



## PROJECT PERIODIC REPORT

**Grant Agreement number:** 244327

**Project acronym:** ABEST II

**Project title:** Argentinean Bureau for Enhancing Cooperation with the European Community in the Science, Technology and Innovation Area. Phase II

**Funding Scheme:** INCO-BILAT

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**Period covered:** from 01/10/2009 to 31/03/2011

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## **Publishable summary**

ABEST was created in October 2005. It operates at the Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation (MINCyT) of the Nation<sup>1</sup>, in the National Directorate of International Relations with co-funding of the European Union and the MINCyT.

The aim of this office is to establish in Argentina a platform to enhance and expand cooperative activities with both the European Union (EU) and with the member countries in the area of science, technology and innovation. One of the main financing instruments promoted by the Liaison Office is the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) managed by the Directorate General for Research and Innovation in the European Union. The other partners in the Consortium are: APRE from Italy, CIRAD from France, and DST from South Africa.

Since the beginning of the second phase of the project in October 2009, the ABEST II Consortium has been working to encourage and facilitate the participation of the Argentinean R&D community in cooperation with Europe and to help overcoming potential barriers for such collaboration. To this regard, the project team has maintained a steady effort in completing the sequence of planned tasks, within a context of continuously increase of mutual understanding and cohesion among the partners, a fact that has been positively reflected in the encouraging outputs of the work done and, furthermore, set-up of the next steps of the project. Results achieved so far have met project expectations as defined in the Description of Work (Annex I to the Grant Agreement). At the end of the first year of the project lifecycle, the ABEST II project can say that it has considerable impact (see facts and figures below) and the Consortium is more than satisfied with the project results and its prospects in Argentina.

ABEST II has set up a support mechanism for FP7 promotion through a refreshed website ([www.abest.com.ar](http://www.abest.com.ar)), which provides relevant and updated information on the cooperation opportunities. The number of Registered people in ABEST II data base is smoothly increasing, up to 250 new contacts during the first year of the project, and it is expected that many of them shall become usual contributors. The total number of contacts in the ABEST II mailing lists is more than 1500 and in the National Directorate of International Relations is of approximately 3000.

Awareness raising and training workshops are at the core of the ABEST II support activities and as a result of such activities the Liaison Office and the FP7 are gaining more visibility in Argentina. Almost 50 meetings, workshops and information sessions (usually called "Info Days") have been carried out in the country, in the City of Buenos Aires and the provinces of Buenos Aires, Tucumán, Salta, Córdoba, Santa Fe, Mendoza, San Juan and San Luis. Approximately 1300 researchers, representatives of universities and laboratories in charge of managing research projects and entrepreneurs have participated in meetings, workshops and information sessions organized by ABEST II to improve the use of available programs and tools. In addition, more than 10 events have been coordinated by videoconference with the liaison offices of other Latin American countries that also have cooperation agreements with the European Union in Science and Technology (Brazil, Mexico and Chile).

In the Latin American region, ABEST II has established links and encouraged synergies with other projects and networks, taking advantage of the possible cooperation actions offered by those other programmes, such as EULARINET and EULANEST.

Regarding the enhancement of the Argentina–European Union bilateral ST&I dialogue, ABEST II coordinates, develops and participates in initiatives to help the identification and demonstration of mutual interest and benefits of cooperation between both regions. Argentina, through the MINCyT, hosted and co-chaired the Senior Officials Meeting on Science and Technology (SOM) within the framework of EU-LAC, which was held between February 25th and 26th 2010 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This meeting was aimed at designing the Joint Initiative for Research and Development subsequently approved by the EU-LAC S&T Ministers

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<sup>1</sup> Until the creation of the Ministry of Science, technology and Productive Innovation (MINCyT) in 2007, ABEST was coordinated by the Secretary of Science and Technology (SECyT) at the Ministry of Education.

on the occasion of the Summit of Heads of State and Government of Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union held in Madrid, in May 2010. Within the working group of the chairs of both regions, Argentina leads at the regional level the chapter on cooperation in science, technology and innovation of the Madrid Plan of Action, and as such has participated in developing the roadmap and Working Programme 2011-2012 for implementing such Joint Initiative, to be approved at the Meeting of Senior Officials of Science and Technology (SOM) in Latin America and Europe (EU-LAC), which will take place on March 28th and 29th 2011.

With the aim of improving the Argentinean participation in the FPs, ABEST II through the recently launched ST&I Observatory conducted desk research and interviews to identify stakeholders, who have participated in the FPs, in order to analyze their participation, compare with other experiences, and monitor the tendency.

In this first eighteen months, the ABEST II project has contributed to build a cohesive informative platform by deepening strategic cooperation between Argentina and the European Union. ABEST II has been able to build a well-established and visible support mechanism for a broad range of ST&I institutions located not only in Argentina but also in Europe and the Latin American region. In terms of impact, the project has represented an important catalyst for a number of EU-Argentinean cooperation processes.