

• **FRENZ Project Context and Objectives**

The Facilitating Research cooperation between Europe and New Zealand (FRENZ) platform supports the European Union (EU)-New Zealand science and technology partnership with initiatives to highlight existing research cooperation between the EU and New Zealand and improve this cooperation by enhancing the quality, quantity, visibility and effectiveness of further actions.

Developing on a Directorate-General for External Relations (DG RELEX) preparatory activity, FRENZ proposes to deliver information and assistance to researchers and facilitate EU-New Zealand policy dialogue in jointly defined areas of strategic research importance.

A suite of seven highly integrated and interdependent Work Packages has been designed to remove impediments to the integration of the New Zealand research community in Framework Programme Seven (FP7) activities of mutual interest and achieve the specific objectives of:

- increasing EU-New Zealand research links;
- better identifying and demonstrating EU-New Zealand cooperation;
- exchanging best practice and exploring prospects for future cooperation

Deliverables from each Work Package will impact on the others in a circular process whereby tools and fora determine the basis for policy dialogue; policy dialogue influences those fields of common interest; and fields of common interest require tools and fora to facilitate cooperation.

The Work Packages thus seek to deliver:

- www.frenz.org.nz – an integrated ‘one stop shop’ web portal concerning EU-New Zealand research collaboration;
- a central ‘Helpdesk’ facility, underpinned by activities on-site in key research organisations across New Zealand;
- a series of themed extended workshops ‘Sandpits’ allowing interested stakeholders to develop innovative research solutions to key issues of EU-New Zealand mutual interest;
- a database of EU-New Zealand collaborations and mobility, plus indicators of success, to develop a toolkit for collaboration and future EU-New Zealand activities;
- a gateway for Europe into the New Zealand research sector to facilitate new bi- and multi-lateral engagement

• **Project Progress and Results**

FRENZ has undertaken a substantial suite of activities in the last 18 months:

- Development and maintenance of the FRENZ project website and associated web-based tools and media
- Construction of the Research in New Zealand Mobility Portal
- Publication of a booklet of key projects with New Zealand involvement
- Launch and maintenance of the FRENZ Helpdesk
- Completion of a survey and report addressing New Zealand participation in the Framework Programme

- Ongoing institutional visits and training events
- Liaison with key EU-based research groups
- Construction of a database of EU researchers in New Zealand
- Launch and preliminary analysis of ongoing survey of New Zealand-based EU researchers concerning barriers to cooperation and mobility
- Positive engagement with New Zealand funding agencies concerning the potential provision of funds for Sandpit workshop outcomes

FRENZ has seen a substantial increase in New Zealand researchers' interest and involvement from the Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP6) to the Seventh (FP7). The type of interaction between FRENZ and researchers has also evolved from general signposting to more in depth issues, as the project's dissemination of FP7-related information becomes more widespread throughout the New Zealand research community.

Feedback concerning FRENZ visits and training sessions has been positive and, in terms of New Zealand researchers' experiences of FP7 engagement, the survey revealed that researchers regarded cooperation with Europe as mutually beneficial. In turn, the barriers they identified concerning research collaboration were not new and when asked what they required to assist in their effort to engage with FP7, the majority brought attention to the importance of being kept abreast of information on opportunities and developments within Europe.

Through the Diaspora project, FRENZ now possesses a unique database of approximately 900 New Zealand-based European researchers, who currently represent an untapped resource in terms of the ability for Europe and New Zealand to tap into these researchers' linkages to facilitate an increased level of collaboration under FP7.

After engagement with New Zealand funding agencies during Year 1 of the project, the FRENZ 'Sandpit' workshops have the potential to act as an important tool to establish actual Europe-New Zealand research projects, following the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST) and the Health Research Council's (HRC) expressions of interest in possibly collaborating with FRENZ on this aspect of the project to provide some seed funding for the outcomes of each workshop.

- **Expected Results and Potential Impact**

The overall aim of the FRENZ platform is to support and provide an implementing mechanism for the EC-New Zealand science and technology partnership and improve research collaboration between the two by providing access to information and by identifying priorities and the best partners for research. These activities are expected to lead to a measurable increase in the numbers of effective EU-New Zealand collaborations and an identifiable improvement of the mutual understanding of the respective research systems in Europe and New Zealand.

The number of contacts made through complementary activities such as the FRENZ Information and Communications, Helpdesk and New Zealand-based Training and Services Work Package has grown significantly. It is thus expected that the information, knowledge and advice disseminated through these respective mediums will have the potential to reach a large number of New Zealand researchers and lead to an increased number of collaborative initiatives under FP7. Furthermore, the project's EU-based Liaison and Facilitation Work

Package is expected to provide FRENZ with the opportunity to share knowledge of New Zealand research excellence with European contacts, as well as gaining knowledge of complementary European research excellence. This, in turn, should lead to the formation of strategic links between EU and New Zealand research organisations and better engagement in ERA-NETs, NCP Networks and Technology Platforms.

The research outcomes of the FRENZ Diaspora project will relate to the formation of a clearer picture of both the number of, and motivation for, researcher mobility and, in turn, opportunities for collaboration in areas of mutual interest. It is expected that this research, once presented to New Zealand and European policymakers, will have the potential to stimulate policy dialogue and possibly pave the way for new joint activities also.

Finally, by bringing together a diverse group of Europe and New Zealand-based researchers, the FRENZ Sandpit workshops are expected to identify new topics and partners for future EU-New Zealand research collaboration. Furthermore, concerning the possibility to secure some initial seed funding from New Zealand-based funding agencies, the Sandpit workshops have the potential to establish actual and immediate start-up collaborative projects.

