1. Publishable summary

- **Summary description of project context and objectives**

The European Commission (EC) has been making considerable efforts in the recent years aimed at strengthening global strategic partnership in scientific research in the field of ICT. In the process of implementation of the 7th Framework Programme (FP7), the European Commission supported series of initiatives aimed at the exploration of new opportunities for ICT Research and Development, enhancing collaboration among researchers from the EU and the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA).

Among the initiatives supported by the European Commission, three complementary projects ISTOK-SOYUZ, SCUBE-ICT and EXTEND covered the EECA area. These projects had a wide range of diversified activities aimed to:

> Increase awareness on EU-funded research activities under the FP7-ICT in the EECA region

> Improve visibility of ICT R&D organizations and specialists from EECA countries on the European arena and stimulate collaboration with their EU counterparts

> To support the policy dialogue between the EU and EECA countries, contributing to the setting up of joint initiatives enhancing their ICT R&D collaboration

PICTURE project – "Policy dialogue in ICT to an Upper level for reinforced EU-EECA Cooperation" – is a logical continuation of the successful activities carried out under the above-mentioned cluster projects.

The aim of PICTURE is to bring the ICT R&D policy dialogue and cooperation between EU and EECA to an upper level, to engage the EU and EECA stakeholders from across research, academia, industries, government and civil society to enrich and support the EU-EECA ICT Policy Dialogue, and to reinforce strategic partnerships between EU and EECA ICT organizations.
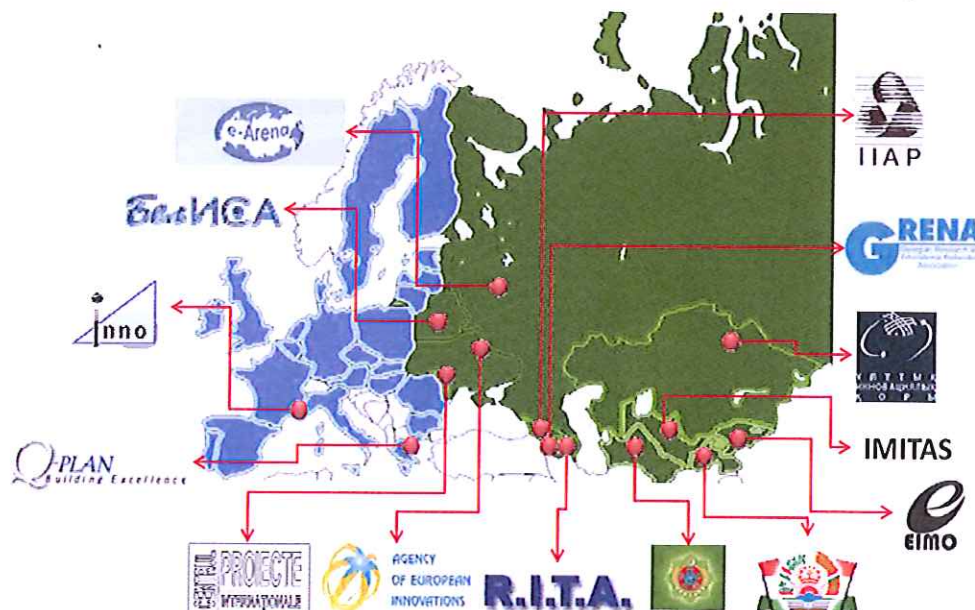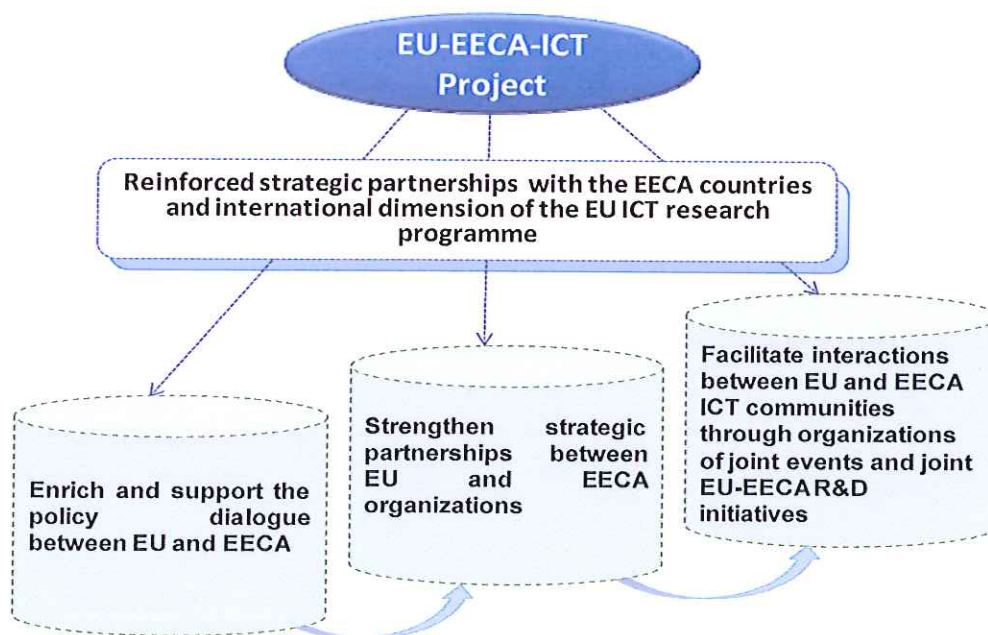

Figure 1: PICTURE consortium geography

PICTURE project will cover an extensive geographical zone including all Member States and all 12 countries of the EECA region. The project's strength lied in its consortium incorporating organizations from all 12 EECA countries possessing deep knowledge of the current ICT collaboration needs and having wide expertise in complementary fields of activities.

PICTURE mission is threefold:

➢ To enrich and support the policy dialogue between EU and EECA countries, by updating and reinforcing points for convergence of the EU and EECA IT research and relevant international initiatives and activities; by developing recommendations and roadmap, and by implementing pilot actions and exchanging experience and lessons learnt,

➢ To strengthen strategic partnerships and cooperative research links between European and EECA ICT organizations, e.g., though stronger involvement of IT diaspora and enhancing concrete cooperation initiatives,

➢ To facilitate interactions between EU and EECA ICT communities through organizations of joint events, and facilitate preparation of joint EU-EECA R&D projects.

Specific objective 1: To enrich and support the policy dialogue between EU and EECA countries, by updating and reinforcing points for convergence of the EU and EECA ACT research and relevant international initiatives and activities; by developing recommendations and a roadmap, and by implementing pilot actions and exchanging

Expected outcomes:

> ➢ An updated report of the ICT research priorities
> ➢ An overview of the existing activities (relevant to ICT policy dialogue) in the EECA countries
> ➢ A validation and dissemination workshop
> ➢ A roadmap for EU-EECA ICT policy dialogue with recommendations

Specific objective 2: To strengthen strategic partnerships between European and EECA ICT organizations

Expected outcomes:

> ➢ Pilot projects per group of countries implemented
> ➢ A report on the access opportunities for EU researchers in the EECA countries provided (if selected as a pilot project)
> ➢ Support provided for the strengthening of the concrete cooperation initiatives

Specific objective 3: To facilitate interactions between EU and EECA ICT communities through organizations of joint events, and facilitate preparation of joint EU-EECA R&D initiatives

Expected outcomes:

> ➢ Three meetings of the three Working groups, organized as an accompaniment to other related projects or external ICT events;
> ➢ Three workshops, with particular focus on Computing Systems and Internet of services, Software and Virtualization and ICT Policy, related to working group's meetings;
> ➢ Implemented information and dissemination campaign, including 4 newsletters, 4 articles, a web portal and project promotional materials;
> ➢ A final PICTURE dissemination event, summarizing the achievements and results on the project, with particular focus to the lessons learnt, good practices and the next steps

- **Description of the work performed since the beginning of the project and the main results achieved so far**

The pool of PICTURE activities during reporting period has been concentrated on the WP2 – **Support to policy dialogue** focusing on EU-EECA ICT cooperation roadmap preparation, development of recommendations o, the EU-EECA ICT policy dialogue, boosting the cooperation between two regions. The consortium partners firstly proceeded with the **analysis of ICT research challenges and opportunities in EECA countries.** Taking into consideration the fact that the ICT area and research priorities are changing very rapidly, the project team reviewed new policy documents in EECA and on the base of the report on ICT priorities that had been prepared by three previous clustering projects SCUBE-ICT, ISTOK-SOYUZ and EXTEND a new document was edited providing updated overview of the ICT research context, priorities and trends for each target country. The D2.1 "Updated report about the EECA ICT priorities" on the base of specified information from partners has been submitted in June 30, 2012. Additional document on the EECA ICT priorities was developed on a specific request from the Project officer in relation with SICA calls recommendations.

Updating the current ICT proprieties in all EECA partner countries led the consortium to a principal and final decision regarding the Working Groups thematic. The consortium selected three following prior topics:

> **ICT POLICY DIALOGUE**
> **COMPONENTS, COMPUTING SYSTEMS AND NETWORKS**
> **CONTENT TECHNOLOGIES AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

The Working Groups establishment has been completed, Terms of reference prepared, high level international ICT experts selected and validated by the Project Officer.

These preparation activities has correspondingly influenced on the thematic of the future Workshops. The organisation of the first workshop is planned around May 2013 in Kiev, Ukraine, and the second one will be held in September 2013 in Erevan, Armenia. The task leaders for the workshops are under the stage of preliminary investigation of the country's activities within this area and working on the following suggestions regarding the best time slot and even scope.

A draft ICT EU-EECA collaboration Roadmap has been elaborated. This draft Roadmap outlines the PICTURE partners' analysis regarding the ICT R&D policy dialogue between the EU and the EECA countries. Its aim is to feed with background information the discussions during the Validation and Dissemination Workshop. The workshop will take place in Moscow on the 29 November 2012. The aim of the workshop is to present, discuss and validate with the attendants the initial findings of the project (as presented in the above Roadmap), and receive feedback from the ICT external experts regarding the future work to be done under PICTURE project and namely the pilot projects that will be carried out during the next stages of the project.

The key activities of the WP3 – **ICT Stakeholders networking, Events and Synergies** – were concentrated on the Synergy task. The purpose of the synergy activities is to create a broader vision and plan of the EECA IT research integration in the fluid motion and harmony with other EU-funded and national programs/projects.

The consortium started by developing the Synergy strategy and was validated at the WP leader meeting in June 2012. The document defines the overall goal and specific objectives of the synergy task, presents the methodological approach to achieve the objectives. The actions plan

describes a pool of actions to be implemented, target audience and the key message to be moved forward.

On the basis of partner's contribution and additional investigations, the project identified 83 ongoing S&T projects with EECA participation and analyzed their content in order to select the projects of common interest. Also, two major projects Ideal-IST and CEENGINE were selected for synergetic effect. The MoU with Ideal-IST has been sign in November 2012, the signature of the MoU with CEENGINE is in process. Some other projects, in particular IncrEAST, BILAT with Ukraine, Belarus and Russia are also under the consortium focus.

In June 2012 PICTURE has been selected by IncrEAST the **Project of the Month** and promoted at the IncrEAST web-site.

An effective collaboration has been initiated with ERA-NETs and IncoNets projects during the conference *"From Dialogue to joint Programmes"/Achievements and perspectives of stakeholder coordination in S&T and Innovation between EU, associated countries, Russia and other eastern European and Central Asian countries* Bonn, 10/11 October 2012). The purpose was to brainstorm and to evaluate experiences gained so far within coordination of bi- and multilateral activities with a focus on ERA-NETs and IncoNets. PICTURE contributed for developing scenarios for synergies between programmes initiatives of cooperation and proposals for tangible measures for a better coordination between actors politics, science and the private sector.

The majority of the activities under WP4 – *Strengthening of cooperative research links* – are scheduled for the next period. However, during the first reporting period 18 possible pilot projects have been identified under the task 2.3: "overview of activities in the EECA countries and analysis" and recommended for implementation. Nine of them are under particular PICTURE's focus and will be proposed for the selection at Moscow validation workshop. 3-4 most relevant to the EU-EECA ICT policy dialogue will be selected jointly by the consortium and external ICT international experts and will be implemented during second project period.

Dissemination and awareness raising activities under WP5 were also performed as planned. During the first reporting period PICTURE partners participated in more than 20 events the most important of which were as follows:

- VC of WG EU-Russia "e-Infra", 19.01.2012;
- FP7 NCP meeting and the EU delegation to Russia, 28.02.2012;
- Meeting of WG "e-Infra", Brussels, 26.04.2012;
- Policy Stakeholders' Conference "EU-EECA" cooperation in the innovation sector: Bi-regional responses to major societal and economic challenges" organised by IncoNet EECA Project, Kiev, 25-26 April 2012;
- Closing Workshop for EECA NCPs, Innovating Innovation Systems Workshop, Vienna, 14 May 2012;
- BEST OF EAST-FOR EASTERN PARTNERSHIP Forum, 21-23May 2012;
- Astana VII Innovation Congress and the Exhibition of the Innovative projects (in the frames of V Astana Economic forum), 23-24 May 2012;
- I T A 2 0 1 2, XV-th Joint International Scientific Events on I N F O R M A T I C S, Cluster of 7 conferences June-July, Varna, Bulgaria
- ICT Proposers Day 2012, Warsaw, 26-27 September 2012;
- NEM Summit 2012, Istanbul, 16-18 October;
- "From Dialogue to Joint Programmes" Conference/Achievements and perspectives of stakeholder coordination in S&T and Innovation between EU, associated countries, Russia and other Eastern European and central Asian countries, Bonn, 10-11 October 2012;

- DigiTec, IT Exhibition, Yerevan, 5-7 October 2012;
- International exhibition-conference "ITU World telecom 2012", in Dubai (UAE) October, 2012

Figure 2: PICTURE consortium partners at ICT Proposers Day 2012, Warsaw, September 2012

To support such broad awareness raising and dissemination activities, the consortium developed the *Awareness Raising and Dissemination Plan* (ARDP) validated by all partners and submitted to the EC. In addition to this tool, the development of the project **branding set** has been completed and a broad branding stuff (including project logo, project leaflet, project banner, project letterhead, templates for Newsletter and project card) is uploaded at the project portal in the Partners area for the common use. Specifications for the new Web portal have been prepared and an updated version has been launched in March as planned. The first project newsletter has been edited in November 2012.

- **The expected final results and their potential impact and use**

The European Commission is involved in various ICT research cooperation activities with EECA countries. However, the recent changes in the global economy, including fighting against climate change, new societal challenges such as the ageing population, sustainable health and social care, inclusion, education and security mean that international ICT research cooperation takes a new turn. One can expect that Europe is willing to improve its current involvement with EECA countries in order to sustainably address global challenges and to maintain its role as an ICT word-

class player. **Globally, the PICTURE project will stimulate the cooperation process with the EECA at an upgraded level.**

More specifically, PICTURE project is expected to support a policy dialog on the basis of **"open policy meetings"** aimed at providing the best framework conditions nurturing ICT research excellence and cooperation across both regions. The targeted upgrade of the present level of the EU-EECA collaboration could result in sustainable socio-economic benefits and impacts for Europe and 12 participating countries strengthening their competitiveness especially in terms of (i) access to knowledge and sharing technical expertise that can nourish new unconventional ideas, (ii) reaching a consensus and preparing the ground for the development of a commonly agreed collaboration strategy namely in research and application fields.

The first project period allowed to significantly progress on preparatory work and to define two key technical topics where the collaboration is the most promising: 1) Components, computing systems, and networks and 2) Content technologies and information management. As indicated above two Working groups have been created in relevance with these two topics and one horizontal group on Policy dialogue. **33 high level international PICTURE experts will contribute to speed-up the upgrade process.**

Via three thematic WGs connecting the project to the key relevant ICT players both from European and EECA countries, the PICTURE project will provide strategic vision regarding the EU-EECA ICT collaboration in the specific research and application domains. This vision is also drafted in the Roadmap including concrete proposals for policy dialogue instruments, actions and pilot projects recommendations.

The results of the Moscow validation workshop, key project milestone, will validate the Roadmap and give a start to the implementation of activities and and events to substantially increase bilateral collaboration, both in quantitative (three ICT workshops, pilot projects in targeted EECA countries, update of the ICT R&D priorities in EECA region) and qualitative terms (analysis of the access opportunities for EU researchers to EECA programs, contribution to closer linkage between research communities,...).

In respect with synergy strategy PICTURE policy activities take into account former and recent actions and initiatives relevant to the European Neighbourhood Policy, 'Eastern Partnership', and the Black Sea Synergy. This integrated approach will feed up recommendations on future vectors of the EU-EECA collaboration strategy.

Inventory of existing policy dialogue instruments in EECA countries realised during the first project period, policy dialogues and thematic working groups meetings, relation with EU delegations will also contribute to drive the collaboration process to the next step. Awareness raising and dissemination activities undertaken by all partners help to create the conditions to facilitate the coordination at policy level among the 12 EECA regions and Europe and to assist the IT stakeholders in addressing ICT cooperation issues on mutual-benefit base.

- **Project public website:** http://www.eeca-ict.eu