that created further discussions with the trainers.

Focus on the second day shifted from the trainers to the participants, as they had the opportunity to present their ideas to the trainers.

The presentation of the ideas and the discussion around these ideas was mostly anticipated by the participants. Participants felt they received specific and solid information which met their personal needs, in order to proceed with their idea and proposals. On the other hand the trainers were able to locate the most difficult areas of the procedure applicants were facing.

Immediate feedback and questionnaire results gathered after the workshop demonstrated that the Training was very successful, raising questions of great interest, providing information on many important Horizon 2020 topics and bringing people with the similar interests together.

The next step, in terms of local activities, will be a follow up event that will give participants the opportunity to showcase their progress in forming ideas, approaching partners and drafting proposals.

1st EECA Cluster networking event - ICT Communities meeting

Where: Baku, Azerbaijan

When: 12 November 2014

The event will focus on specific ICT sub-areas of mutual interest for in R&I collaboration among research and industrial teams from the EU and the EECA countries, namely:

- Big Data, Software and Services
- Interactive Content, Media and Creative industries
- High Performance Systems

The objectives of the event are:

- To set up an open discussion on R&I collaboration potential among EU and EECA actors, in areas of common interest: research/technological/market trends; emerging opportunities for collaboration; barriers and ways to overcome them, etc.;
- To arrange face-to-face meetings among key experts from the 2 regions to facilitate direct discussions on their R&I interest and expertise setting the framework for future collaboration.

More details on the event are available [here](#).






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ICT Info-Day 2014 (Information Event)

Where: Baku, Azerbaijan

When: 13 November 2014

This ICT Info-Day is an Information Day organised by the Commission and the EECA Cluster on Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2015 focusing on the field of Information & Communication Technologies. The aim of the event is to give the research community an overview of ongoing activities, and to support the preparation of proposals for the 2015 calls. Participation to the event is free, and the Event programme will be announced soon.

More details on the event are available [here](#).

EECA Cluster @ ICT Proposers' Day 2014

Where: Florence, Italy

When: 9-10 October 2014

This information and networking event focused on the Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2015 in the field of Information & Communication Technologies.

It offered an exceptional opportunity to meet potential collaborators and build partnerships as it will bring together academia, research institutes, industrial stakeholders, SMEs and government actors interested in HORIZON 2020 from all over Europe. It also allowed prospective applicants to attend relevant workshops and get information directly from the Commission.

The event included:

- Information sessions on how to prepare and submit a proposal
- Info stands providing information on the specific topics of the Work Programme 2015 and proposal drafting
- Networking sessions organised according to Work Programme 2015 topics where potential applicants can present their project ideas
- Meeting spaces for people interested in collaborating to hold meetings

More Information: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/ict-proposers-day-9-10-october-2014>

EECA Cluster @ NESSI Member's & International Day

Where: Barcelona, Spain

When: 20-21 November 2014

The EECA Cluster will be present at the NESSI Member's & International Day, which will be held in Barcelona on 21-21/11/2014. The purpose of this event is to set-up a "Proposal development & consortium formation" workshop in view of the H2020 calls closing in April 2015 with the aim of enhancing collaboration between NESSI members, other ETP members and also organisations from International Co-operation partner countries.

The event is aiming at an open dialogue to discuss and elaborate proposal ideas and start building proposals under the ICT topics identified. The event is expected to reinforce industrial cooperation and ICT research, development and innovation through a better networking between European ICT Technology Platforms and International Co-operation partner countries. More information about the event at <http://www.nessi-europe.eu/>

EECA Cluster @ NEM Summit

Where: Brussels, Belgium

When: 29-30 September 2014

The EECA Cluster was present in the NEM Summit which was held on September 29-30 in Brussels. The NEM Summit, organised every year since 2008 by the NEM Initiative in close cooperation with leading industrial and academic players worldwide, is the "not-to-be-missed" annual event for all those interested in Future Internet developments and in the fast paced evolution of the European media industry.

NEM is the Horizon 2020 European Technology Platform (ETP) dedicated to content, and the acronym's meaning has recently been changed to stand for "New European Media" (formerly "Network and Electronic Media"), with the strapline: "Connected media & content for innovation and creativity in digital Europe". More information at <http://nem-initiative.org/nem-summit/>




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In this newsletter and subsequent newsletters, we take the opportunity to introduce you to our EECA partners. In this issue we highlight the activities of The Agency of European Innovations (AEI) in Ukraine!



The non-governmental organisation Agency of European Innovations (<http://www.aei.org.ua>) is the leading research organisation in Ukraine that focuses on an increase in cooperation between Ukraine and EU in the areas of ICT, R&D, Renewable Energy, Agricultural, Food and Health within HORIZON 2020, ENI and others EU programmes.

The AEI supports Universities, RD&I Institutions, SMEs, governmental and local authorities in preparation and implementation of common international projects for the above mentioned cooperation programmes. AEI acts as the Regional Contact Point of Scientific-Technical Cooperation with the EU and the ICT&SME National Contact Point (NCP) of Ukraine.

AEI was founded in 2010 and is already a partner in a number of international projects. In addition to two FP7-ICT projects: PICTURE (Policy dialogue in ICT for Reinforced EU-EECA Cooperation, contract 288279) and EECA-2-HORIZON (EU-EECA cooperation and policy dialogue in ICT within the framework of HORIZON 2020, contract 610793), the Agency was involved as subcontractor in the FP7-INCO project START, boosting EU-Ukraine cooperation in the field of super-hard materials.

The AEI forms a circle of the most active RD&I organisations, SMEs and representatives of public authorities in Ukraine. Leading experts from Ukraine that have experience in FP6 and FP7 projects are members of the Agency of European innovations. Also, AEI performs a coordinating role within an ICT sub-group of the Ukrainian national technology platform "AGRO-FOOD".

One of the missions of the Agency is to strengthen cooperative research links – partnership building actions and advanced support services between European and Ukrainian organisations in ICT, and for the implementation of these activities within the new project EECA-2-HORIZON. Within EECA-2-HORIZON AEI is responsible for the:

- ✓ Organisation of 2 information days – 1 in the EU and 1 in the EECA region
- ✓ Organisation of Networking / Twinning events
- ✓ Final Dissemination Conference
- ✓ Effective cooperation of ICT Communities from EU/AS and EECA in the targeted ICT areas: to deepen and upgrade the operation of the PICTURE Working Groups

AEI understands the great potential of cooperation between the EU and Ukraine in the field of ICT and we are active participants in the dialogue on the formation of the initiative "Towards Harmonisation of Digital Markets (HDM) in the Eastern Partnership (EaP)". This aims at promotion of information society policies and capacity building in the EaP for creating interoperable cross-border services between the Eastern European partner countries and the EU. The primary goals are to build political support for a new Eastern Partnership initiative on Harmonising Digital Markets (HDM) and to identify a limited number of joint priorities as a basis for pilot projects.



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