



INTEGRATING-ACC

***Integrating the Associated Candidate Countries into the
6th Framework Programme
through networking activities and improved NCP services***

SIXTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME



Contract no°: 510433

SPECIFIC SUPPORT ACTION

**Specific Programme: Integrating the European Research Area
International Co-operation Activities (INCO)**

Final Activity Report

Period covered: from **1st April 2005** to **31st March 2006**

Start date of project: **1st April 2004**

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Publishable executive summary

Project Objectives

This Specific Support Action aimed to integrate the scientific community of the 10 New Member States and 3 Candidate Countries, (collectively referred to here as the “ACC”)¹ into the 6th Framework Programme. It focused in particular on the integration into the Integrated Projects, Specific Targeted Research projects and Networks of Excellence proposed to thematic priority 6 “Sustainable development, Global Change and Ecosystems” (SustDev) and mobilised the skills of SustDev NCPs from 21 countries.

National Contact Points promote the Framework Programme within their countries and are familiar with the barriers to participation in this programme since they have direct access to the scientific communities and to a large number of networks (e.g. national research programmes, networks of liaison officers in universities, research organisations, other NCPs, IRCs etc.).

To address this issue three types of support activity were carried out:

- active promotion of the research capacity of the New Member States and Candidate Countries (e.g. NCPs were invited to information days in other countries).
- analysis and reinforcement of the networking approach. The networking activities of the National Contact Points were reinforced both within the NCP network and with other networks of research players. The existing research networks in Europe were identified and their activities and practices analysed as was the cooperation between NCPs and networks.
- Improvement of the NCP services to overcome the barriers to participation in the 6th Framework Programme. This was done by analysing NCP practices across Europe and establishing Best Practice Guidelines.

The results of this Specific Support Action are applicable to all the NCPs of the thematic priorities and a comprehensive dissemination of the results was undertaken.

¹ This project started before the enlargement of the EU on the 1st May 2004. Therefore the 10 New Member States and 3 Candidate Countries were collectively referred to as the 13 Associated Candidate Countries “ACC” in all the documents produced by the project. For the sake of simplicity and coherence this terminology will be maintained throughout.

Contractors involved

The consortium is composed of 25 partners from 21 countries and is coordinated by the French Agency for the Environment and Energy Management, ADEME.

	Participant name	Participant short name	Country
1	French Agency for the Environment and Energy Management	ADEME	FRANCE
2	Innova S.p.A.	INNOVA	ITALY
3	Austrian Research Promotion Agency	FFG	AUSTRIA
4	National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology	NIMH-BAS	BULGARIA
5	University for National and World Economy	UNWE	BULGARIA
6	AgroBioInstitute	ABI	BULGARIA
7	Research Promotion Foundation	RPF	CYPRUS
8	Technology Centre AS CR	TC	CZECH REPUBLIC
9	Archimedes Foundation		ESTONIA
10	The Academy of Finland, Bioscience and Environment Research Unit	AKA	FINLAND
11	Réseau Scientifique et technique du Ministère de l'Équipement, des Transports, du Logement, du Tourisme et de la Mer	RST	FRANCE
12	Foundation for research and technology	HELP-FORWARD	GREECE
13	National Office for Research and Technology	NKTH	HUNGARY
14	The Israel - Europe R&D Directorate for the EU FP6	ISERD	ISRAEL
15	SPIE/Baltic	SPIE/Baltic	LATVIA
16	Agency for International Science and Technology development programmes	AISTDP	LITHUANIA
17	Malta Council for Science and Technology	MCST	MALTA
18	SenterNovem	SenterNovem	NETHERLANDS
19	Institute of Fundamental Technological Research	IFTR PAS	POLAND
20	Bostina and Associates Management Consulting	BAMC	ROMANIA
21	Ministry of Education and Research	MCT	ROMANIA
22	Technical University in Zvolen	TU	SLOVAK REPUBLIC
23	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology	MHEST	SLOVENIA
24	Spanish Ministry of Education and Science	MEC	SPAIN
25	The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey	TUBITAK	TURKEY

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Work performed and results achieved

Improving the NCP services through benchmarking

The services provided by a National Contact Point can help overcome many of the barriers to participation in the 6th Framework Programme. A major objective of the INTEGRATING-ACC project was therefore the improvement of the NCP services in the New Member States and Candidate Countries. This was done by conducting a benchmarking exercise.

First an analysis of how NCPs work was carried out. The figure below illustrates one of the results of this analysis: the process flow of NCP activity. It shows that the activity of a National Contact Point can be broken down into four phases: sourcing and networking, promoting the NCP services, providing the NCP services, improving the NCP services.

The best NCP practices in Europe were identified and four of them were chosen as benchmarks: sourcing and networking, proposal screening, training and integrating scientists into FP6 projects. These benchmarks were analysed in depth so that they could be transferred to other NCPs. The results were published as “Best Practice Guidelines” and widely disseminated. They were also presented during the final project review meeting in Brussels on 20th March 2006.

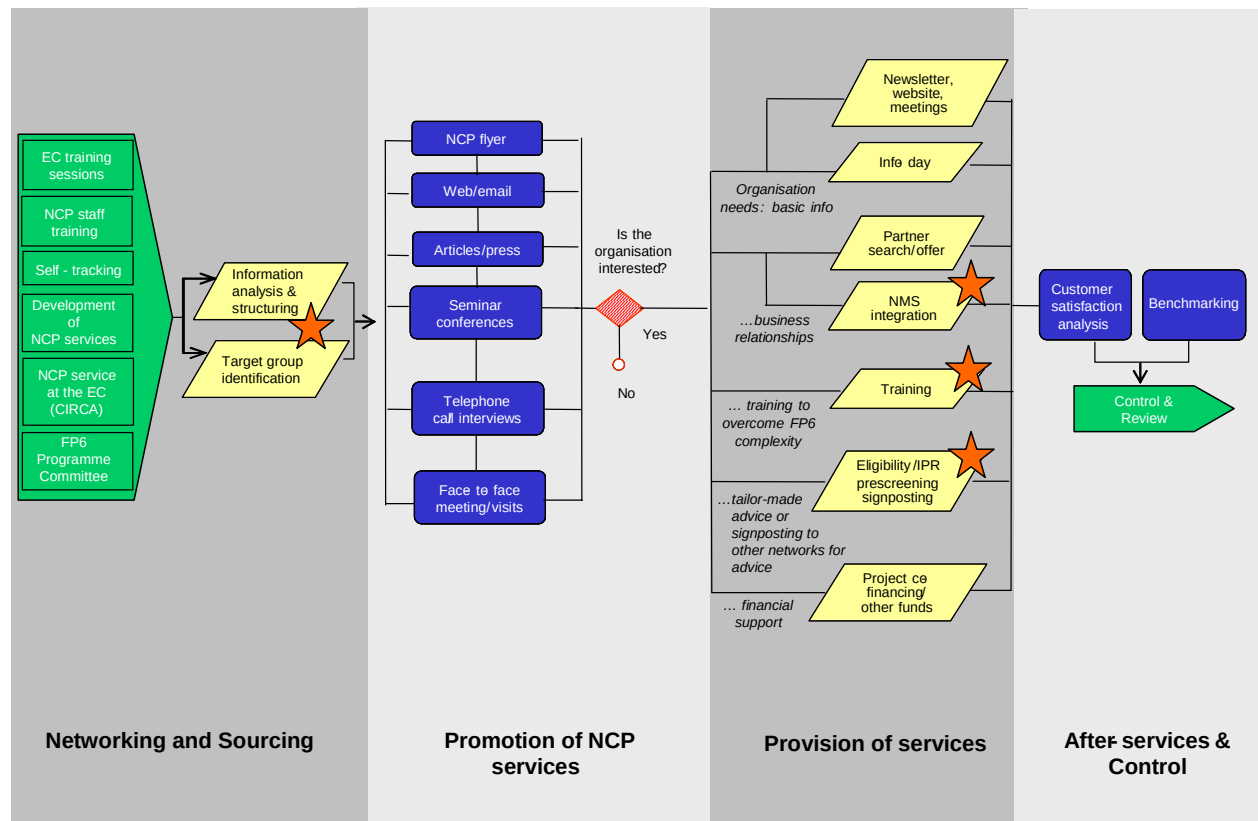


Figure 1. Process flow of National Contact Point activity

Promoting the research capacity of the New Member States and Candidate Countries

The research capacity of the New Member States and Candidate Countries is not always well known by the scientific communities of the EU-15 countries. The INTEGRATING-ACC consortium therefore carried out a number of promotional activities. These activities included: compiling

expressions of interest from their national research community and disseminating this information to the consortium and on a variety of web sites; creating dedicated web links on their respective web sites to the relevant information. In addition, 14 of the FP6 Information Days organised by the consortium during the life of the project were given an extra European dimension by inviting NCPs from other countries to give presentations about the research capacity in their country and be available for partner search queries.

Networking for integration

Networking is an essential component of scientific activity and actively participating in networks is the ideal means for rapid integration into a community. Recognising this, the INTEGRATING-ACC consortium carried out a survey of the networks relevant to priority 6 of the 6th Framework Programme. 283 networks were identified at National, European and International levels.

A European seminar “Scientific Networking for Integration: How Networks are shaping Research for Sustainable Development” was organised on the 29th September 2005 in Portoroz, Slovenia. It was an opportunity to discuss and explore developments in scientific networking practices and provided a better understanding of the impact on the scientific community. Representatives from the European Commission DG Research and scientific experts from various European and South African scientific institutions presented their contributions with themes focusing on the benefits and added value of networking. An emphasis was placed on the opportunities of networking so as to promote the research capacity and transfer of knowledge amongst the scientific community.

Networking to improve the impact of NCP services

National Contact Points often cooperate with networks. In order to develop our understanding of the impact of such cooperation a major study was carried out.

It was concluded that the NCPs work with a very wide variety of networks: networks of EU R&D contacts (local, regional and national); networks of local entities supporting innovation; scientific networks; professional networks and also networks of local, regional, national authorities, governments and agencies.

The cooperation between the NCPs and the networks varies according to the objectives and membership of the network. The National Contact Points cooperate most frequently with networks of EU R&D contacts (local, regional and national); scientific networks and professional networks. The figure below shows that the cooperation takes place principally when promoting and providing the National Contact Point services (e.g. announcement of FP6 information days and coorganisation of the event).

Throughout the life of the project the number of networks with which the consortium worked with increased from 110 in March 2005 to 171 in March 2006. It can be estimated that this led to access to 63,000 potential FP6 participants.

Impact

The INTEGRATING-ACC project has had both immediate and medium to long-term impact on the integration of the New Member States and Candidate Countries into the 6th Framework Programme.

- The improvement of the capacity of the 25 National Contact Points to advertise the 6th Framework Programme and promote the research capacity of the New Member States and Candidate Countries had an immediate impact.
- The survey of networks of R&D players across Europe led to a significant immediate increase in the cooperation between NCPs and networks which in turn led to an increase in the impact of the NCP activity. The benefits of cooperation with different

networks have been analysed and are now well understood. It can therefore be expected that in the medium term the extent with which NCPs cooperate with networks will continue to increase.

- The benchmarking exercise led to the sharing of knowledge on NCP practices and a better understanding of what makes them effective. The results became available as the preparation for the 7th Framework Programme began and were of particular interest to the communities involved in establishing the NCP system for FP7 both at a national level and at the European Commission. They will certainly impact the quality of the NCP services being provided in the 7th Framework Programme.

It can be concluded that the INTEGRATING-ACC project has accomplished its objectives and has contributed to the integration of the New Member States and Candidate Countries into the 6th Framework Programme. It has also prepared the ground for their further integration into the 7th Framework Programme.

Scheme of cooperation between NCPs and networks

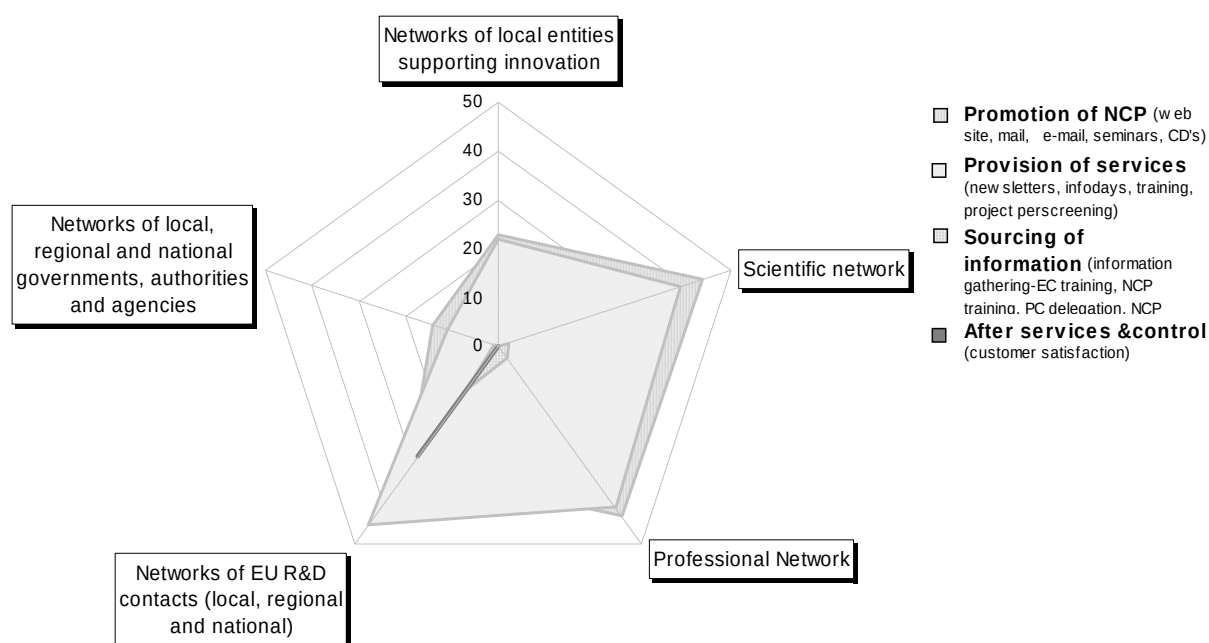


Figure 2. Intensity of cooperation between NCPs and networks during the different phases of NCP activity.

Section 1 – Project objectives and major achievements during the second reporting period

Overview of General Project Objectives

This Specific Support Action aims to integrate the scientific community of the 10 New Member States and 3 Candidate Countries, (collectively referred to here as the “ACC”)² into the 6th Framework Programme. It focuses in particular on the integration into the Integrated Projects, Specific Targeted Research projects and Networks of Excellence proposed to thematic priority 6 “Sustainable development, Global Change and Ecosystems” (SustDev) and addresses this issue by carrying out an “experiment” in establishing and testing work practices (principally networking methodologies and best practice guidelines) for National Contact Points (NCPs).

The project mobilises the skills of SustDev NCPs from 21 countries. The NCPs promote the Framework Programme within their countries and are familiar with the barriers met in the ACC since they have direct access to the scientific communities and to a large number of networks (e.g. national research programmes, networks of liaison officers in universities, research organisations, other NCPs, IRCs etc.).

Three types of support activity are being carried out:

- active promotion of the research capacity of the ACC (e.g. ACC NCPs are invited to information days in other countries).
- analysis and reinforcement of the networking approach. The existing research networks in Europe will be identified and their activities and practices analysed. The NCP networking activities will be reinforced both internally and externally with other networks.
- overcome the barriers to participation in the 6th Framework Programme. This will be done by improving the NCP services. NCP practices across Europe will be analysed and Best Practice Guidelines established and tested.

The results of this SSA will be applicable to all the NCPs of the thematic priorities and a comprehensive dissemination plan was undertaken to ensure that all of the target groups benefit from the methodologies developed and tested during the SSA.

² This project started before the enlargement of the EU on the 1st May 2004. Therefore the 10 New Member States and 3 Candidate Countries were collectively referred to as the 13 Associated Candidate Countries “ACC” in all the documents produced by the project. For the sake of simplicity and coherence this terminology will be maintained throughout.

Work performed during the second reporting period and main achievements

Promoting

A major activity during the second year of this project was the travelling of National Contact Points to Information Days in other countries. The objective of this activity was to promote the research capacity of other countries to the scientific community and to be available for face-to-face interviews and requests for partner searches. In all the NCPs travelled to 14 information days in the run-up to the final calls for proposals of the 6th Framework Programme.

Networking

During the first year of the project the consortium had worked together to develop a common understanding of what a network is and identified the networks operating in their respective countries. During the second year of the project the effort was put into the analysis of the networks identified, determining general categories of networks and analysing how the NCPs work with them. It was concluded that the consortium cooperates with 175 networks, totalling approximately 50 000 members. This cooperation greatly enhances the impact of the NCPs' work, particularly when they are promoting their services (e.g. the networks relay announcements of training sessions being organised by the NCP) and during the provision of NCP services (e.g. joint organisation of information days). The NCPs also work regularly with networks when sourcing information (e.g. networks of liaison officers in Brussels) and when improving their services (e.g. benchmarking with the European network of NCPs).

A European Seminar was organised in Portoroz, Slovenia on the 29th September 2005 on the theme "Scientific Networking for Integration: How networks are shaping research for sustainable development". Representatives of networks from across Europe, as well as scientists and representatives from the European Commission discussed networking practices, how networks are used by scientists for integration, and how networking is used as a policy tool. The presentations and summary of the seminar are available on the project web site.

Benchmarking

The benchmarking exercise was pursued and successfully completed. Building upon the work done during the first year of the project to identify the best practices in the consortium, during the second year of the project the effort was put into the analysis of four benchmarks and their transfer within the consortium and beyond.

The transfer of the benchmarks was discussed at great length during the consortium meeting in September 2005. The consortium analysed how they could take up the benchmarks in their respective organisations and the barriers they were likely to meet in doing so.

The transfer of the benchmarks outside the consortium was initiated during the final project review on the 20th March in Brussels and through the final report which was printed in 250 copies and widely disseminated.

Communicating

The communication activities have included the organisation of meetings, the promotion of the open meetings, the publishing of the final project reports and the regular updating of the project web site.

The organisation and promotion of the European Seminar "Scientific Networking for Integration: How networks are shaping research for sustainable development" in Portoroz, Slovenia on the 29th September 2005, was a major task which involved the whole consortium, both for the elaboration of the programme and the email dissemination of the invitations. The number of

participants was over 50. The final project review on the 20th March in Brussels attracted 34 participants.

The project web site, www.sustdev-ncps.com, was regularly updated, particularly with information on the various events being organised by the consortium in their respective countries. The project web site was also used when promoting the European Seminar and Final Project Review and making the results available. The partners-only section was used for documents whose circulation was limited to the consortium.

The deliverables of work packages 1 and 2 were printed in 200 and 250 copies respectively and widely disseminated.

Management

The management of the project was carried out by the coordinator, ADEME, and the administrative and financial management team at INNOVA, together with the Project Management Committee. The Project Management Committee held a final meeting on the 21st March 2006 in Brussels to approve the deliverables and final activity report and discuss the impact of the project.

Problems met

No major problems were met during the second reporting period.

Section 2 – Workpackage progress of the period

Workpackage 1 Networking Activities aimed at integrating the ACC into the 6th FP

Objectives

The overall objective of this work package was to accelerate the integration of the ACC scientific community into the 6th Framework programme by:

- promoting the research capacity of the New Member States and Candidate Countries to the research community in other countries;
- analysing and promoting a networking approach to integration.

Results

Task 1.1 – Identification of the existing networks and analysis of their practices

The work on this task has been started in the first year of the project. During the second year of the project the networks identified in the first year of the project were checked in order to obtain only the networks that are relevant according to the network definition agreed upon during the consortium meeting in February 2005 (deliverable 1.5). Collected data have been sent to partners for validation and the network database was changed in accord with the confirmed data. The database in its final version contains 283 networks. As agreed by the project management committee this database is a new deliverable (deliverable 1.6) available on the project web site for use by the consortium. Should a third party be interested in using the database the project management committee will be consulted first.

Task 1.2 – Barriers to ACC participation in the Framework Programme

As agreed during the 2nd meeting of the project management committee in March 2005, a survey was executed in order to undertake the analysis of the barriers to ACC participation in Framework Programme. Categories of barriers were determined. The evolution of barriers during the project was established.

Task 1.3 – Establishing a methodology for improving the liaison between the NCP network and other networks

During the first year of the project the consortium had worked together to develop a common understanding of what a network is to identify the networks in their respective countries. During the second year of the project, the effort was put into the analysis of the identified networks and determining general categories of networks. A survey was carried out in order to identify the networks the NCPs work with. The analysis of the liaison between NCPs and networks was carried out. It was concluded that the consortium cooperates with 171 networks, totalling approximately 63 000 members. This cooperation greatly enhances the impact of the NCPs' work, particularly when they are promoting their services (e.g. the networks relay announcements of training sessions being organised by the NCP) and during the provision of NCP services (e.g. joint organisation of information days). The NCPs also work regularly with networks when sourcing information (e.g. networks of liaison officers in Brussels) and when improving their services (e.g. benchmarking with the European network of NCPs). The scheme of cooperation between NCPs and networks was developed and presented at the final meeting of the Integrating ACC project in Brussels. To discover

the diversity between the liaison of MS NCPs and ACC NCPs with networks the separate schemes for MS and ACC were created.

Task 1.4 – Promotion of the research capacity of the ACC in the Member States

During the second year of the project, the calendar of the information days planned in 2005 was prepared. In order to accomplish promotion of research capacity of ACC in member states, the calendar of the information events was centralised on the project web site. NCPs carried out the promotional activities during the preparation for the 4th calls of the 6th priority during 2005. It was planned to execute 43 promotional activities. The partners realised 23 trips to promote the research capacity of their respective country.

Task 1.6 - Preparation of the material for the European seminar

A European Seminar was organised in Portorož, Slovenia on the 29th September 2005 on the theme “Scientific Networking for Integration: How networks are shaping research for sustainable development”. The way NCPs work with networks was presented. Representatives of networks from across Europe, as well as scientists and representatives from the European Commission discussed networking practices, how scientists use networks for integration, and how networking is used as a policy tool. The presentations and summary of the seminar are available on the project web site.

Deliverables

Table 1: Deliverables List WP1

Del. no.	Deliverable name	Workpackage no.	Date due	Actual/Forecast delivery date	Lead contractor
1.1	Analysis of the existing networks, scheme of the cooperation.	1	09/2004	09/2005	TC
1.2	Barriers to ACC participation in the Framework Programme.	1	09/2004	03/2006	TC
1.3	Database of the information events both in the ACC and MS. Participation of the ACC, resp. MS NCPs in the information events of the MS, resp. ACC.	1	07/2004	07/2004	TC
1.4	Material for the European seminar on Network Practices in Europe	1	09/2005	09/2005	TC
1.5	Common definition of a network	1	-	02/2005	ADEME
1.6	Database of networks	1	-	03/2006	TC

Milestones

Table 2: Milestones List WP1

Milestone no.	Milestone name	Workpackage no.	Date due	Actual/Forecast delivery date	Lead contractor
1.1	Analyses are published on time for the European seminar	1	09/2005	09/2005	TC

Workpackage 2 Assessing and improving the NCP services to overcome barriers to participation

Objectives

The objectives of this work package are to:

- improve the quality and effectiveness of the NCPs' operational modalities and the support-supply scheme of the NCPs of the 6th thematic priority
- transfer best practices selected as benchmarks within the NCP Network

In this context, work package 2 activities have been organised in 4 major tasks:

- Task 2.1 Analysis of SustDev NCPs practices and skills
- Task 2.2 Identification of best practices and benchmarks
- Task 2.3 Development of the best practice guidelines
- Task 2.4 Transfer of the best practices within the network

Results achieved

Tasks 2.1 and 2.2 have been accomplished by INNOVA during the first 12 months of the project. These activities have been focused on the start-up and development of the benchmarking exercise.

The benchmarking exercise applied to the Integrating-ACC context is built up on the 'INNOVA Benchmarking Practice', a methodology that has been used originally in the Network of the Innovation Relay Centres (IRCs) in 2001. The model has been tailored to the Integrating-ACC context in order to reach most effective and useful results.

The benchmarking methodology of Integrating-ACC is built around a 4-steps model:

- Definition of topics & information gathering
- Analysis & Best Practice Verification
- Benchmarking Modelling & Validation
- Publication and transfer of results, monitoring.

The first two steps have been mainly finalised with Task 2.1 and 2.2. Task 2.3 and 2.4 have been key activities of INNOVA during the second year of the project.

Task 2.3 Development of the best practice guidelines

Task 2.3 main purpose has been the development of the Best Practices Manual in order to facilitate the transfer of the best practices into the other NCPs' organisations. Prior to the handbook's development, consensus had to be reached on which practices were to be selected as benchmarks. This has been already achieved during the first year of the project during the consortium meeting in Limassol, Cyprus in February 2005. The project partners also discussed the success factors that are rendering the best practices chosen as benchmarks so successful. To each benchmark, at least three success factors were attributed.

- Sourcing and Networking
 - o The NCP must have an on-hand pool of contacts, both nationally and internationally.
 - o It is essential to have a good working relationship with the key contacts: the National Delegate and the experts of the Programme Committee.
 - o The sources of information must be reliable in order to be sure that they provide efficient and sufficient information.
- Proposal Screening
 - o Proactive approach with the research community through visits and presentation of the Work Programme.
 - o Expertise knowledge will be communicated through a team of people covering multi-disciplinary expertise.

- Use of client relation management system (INNOMAN) which permits the repeatedly contact with researchers
- Organisation of professional training
 - Training sessions covering legal & financial issues should also be proposed, not only management
 - Find the best practices available and bring in the experts (e.g. the evaluators)
 - Training sessions must be focused & tailor-made in order to provide clear expectations to the trainee
 - The target groups of different training sessions must be separated
- Integrating NMS and CC into the project
 - In a small country, the NCP should focus on the strengths / priority topics of the local scientific community.
 - Personal commitment should be high: being proactive, writing emails, etc.
 - Direct cooperation among the NCP network: the NCP network is a good entry point to a country scientific community.

In addition, for each benchmark performance indicators have been selected and discussed during an informal consortium meeting in July 2005 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. These indicators are quantifiable measurements that reflect the critical success factors of the organisations and measure the progress towards set goals. Their outcome differs depending on several constraints like the organisational structure, the NCPs' knowledge level and environmental conditions in which the NCP is embedded. The chosen performance indicators for the four benchmarks are the following:

- Sourcing and Networking
 - % of info day participants who go on to participate in projects
 - Efficiency of Contact with National Delegate
- Proposal Screening
 - % of submitted proposals that have been screened before
 - Customer satisfaction rate
- Organisation of professional training
 - Increase in the Success rate of proposals submitted after training
 - Customer satisfaction rate
- Integrating NMS and CC into the project
 - % of successful partner matches
 - % of submitted proposals after one-to-one meetings and e-mail exchange
 - success rate of submitted proposals

The in-depth description of the benchmarks has been accomplished with the assistance of the benchmark owners. Each NCP selected as benchmark has been interviewed by telephone on its working process. These interviews supported the engineering of the benchmarks and the elaboration of the process flow charts illustrating graphical the working processes. After the first draft of each benchmark description has been completed, the descriptions were sent to the NCP benchmark owners for their approval.

At the Consortium meeting in Portorož in September 2005, each benchmark including process flows and performance indicators have been presented.

The Best Practices Manual has been designed in the following period, ready to be presented at the final meeting in Brussels on March, 20th2006. All the results related to the benchmarking exercise and achieved during the project's period have been illustrated in detail.

In specific, the manual is composed of three chapters. In *Chapter 1*, the benchmarking concept is explained. A description of what benchmarking does really mean and why its application can lead to organisational improvements is provided. *Chapter 2* deals with the benchmarking methodology applied to the Integrating – ACC context. The 4-step model developed and tailored to the project's framework in order to select the most relevant practices and to analyse them in detail for making them transferable to the SustDev Network is illustrated. *Chapter 3* illustrates the outcomes of the benchmarking exercise and the in-depth presentation of the four benchmarks. Each benchmark is

described in its single steps including a process flow chart which illustrates graphical the working processes and supports a better understanding of the NCP as an organisation and as part of a network.

Task 2.4 Transfer of the best practices within the network

Consensus on the selected benchmarks has been reached already during the first year of the project and the NCPs are eager to take up the illustrated working models in their daily working processes.

The final phase of transfer of the benchmarks within the consortium began in earnest during the consortium meeting in September 2005.

The in-depth description of the benchmarks including process flows and the performance indicators have been presented, then the consortium discussed in great detail the barriers which they felt they would meet when taking up these benchmarks in their own organisations.

This discussion revealed that the take up of the benchmarks in the NCPs' organisations is still connected with several barriers. Main barriers are the lack of contact and linkages, especially concerning NCPs coming from ACC and from some New Member States. The missing contacts with experts and other NCPs results in scarce networking activities and insufficient information exchange. Furthermore, human and monetary resources are often missing which makes the NCPs' work less efficient.

The actual transfer of the benchmarks beyond the consortium took place mainly through *the final meeting in Brussels on the 20th March 2006* and the dissemination of the Best Practices Manual. 250 copies are distributed to the whole NCP network (not only to NCPs of priority 6) and to other key actors.

The benchmarking exercise should be conceived as a tailor-made support to let the SustDev NCPs Network be more aware of its potential contribution to the promotion of the R&D FP schemes and to the encouragement of research efforts at local level. Therefore, despite the results and their future implementation, it is worthy to mention that it has been primarily an opportunity to share and exchange knowledge, practices and approaches.

As concerns the outcomes of the exercise, the four benchmarks identified should be considered as reference models for future NCP operation. The benchmark cannot be of course applied within the whole Network simply as they are. Adaptations and adjustments to the characteristics of the single countries, organisations and people will be necessary.

It is therefore important to define how the selected successful practices can be transferred and implemented in contexts different from the ones where they have been originally created and applied.

The transfer of benchmarks should be intended as a broad activity, transversal to the whole benchmarking exercise and running since the beginning. It is not only a matter of transferring results, but also to allow a more comprehensive knowledge transfer process. This refers not only to the finally selected practices, but also to the benchmarking model, the process flow development and validation, the selection process. The transfer of the selected practices, therefore, should be seen just as the final step of a longer process.

One fundamental step in this process is to gain the acceptance of the benchmark findings by the involved NCPs; acceptance implies that the outcomes of the exercise are convincingly demonstrated, correct and based on reliable data. This means to obtain a general consensus on practices to be selected and this has clearly happened during the participatory workshop in Cyprus in February 2005, as previously mentioned, where the participating NCPs have been invited to analyse, discuss and accept preliminary selected best practices and extract benchmarks.

A second step in the transfer process is to render the NCPs better acquainted with the chosen benchmarks and create a shared consensus on them. This has been achieved through the workshop in Slovenia in September 2005.

The last step is to encourage NCPs to incorporate selected practices starting from the development of specific action plans to initiate the benchmarks adoption before their full implementation, foreseen beyond the INTEGRATING-ACC project deadline. The workshop in

Slovenia has been also useful in this sense, since it has represented a preparatory phase for action plans development. The discussion, in fact, has been focused on the identification of obstacles and barriers that can hinder or slow down the transfer. Considerations have also been made on process criticalities and procedures to better integrate the benchmarks in the different contexts.

The benchmarks uptake by the NCPs is strictly related to these aspects and the identified barriers have to be appropriately faced and lowered before taking up implementation actions so to facilitate the transfer process.

The final meeting in March 2006, among the NCPs involved in the INTEGRATING-ACC project, represented a further occasion to revise the benchmarking results, agree on potential future steps and plan the subsequent benchmarks implementation in the interested NCP organisations.

Deliverables

Table 3: Deliverables List WP2

Del. no.	Deliverable name	WP no.	Date due	Actual/Forecast delivery date	Lead contractor
2.1	Questionnaire on NCP practices and skills	2	June 2004	June 2004	INNOVA
2.2	Research methodology established to collect and analyse the data of the survey	2	August 2004	February 2005	INNOVA
2.3	Report on the practices and skills of the SustDev NCPs	2	October 2004	August 2005	INNOVA
2.4	Analysis of the identified benchmarks and the process flow description	2	September 2005	February 2006	INNOVA
2.5	Best practice guidelines	2	September 2005	February 2006	INNOVA

Rem: the new timeframe was adopted after approval by the project management committee and did not reduce the impact of the deliverables.

Milestones

Table 1: Milestones List WP2

Milestone no.	Milestone name	Work package no.	Date due	Actual/Forecast delivery date	Lead contractor
2.1	Practices and skills questionnaire sent out to the NCPs	2	June 2004	June 2004	INNOVA
2.2	Report on the practices and skills of the SustDev NCPs	2	November 2004	August 2005	INNOVA
2.3	Best Practices Guidelines	2	August 2005	February 2006	INNOVA

Workpackage 3 Communication and dissemination activities

Objectives

The overall objective of this Work Package is to promote the research capacity of the ACCs and networking approach and Best Practices established in Work Packages 1 and 2 by the dissemination of knowledge to the target groups (NCPs, other networks and the scientific community). This was further enhanced by creating an efficient communications system for National Contact Points, providing logistical support for consortium meetings and other project events i.e. 'European Seminar'.

Progress

Task 3.1 – Maintaining Project web site and communications system

During the second year phase of the project the INTEGRATING-ACC web site www.sustdev-ncps continued to be updated by uploading the necessary information such as Call for Proposals, list of ongoing events in partner countries, promoting the two day European Seminar held in Slovenia, consortium and project management meetings uploaded onto the Library area for partners only, and links established with relevant sites such as Cordis and other European web sites.

Task 3.2 – Consortium meetings

Work Package 3 provided logistical support for the preparation of the consortium meeting held in Ljubljana, Slovenia 7th July 2005 and the informal consortium meeting in Portoroz, Slovenia in September 2005. Dr. Alex Gnamus from the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Slovenia, provided assistance with regards to the venues for the meetings and information on hotels in Slovenia.

Task 3.3 – Two –day European Seminar in Slovenia

Preliminary preparation for this Seminar was carried out 4 months preceding the event. During the course of the preparatory work, 2 meetings were held in Paris between the work package leader and the project coordinator during the months of July and August 2005 where the logistics were discussed i.e. the Seminar programme, pre-announcement, list of invitees, registration and accommodation forms and list of guest speakers. The preparatory work carried out under Work Package 3 consisted of compiling a list of invitees such as Directors and Heads of Unit, DG Research, National Contact Points of all the Thematic Priorities, Scientific Ministers of each participating country, INCO and COST National Focal Points and scientific researchers. The electronic mail out of information was effected a month prior to the event. The Seminar information and presentations was uploaded onto the project web site. The event was also published on the Cordis events section. The logistical organization was carried out by Moira Dillon, Leader Work Package 3, Dr. Celine Phillips, Project Coordinator and Ms. Maja Ambrozic from the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Slovenia.

The Seminar was an opportunity to discuss and explore developments in scientific networking practices and provided a better understanding of the impact on the scientific community.

Representatives from the European Commission DG Research and scientific experts from various European and South African scientific institutions presented their contributions with themes focusing on the benefits and added value of networking. An emphasis was placed on the opportunities of networking so as to promote the research capacity and transfer of knowledge amongst the scientific community.

In order to encourage the participation of researchers, the project consortium decided to sponsor one researcher per country for the event. Malta was also represented by a scientific researcher from the University of Malta.

Task 3.4 Reporting

The work package leaders reported regularly on their activities to the project coordinator. The Consortium contributed to the Final Activity report of activities of this Work Package covering period 1st April 2005 until 31st March 2006.

Task 3.5 Publications

Two documents were printed and distributed namely the, 'Report on Networking Practices in Europe' and 'Report on Best Practice Guidelines'.

Deliverables

The following deliverables of this Work Package have been executed so far covering period 1st April 2005 until 31st March 2006.

Table 5: Deliverables List WP3

Del. no.	Deliverable name	WP no.	Date due	Actual/Fo recast delivery date	Lead contractor
3.2	Consortium meeting	3	17	17	MCST
3.3	Two-day European seminar in Slovenia	3	19	19	MCST
3.4	Report on networking practices in Europe	1 & 3	23	23	MCST
3.5	Report on Best Practice Guidelines	4 & 3	23	23	MCST

Milestones

Table 6: Milestones List WP3

Milestone no.	Milestone name	WP no.	Date due	Actual/Forecast delivery date	Lead contractor
3.2	Consortium meeting in Slovenia	3	July 2005	July 2005	MCST
3.3	Two-day European seminar in Slovenia	3	September 2005	September 2005	MCST
3.4	Report on networking practices in Europe	1 & 3	March 2006	March 2006	MCST
3.5	Report on Best Practice Guidelines	4 & 3	March 2006	March 2006	MCST

Section 3 – Consortium management

Consortium management tasks and their achievement

The management of the consortium has been carried out by the coordinator, ADEME and the Administrative and Financial management team at INNOVA together with the Project Management Committee.

ADEME, as project coordinator, has maintained regular contact with the work package leaders, exchanging with them on the progress made and working with them on the content whenever necessary. The Project Management Committee was consulted whenever major decisions concerning the project had to be made and they held a final meeting on the 21st march 2006 in Brussels to approve the deliverables, the final activity report and the impact of the project.

ADEME has also worked on developing the project indicators and on compiling the data necessary to quantify the indicators.

INNOVA is involved in WP4 as responsible for the financial management of the project. According to this role, in the 2nd year of project life, it has accomplished the following tasks:

- Provision of specific information on contractual financial issues during project meetings; support and upon request answering to partners if help was needed via e-mail or through telephone conversations;
- Support to project partners in the elaboration of the first contractual Financial Statements (Form C) covering the 1st year of project implementation from 01/04/2004 to 31/03/2005. The financial reporting for whole consortium has been submitted to the EU Commission in June 2005.
- elaboration of the 1st Management Report focused on workload and eligible costs of each partner regarding each work package; preparation of the Summary Financial Report (workbook).
- support to project partners in the elaboration of the second contractual Financial Statements (Form C) covering the 2nd year of project implementation from 01/04/2005 to 31/03/2006, included audit certificate as foreseen by the Technical Annex;
- preliminary activity for the preparation of the 2nd Management Report focused on workload and eligible costs of each partner regarding each work package; preparation of the Summary Financial Report (workbook).

Contractors

The partners have all contributed actively to the tasks assigned to them.

Problems met

No major problems were met during the second year of the project.

Annexes - Volume 1

Annexe 1: Deliverable 1.1 “Analysis of the existing networks, scheme of the cooperation”

Annexe 2: Deliverable 1.2 “Barriers to ACC participation in the Framework Programme”

Annexe 3: Deliverable 1.3 “Database of the information events organised by the consortium.
Participation of the consortium in information days in other countries”

Annexe 4: Deliverable 1.4 “Material for the European seminar on Networking Practices in Europe”

Annexe 5: Deliverable 1.5 “Common definition of a network”

Annexe 6: Deliverable 1.6 “Database of networks”

Annexes - Volume 2

Annexe 7: Deliverable 2.3 “Report on the Practices and skills of the SustDev NCPs”

Annexe 8: Deliverable 2.4 “Analysis of the identified benchmarks and the process flow description”

Annexes - Volume 3

Annexe 9: Announcement of the European Seminar “Scientific Networking for Integration:
How networks are shaping research for sustainable development” in Portorož,
Slovenia, 29th September 2005

Annexe 10: Measuring the success of the Project indicators