



GA number: 297550

1 Publishable summary

Project context and main objectives

The PEOPLE Programme under FP7 aims to strengthen the human potential in research and technology in Europe, by stimulating people to take up the profession of researchers, encouraging European and foreign researchers to stay in Europe, and attracting to Europe the best researchers from the entire world. The international dimension is well addressed by the Marie Curie Actions (MCAs) under FP7 by providing a number of opportunities for Third Country researchers and organizations to collaborate with their European counterparts. While EU researchers and research organisations are generally aware of the opportunities provided by the PEOPLE Programme, there is still a need for wide promotion of MCAs to the scientific communities in Third Countries.

In this respect the role played by the formally nominated National Contact Points (NCPs) as providers of information and assistance services to potential applicants and contractors, and the scientific community as a whole at international level, is fundamental. *NCPs bridge the European and international research communities* in order to inform and raise awareness about the funding opportunities of the MCAs, to advise and assist potential applicants in the preparation, submission and follow-up of grant applications, and to offer support during the execution of projects – especially with respect to the management and administrative aspects of projects.

PeopleNetwork+ has its main focus on *sharing good practices and promoting trans-national co-operation among NCPs to facilitate the improvement of the overall quality of PEOPLE NCP services across and outside Europe*, by offering training and twinning opportunities to all officially nominated PEOPLE NCPs. Some trainings cover the Marie Curie COFUND and IRSES actions which, in general terms, target programmes that support the trans-national mobility of researchers. This is important not only for the exchange of knowledge between European NCPs and those countries, but as an opportunity to attract researchers to Europe, and increase its scientific potential and to facilitate the achievement of the ERA goals.

In order to increase the awareness of international researchers and research organisations of the opportunities offered under the FP7 PEOPLE Programme, 5 MCA promotional events in Third Countries will be organised during the running of the project. The project promotion activities focus therefore on *promoting the overall PEOPLE programme in Third Countries* only in order to *enhance collaborations at international level*, and will include specific sessions right at the end of the project to promote Horizon 2020.

The project aims also to *further stimulating the closer cooperation among FP7 PEOPLE NCPs*, with a focus on strengthening cooperation with Third Country and newcomer NCPs, and between the NCP Network and the EC/REA. To this end a set of *tools and communication mechanisms* will be established during the running of the project, including dedicated focus groups and mailing lists.

PeopleNetwork+ is a 2-years project running from the 1st of January 2012 to the 31st of December 2013.

Consortium

PeopleNetwork+ has a consortium of **15 beneficiaries** (as detailed below) and of approx. **80 Associated Partners** (APs); these latest include all the officially nominated PEOPLE NCPs/Contact Points in EU MS/AC and Third Countries that are not involved in the project as



GA number: 297550

beneficiaries but will nevertheless benefit from the project activities and outcomes (the list of PeopleNetwork+ APs is continuously updated, also in case of newcomers, taking into account the formal NCP list of the European Commission sent regularly to the project coordinator). The partnership includes 3 International Cooperation Partner Countries (ICPC countries) that have signed bilateral S&T agreements with the European Union: Argentina, Egypt and Russia. Their involvement is crucial to cover, besides Europe, three important world regions. Therefore PeopleNetwork+ approach will focus on:

- Europe
- Mediterranean/North Africa (Egypt)
- Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Russia)
- Latin America (Argentina)

Participant organisation name	Participant short name	Country
Agenzia per la promozione della ricerca europea	APRE	Italy
Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación Productiva	MINCyT	Argentina
Austrian Research Promotion Agency	FFG	Austria
Sofia University 'Saint Kliment Ohridski'	SU NIS	Bulgaria
Research Promotion Foundation	RPF	Cyprus
Academy of Scientific Research and Technology	ASRT	Egypt
SIHTASUTUS EESTI TEADUSAGENTUUR	ETAG	Estonia
Centre for Research and Technology	CERTH	Greece
Israeli Industry Center for Research & Development	MATIMOP-ISERD	Israel
Malta Council for Science and Technology	MCST	Malta
Agentschap NL	AgNL	Netherlands
The Institute of Fundamental Technological Research PAS	IPPT-PAN	Poland
State University - Higher School of Economics	HSE	Russia
Euresearch	Euresearch	Switzerland
The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey	TÜBİTAK	Turkey

Project expected final results

The activities of PeopleNetwork+ are structured into 5 Work Packages: WP1 management of the project activities; WP2 focuses on welcoming newcomers to ensure a minimum level of knowledge and quality of services provided by each NCP in Member States, Associated and Third Countries; WP3 Capacity building, with a special emphasis on more experienced NCPs; WP4 for the promotion of the PEOPLE Programme; WP5 focuses on networking and communication activities. Expected project outputs can be summarised as:

- Improved and more consistent level of NCP support services across Europe and beyond
- Simplified access to FP7 PEOPLE calls - lowering the entry barriers for newcomers and raising the average quality of submitted proposals
- Knowledge transfer among NCPs through identification and sharing of best practice, training sessions and twinning visits
- Encouraging the international dimension of the PEOPLE Programme through the promotion of all relevant FP7 Marie Curie actions, including IRSES

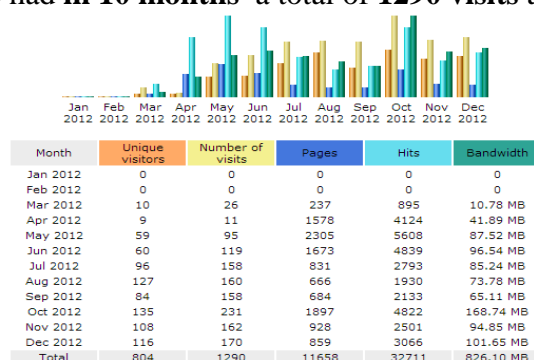


GA number: 297550

- The creation of a virtual Marie-Curie Community through outreach and dissemination activities linked to Web 2.0 activities.

Project main results

The activities of each Work Package are strictly interlinked and, most of the times, have been organised in accordance with other project events/activities or other EU and international events/initiatives, as briefly summarised here after. 3 majors NCP Forum gatherings were organised during this 1st reporting period, as well as meeting of management team (Steering Committee meeting) consisting of the coordinator plus 4 Work Package leaders, 7 Task leaders and 2 Associated Partners (as observers only), for a total of 14 members, met three times in this first year if the running of the project. To facilitate the internal project communication an internal and restricted project e-learning platform has been created, aimed at facilitating the learning process of newcomers and experienced NCPs and for sharing of good practices, easily accessible by NCPs from the dedicated project web site (<http://peoplenetworkplus.eu/>). It tackles the worldwide scientific community and specifically for Third Countries, and provides the project's data repository. The web site had in **10 months** a total of **1290 visits** and **11.658 pages** viewed:



Project social media have been activated, with **Facebook** reaching **38456 people**, **LinkedIn** with **52 members**, of which 40% are active in research, and **Twitter** feeding **35 followers worldwide**.

Facebook platform:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/PeopleNetwork/406182846062442>



LinkedIn Group

http://www.linkedin.com/groups/PeopleNetworkPlus-4345491?trk=myg_ugrp_ovr



Twitter

<https://twitter.com/#!/PeopleNetwork1>



The project had a very good start: in February 2012 a **kick off meeting**, together with the **first NCP Forum**, a **Workshop on Social Media**, a **networking meeting with the ACCESS projects coordinators** and the **first Steering Committee meeting**, was organised in Rome, a gathering lasting three days to which more than 50 delegates from all over the world took part, as well as representatives from the EC. Following this meeting the network has had other **three general gatherings** in year 2012, combining the activities foreseen in different Tasks and Work Packages:

- **Cyprus (July 2012)** during the first week of the **EU Presidency**, with approx. 50 delegates, including representatives from the EC and the REA; second NCP Forum and Steering Committee meeting, training on COFUND, training on Consortium Agreements for Marie Curie Initial Training Networks (ITN) for experienced NCPs, training on legal and financial issues for newcomers/less experienced NCPs
- **Brussels (October 2012)**: meeting with Third Countries representatives organised by the EC in collaboration with the project coordinator, followed by NCP meeting and REA training on ITN schemes (focus on EID);
- **Istanbul (November 2012)**: approx. 40 delegates participated at the training on IRSES (also REA PO and EC PO invited as trainer/speaker), third NCP FORUM and Steering Committee meeting.



The contents of the training sessions above have been chosen based on an assessment of the training and capacity building needs of NCPs, via a dedicated mapping questionnaire (also available on line) to which a total of **81** NCPs responded. The results of this questionnaire have been used also to match the NCPs profiles and competencies and organise the **twinning schemes**, i.e. working visits (10 visits foreseen and set, one in year 2012 and 9 between Jan and July 2013), involving a total of **61** NCPs from all over the world.

Special attention has been given to the needs of Third Countries NCPs/Contact Points and newcomers in general terms. To introduce them into the Network, to make them collaborate more with other NCPS and, in some cases to assist them in starting a new job as NCP, the project has created a specific route starting with a welcome package (containing a welcome letter with all necessary and basic information about MCAs, the project activities and training sessions as well as an e-Practical Guide) and ending with specific training sessions dedicated to them. The use of a common mailing address dedicated an e-learning platform has also helped the process of enhancing collaboration among NCPs.

The European Commission perceives the network of NCPs as an important instrument for gathering feedback on possible problems and difficulties in the implementation of the Framework Programme, and in particular of the MCAs. In this respect, in this first phase PeopleNetwork+ has successfully further developed a structured communication channel that facilitate links with the EC and with the REA, this latest via a focus group dealing directly with the REA POs and collaborating, for example, in the drafting and amendment of specific MCA legal and financial documents.

Last, but not least, we should mention the promotion of the PEOPLE Programme and NCP Network in Third Countries: a total of **two main promotional events** were organized in Third Countries, one in Moscow and one in Buenos Aires (with coordinator and EC representatives), opened to the international and local scientific community, policy makers, researchers, others.