1 PUBLISHABLE SUMMARY

1.1 Rationale & Concept of the EXTEND Project

Research capabilities in Eastern Europe and the Central Asia (EECA[1]) have been severely affected by rapid political change, internal conflict and the gradual transformation from state-run to market economies. This is manifested by the huge reduction in national Science and Technology (S&T) expenditure and the brain drain of leading scientists from these countries during the 1990s. Since the early 1990s, the European Union has played a key role in supporting the EECA countries' political and economic transformation as well as the reconstitution of their research infrastructures. The EU has assisted these countries through financial and technical assistance (primarily through the TACIS programme), investments and trade. Notably, the EU is the main trading partner of EECA countries, accounting for more than 26% of their total trade in 1999[2].

The recent enlargement of the European Union has brought the EECA countries much closer to the EU. The overall framework of relations between the EU and EECA countries is specified in Partnership and Co-operation Agreements (PCAs) that have been signed with all countries. The PCAs specify the political relations between each EECA country and the EU as well as the parameters for economic relations, trade, as well as social, cultural and scientific and technological co-operation. Moreover, the European Commission developed in May 2004 the European Neighbourhood Policy, which aims to reinforce ties with neighboring and partner countries including the EECA.

Scientific relations between the EU and EECA countries are acquiring an increasing relevance for the European Union. One of the EU's main Science & Technology (S&T) policy objectives since 2000 is set out in the following Lisbon goal: the "*EU should become the worldwide leading knowledge-based economy*". The acknowledgement that "*science knows no boundaries and the issues that research is asked to deal with are increasingly global*" underpins the objective of opening the European Research Area to the world and promoting S&T cooperation with partner countries in a coherent and policy-driven manner. Moreover, in order to be able to stay at the forefront of world competition, the EU has to make constant progress in Science and Technology and to benefit from the widest possible spectrum of researchers across the world.

On the one hand, the EECA countries are important for the S&T development of the EU due to the presence of worldwide leading S&T institutes and a strong academic community in these countries[3]. EECA research organizations have a recognized excellence in many different fields including aerospace, chemistry, materials, ICT, mathematics and physics[4]. Moreover, the EECA countries constitute growing markets for European products and services. At the

[1] EXTEND project target only six (6) Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The abbreviation EECA countries is used to denote the six targeted countries in the context of this project.

[2] "EU-NIS Strategic Co-operation", http://ec.europa.eu/research/nis/en/eu-nis.html

[3] Dr. Erich Rathske, "Current and Future Opportunities for Bilateral and Multilateral Scientific Cooperation in FP7", International Bureau (IB) of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

[4] Ibid 2

same time, the EU is an important S&T cooperation partner for the EECA countries due to the envisaged impacts on economic development and political stability. Furthermore, scientific co-operation with the EU will help reduce the brain drain of EECA scientists and researchers, thus advancing the countries' technology base and stimulating research excellence.

In this context, the Commission promotes the scientific and technological co-operation with the EECA countries, aiming firstly to restore and reinforce their research capacity and secondly to integrate them in the European Research Area. The Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) comprises one of the main instruments that are exploited towards this direction, as international co-operation represents an important dimension of it. FP7 offers a number of opportunities for the participation of EECA countries. However, in order to make use of these possibilities the research communities of the region have first to become aware of the new opportunities that exist and secondly to be advised on how to take part actively.

The EXTEND project addresses the need for enhanced scientific and research co-operation between the EECA countries and the EU, focusing specifically on the **Information and Communication Technologies** theme of the FP7's Co-operation Programme. At present, research communities in the region are not sufficiently aware of the opportunities offered by the ICT work-programme or the necessary know-how for successful participation in it. This is exhibited by the very low participation rate of EECA countries in the predecessor 6th Framework Programme (all 3 Specific Programmes), as shown in Table 1. The last two columns show in more detail the participation of EECA countries in the IST thematic priority of Specific Programme 1 (Focusing and Integrating European Research) of FP6.

	Participation in FP6* (All 3 Specific Programmes)		**… of which participation in IST Thematic Priority**	
Country	**Number of contracts** (with at least 1 participation from country)	**Number of participants** (from country)	**Number of contracts** (with at least 1 participation from country)	**Number of participants** (from country)
Armenia	5	5	3	3
Azerbaijan	5	5	2	2
Belarus	10	10	6	6
Georgia	10	10	1	1
Moldova	8	8	2	2
Ukraine	53	63	8	8

Table 1: Participation of Eastern European and Southern Caucasus countries in all FP6 and IST Thematic Priority. * *data from 1/2002 until 11/2006*
Source: *EC DG Research, Directorate D International Co-operation, CORDIS*

In order to overcome the above situation, EXTEND aims to support the ICT research communities in the region by identifying suitable ICT research actors per country, training them on the procedural aspects of FP7 and providing assistance in developing networks with ICT research actors across Europe.

A second key component of EXTEND is that it addresses the need for well-defined future research priorities that will enhance S&T co-operation between the EU and EESC countries. EXTEND aims to identify concrete areas for ICT research co-operation that reflect the capabilities and interests of both the EECA countries and EU. This will be achieved through a consultation process with key ICT research actors in each country. This process will identify the

ICT research priorities of the target countries and will result in recommendations for closer co-operation between the EU, Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus.

1.2 EXTEND Expected Results

The **expected results** of EXTEND are:

- Mapping of key research actors & capabilities will result in a "Landscape of key ICT research actors and capabilities" integrated in the searchable database of the EECA (Eastern Europe and Central Asia) countries (Competence Platform);
- Consultation with ICT research stakeholders in six (6) Eastern European and Central Asia countries in order to identify suitable ICT research priorities for future co-operation with the EU will result in a set of "Recommendations for shaping ICT research co-operation between the EU, Eastern European and the Southern Caucasus countries for the period 2010-2015";
- Organization of two rounds of ICT Training Workshops and the continuous provision of ICT help-desk services;
- Development of networks between the EU and Eastern Europe and Central Asia by means of two Regional Conferences and the focused dissemination of the "Landscape of key ICT research actors and capabilities" in the EU via the EU members states' NCPs, Cordis, IDEALIST, etc.

1.3 Work Performed and Results Achieved

At the core of EXTEND project is to enable and facilitate with methods and tools the elicitation and subsequently the codification of regional and local priorities for ICT research in view of strengthening the collaboration potential between EU and EECA countries. In tandem with this aim, EXTEND's 2nd year of activities concentrated on the following:

1. **Continuous identification and codification of the information about the ICT organizations in EECA countries**: EXTEND continued to update the information about the ICT organizations in terms of contact details, research capacity and training needs.
2. **Development of a final version of the landscape of ICT research organization**: EXTEND has analyzed the information collected about the ICT organizations and offered an account of the nature of the existing research competences and their distribution in the EECA countries (EXTEND targeted Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Georgia).
3. **Further development and update of the FP7 ICT Help-Desk**: EXTEND continued to update the dedicated IT service for fulfilling inquiries about FP7. The service is available through the EXTEND website and in the EECA portal.
4. **Implementation of the consultation Methodology and organization of the consultation workshops:** EXTEND implemented the methodology to elicit the local ICT priorities from EECA countries. A series of consultation workshop was organized in all the countries.
5. Organisation of 10 in total Training Workshops
6. **Diffusion of EXTEND concepts and vision in the EECA Region**: EXTEND undertook several initiatives to ensure that EXTEND becomes widely known to the ICT stakeholders of the region. Among those, were the participation in the ICT 2010

event, in the Budapest info day and the Closing Conference and the continuous dissemination in regional events, press-releases, etc.

EXTEND with ISTOK-SOYUZ and SCUBE-ICT comprise the EECA cluster of EC projects. Under this initiative, EXTEND has performed several contributions i.e. EECA Gateway, EECA Newsletters, Competence Platform, Help-Desk etc.

1.4 EXTEND Consortium

Partner's Name	Acronym	Country
PLANET S.A.	PLANET	Greece
Centre for Industrial Economics and Services	CEIS	Romania
Information Society Technologies Center	IST-C	Armenia
Regional Information Technologies Academy	R.I.T.A.	Azerbaijan
Belarusian Institute of System Analysis and Information Support of Scientific and Technical Sphere	BELISA	Belarus
Academy of Sciences of Moldova	ASM	Moldova
Kyiv State Centre for Scientific, Technical and Economic Information	NIP Ukraine	Ukraine
Georgian Research and Educational Networking Association	GRENA	Georgia

1.5 EXTEND Contact Details

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