"Bringing the EU-EECA cooperation and policy dialogue in ICT in the HORIZON 2020 era" (Grand Agreement 617093)

Periodic Progress Report

1st period

(1/2/2014 – 31/1/2015)

Publishable summary

The EECA-2-HORIZON project is a Support Action funded by the European Commission under the FP7-ICT Theme (GA No: 610793)

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*The **EECA-2-HORIZON** consortium coordinates its activities with the **EAST HORIZON project** (FP7-ICT Support Action, GA No 611063). The 2 projects form the **Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) Cluster** to join forces towards a common goal: reinforce EU-EECA R&I collaboration in the broader field of ICT.*

PROJECT CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

EECA-2-HORIZON (www.eeca-ict.eu) is an innovative EU funded Support Action aiming to **reinforce the development of strategic and mutually beneficial partnerships in ICT between the EU and the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) countries**. The overall goal is to strengthen the links and boost cooperation among the research and industrial communities of both regions to exploit emerging opportunities for international partnerships (both under EU and EECA RTD&I programmes) and jointly address common societal challenges.

Therefore, the project partners set the following <u>objectives</u>:

Inform and Stimulate

✓ **Organise a series of increase awareness events in both regions** to promote and facilitate collaboration among ICT actors from both regions.

✓ **Promote "reciprocity in collaboration"**, namely the participation of EU researchers in EECA R&I programmes. This will be based on identifying and analysing R&I programmes and initiatives from the EECA countries that are open to the participation of EU research teams and/or individual researchers, with a view to highlight and promote emerging opportunities for EU actors, and eventually support the international cooperation under EECA programmes.

✓ **Provide "hands on" support** to prominent EECA organisations to join consortia preparing research proposals under HORIZON 2020, as well as **consult EU research teams** to participate in EECA programmes.

Support Collaboration

✓ **Link and bring together leading ICT research and industrial actors from both regions** in areas of mutual interest and added value for EU and EECA cooperation, foster their interaction and eventually boost the formation of long-term strategic international partnerships. This will be based on 2 pillars:

> ✧ **R&I actors:** create a number of sustainable cooperative "***ICT Communities***" focusing on specific ICT sub-areas that exhibit a high collaboration potential for EU-EECA collaboration.

> ✧ **Technology Platforms:** strengthen the interaction and cooperation among European Technology Platforms and similar structures and interested stakeholders from the EECA countries.

✓ **Create a knowledge sharing and collaboration environment for ICT research and industrial actors from both regions** (*ICT web portal),* aiming to inform, facilitate interaction and support collaboration towards the formation of strategic partnerships under both EU and EECA RTD&I programmes.

✓ **Organise a series of networking/twinning events in both regions** to promote and facilitate collaboration among ICT actors.

Facilitate policy dialogue

✓ **Support dialogue between the EU and the EECA countries on enhancing their cooperation in ICT** by communicating the project findings to ICT stakeholders from both regions as well as to the EC.

> *Important Note*: EECA-2-HORIZON project ***builds upon the invaluable legacy in EU-EECA cooperation in ICT that was created by the PICTURE project*** *(FP7-ICT, CSA, completed in May 2014)* ***and its preceding EECA-ICT cluster*** *that was formed by joining forces of three (3) FP7-ICT CSAs, namely:* ***ISTOK-SOYUZ, SCUBE-ICT*** *and* ***EXTEND*** *(completed in 2011).*

EECA Cluster targeted regions/countries

EECA-2-HORIZON Identity

Full title	"Bringing the EU-EECA cooperation and policy dialogue in ICT in the HORIZON 2020 era" (Grand Agreement)
Programme	FP7-ICT
Duration	1 February 2014 – 31 July 2016 (30 months)
Coordinator	Q-PLAN International Advisors Ltd (Greece, www.qplan-intl.com)
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Partners	✓ Inno TSD (France, www.inno-group.com) ✓ National Association of Research and Educational E-Infrastructures "e-Arena" (Russia, http://e-arena.ru) ✓ Non-governmental organization "Agency of European innovations" (Ukraine, http:/cstei.lviv.ua/en) ✓ Belarusian Institute of System Analysis and Information Support of Scientific and Technical Sphere (Belarus, www.belisa.org.by) ✓ Institute for Informatics and Automation of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia (Armenia, www.sci.am) ✓ Regional Innovative Technologies Academy (Azerbaijan, www.rita.az) ✓ Centre of International Projects (Moldova, www.cpi.asm.md) ✓ Georgian Research and Educational Networking Association (Georgia, www.grena.ge) ✓ National Agency for Technological Development JSC (Kazakhstan, www.natd.gov.kz)

1ST YEAR ACHIEVEMENTS *(1/2/2014 – 31/1/2015)*

✓ A wide range of **dissemination and promotion activities** were carried out (at both national and European level) highlighting emerging opportunities for EU-EECA cooperation as well as the competencies of EECA R&I actors to their EU counterparts. Such activities included (*note: the list is not exhaustive*):

⇨ An open *LinkedIn group* has been created: https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=8249599

⇨ Two (2) *e-Newsletters* have been distributed through the partners international networks:

▪ 1st issue – October 2014

▪ 2nd issue – February 2015

⇨ The project objectives, activities and services were presented during *international conferences*, e.g.:

▪ NEM Summit 2014 (29-30/09/2014, Brussels, Belgium),

▪ ICT Proposers Day' 2014 (9-10/10/2014, Florence, Italy),

▪ NESSI Summit 2014 (20-21/11/2014, Barcelona, Spain)

⇨ A Catalogue with the collaboration profiles of key ICT R&I teams from the broader EECA region was prepared and disseminated.

✓ **Four (4) EU-EECA ICT Communities have been created** focusing of broad ICT areas that are of common interest for the EU and EECA collaboration. Experts from key research and industrial organisations from both the EU and the EECA region are involved, while relevant European technology Platforms (ETPs) have been contacted and their members were invited to join those Communities.

EU-EECA ICT Communities	Relevant European Technology Platform
Big Data Software and Services	Networked European Software and Services Initiative" (NESSI)
Interactive Content, Media and Creative Industries	Networked and Electronic Media Initiative (NEM)
High Performance Systems	The European Technology Platform for High Performance Computing (ETP4HPC)
Photonics	Photonics21

✓ **An international workshop was organised** on 12/11/2014 in Baku, Azerbaijan aiming to bring together key ICT actors from both regions active in the fields of "*Big Data Software and Services*", "*Interactive Content, Media and Creative Industries*" and "*High Performance Systems*". Representatives of academic and research organisations, the private sector (Industry and SMEs) and associations/clusters from both regions had the opportunity to exchange ideas on their collaboration potential under H2020. Moreover, **members of the Steering Boards of the NEM and NESSI European Technology Platforms**

▪ presented the activities of the respective ETPs to support the scientific and technological development of the ICT field of focus (e.g. through the elaboration of position papers in several sub-fields as well as the development of a Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, which contribute in shaping R&I priorities at EU level, etc); and

▪ informed EECA experts on ways to be involved in the ETP's activities as well as the potential benefits of their involvement (e.g. opportunity to network with leading research and industrial EU actors, promote the R&I priorities in their countries and contribute in highlighting/revealing the common areas for collaboration among R&I actors from both regions, etc).

The workshop concluded to the **creation of three (3) EU-EECA ICT Communities**, while their members agreed on a set of actions to further enhance interaction and collaboration among EU and EECA experts under the ETPs context.

Overall, **more than 70 experts from both regions** attended the workshop while special emphasis was given to attract representatives of SMEs and Industry (specific requirements were introduced for the selection process of invitees). More specifically, **30% of the total participants were representing Industrial organisations or SMEs**.

✓ **A wide range of advanced on-line services have been deployed** to promote EU-EECA R&I cooperation and facilitate the creation of long term collaboration among EU and EECA R&I teams, namely:

  ↪ A ***Competence Platform*** (i.e. an on-line database) has been created with R&I profiles of ICT teams from the broader EECA region to promote their competencies and assist their involvement in H2020;

  ↪ A ***Help Desk*** has been developed aiming to provide personalised advice to EECA researchers on issues related with their participation in H2020;

  ↪ An ***EECA@Watch platform*** has been launched acting as an information source for ICT sector in the EECA countries by providing updated information on the ICT R&I national priorities, the available EECA R&I programmes for international cooperation and the research competencies of key national ICT actors; and

  ↪ A ***Collaboration space*** dedicated to the 4 EU-EECA ICT Communities has been created to facilitate interaction among the members of the created Communities:

    ▪ Big Data Software and Services

    ▪ Interactive Content, Media and Creative Industries

    ▪ High Performance Systems

    ▪ Photonics

✓ In an attempt to highlight and promote "reciprocity in collaboration", an analysis on the **R&I programmes that are funded by the EECA countries and are open for EU researchers and research/industrial organisations/teams** was carried out. Short profiles of the identified programmes were prepared and promoted through the partners' international networks and the members of the EU-EECA ICT Communities, while they are publicly available through the Cluster web portal (http://eeca-ict.eu/programmes).

Remark: The activities mentioned above were carried out at "Cluster level", namely in close collaboration with the FP7 EAST-HORIZON project (FP7-ICT, CSA, GA No 611063).