Enhancing the impact of the Euro-India policy dialogue: ICT policy position paper

SYNCHRONISER and Euro-India SPIRIT, two EU-funded projects working towards synergising and strengthening EU-India relations in ICT research and innovation, have identified a set of high potential ICT research themes that could create a durable research partnership between the two regions and bring substantial benefits to their economies and societies. These recommendations constitute the core of a policy position paper produced jointly by both projects.

POLICY MAKING AND GUIDELINES

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Recommendations submitted to consolidate collaborative research across Information & Communication Technologies

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The two projects bring together the ‘leading lights’ from research, academia and industry as well as representatives of the stakeholder communities of both regions on a common platform to identify priority areas and formulate enabling policy recommendations to develop a collaborative research agenda and support joint R&D projects.

EU-India bilateral relations and cooperation in research has been progressing substantially since the signing of the Science & Technology (S&T) Cooperation Agreement in 2001. Additionally, a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Information Society was established in 2004 under an institutional agreement between the European Union and India. The JWG is comprised of research administrators, policy-makers and senior functionaries of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India and the Directorate General for Information Society and Media, European Commission and meets once a year to deliberate on a range of policy, regulatory, technology and research issues in order to define a common position and develop a shared agenda.

The research themes and issues were identified and policy recommendations developed by technology experts and leaders from business and academia and civil society from the European Union and India - members of the SYNCHRONISER Steering Committee and the Euro-India SPIRIT Experts Working Group.

The objective of the policy position paper is to stimulate discussion at the forthcoming EU-India policy dialogue meeting under the auspices of the JWG on Information. This document highlights themes for joint EU-India research and innovation in the field of ICTs - encompassing innovative technologies, applications, processes, standards and tools – as well as a set of enabling policy measures in order to address key technological, societal and economic challenges facing both societies as they chart their future course as leading knowledge and technology centric business ecosystems and empowered and inclusive societies.

The recommendations highlight common priorities and propose short, medium and long term objectives, strategies and approaches, which, if implemented, would have the effect of substantially enhancing and durably
strengthening cooperation between Europe and India across ICTs and multiple application domains where these technologies play a leading role.

Short-term recommendations:
Wider dissemination of the European Union's Work Programme 2011-12 which sets out the detailed research actions and funding over this period and the opportunities afforded therein for Indian research actors so as to accelerate formulation and submission of R&D projects within the existing FP7 framework.

Medium-term recommendations:
• The experts recommend studying in detail the already established Joint Research Mechanisms (joint call for proposals) between Europe and third countries such as Brazil and Russia and their effect on collaborative research. The rules, governance, rollout and administration of such joint calls will be extremely useful in defining a dedicated joint research format and co-funding scheme between the European Union and India.

• Collaboration with European Technology Platforms (ETP) and xETPs initiatives is also recommended. An interesting opportunity for India and EU could be using ETPs as an instrument to produce a roadmap for cooperation between EU and India, both in specific technology fields and also on ICT innovation issues. If successful, possible promotion of Indian technology platforms should be part of the future work in order to enhance cooperation.

Long-term recommendations
The experts consider that reinforcing the Information Society Technologies Advisory Group (ISTAG), a high level advisory body of stakeholders, by institutionalizing regular interactions with eminent Indian ICT visionaries, experts and leaders (ex. members of the SYNCHRONISER & EIS expert groups) could be another tool to promote EU-India cooperation. The formation of an EU-India ISTAG is also suggested.

Last but not least, the experts stress the importance of bringing Indian contribution beyond the European FP8 framework, which is under preparation, as a way to find resonance of Indian issues within EU priorities for research so as to enhance cooperation across shared issues and agenda. A concrete fall out could be co-financed and coordinated calls by India and the European Union across shared priority areas.

These Policy recommendations will be presented to the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India and to the Directorate General for Information Society and Media, European Commission in tandem with their forthcoming meeting under the auspices of the Joint Working Group (JWG). They would provide valuable input to the JWG for boosting the relevance (for stakeholders) and impact (for societies) of the institutional policy dialogue mechanism, for enhancing EU-India joint research in ICTs, while laying prime emphasis on a workable, user-centric and consultative approach to develop a joint research agenda.

For more information please visit:
http://www.synchroniser.org/download.htm
SYNCHRONISER project: http://www.synchroniser.org/
Euro-India SPIRIT Project: http://www.euroindia-ict.org/
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