



Project no.: **043701**

Project acronym: **RUSERA-EXE**

Project full name: **Expanding ERA over Russia**
Instrument: **Specific Support Action**
Thematic Priority: **FP6 INCO**

Periodic Activity Report

Period covered: **January 2007-December 2008**

Date of preparation: 15 March 2008

Start date of project: **01/01/2007**

Duration: **24 months**

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1. Project Execution

Description of project objectives, contractors involved, work performed and end results

The objective of RUSERA-EXE is to increase the quantity and quality of cooperation between Russian and EU researchers by creating **long lasting "researcher-to-researcher" RTD partnerships**. The project will focus on the 5 most promising and advanced RUSERA FP6 Regional Information Nodes (RINs) (Tomsk, Krasnoyarsk, St. Petersburg, Uljanovsk, Ulan-Ude) who actually will cover the whole territory of the existing RUSERA Network with the assistance of other RUSERA RINs, and achieve its objective by:

- Establishment of **long lasting partnerships** between researchers in Russian regions and EU Member States and development and fostering of these contacts via **bilateral working visits** of Russian and European researchers to Russian and EU host research organisations;
- Specialized **training workshops/seminars** for RUSERA RINs, scientists and research managers;
- Elaboration of **new method of cooperation**; developing **new methodology** of RTD cooperation between Russia and EU; implementation of the new methodology;
- Creation of **handbook** for research managers;
- Inclusion of **more partners from Russian regions** in projects submitted under FP7 by EU Member States coordinators;
- **Raising awareness in Russian regions** about the opportunities of participation in FP7;
- **Promotion of the research potential of Russian regions** among the EU Member States scientific community;
- Improvement of **advisory and practical skills** of Russian RINs – FP multipliers;
- Improvement of the **skills of potential Russian coordinators** to write a successful proposal and to manage it appropriately;
- **Stimulation of the EU scientific community to cooperate with Russian researchers** in the regions;
- **Continuous advice** to RUSERA RINs, scientists and research managers by AEER/TPU and FFG/EIP;
- Establishing of **twelve EU-RU "researcher-to-researcher" long lasting contacts** and RTD partnerships.

The project is co-ordinated by Association of Engineering Education of Russia (AEER) and implemented jointly with the Austrian Promotion Agency (FFG/EIP) and National Documentation Centre (EKT), Greece.

RUSERA-EXE Project results

- **4 PMB meetings** were held: there were three PMB meetings according to the schedule, and a special meeting was called in addition.
- **245 telephone consultations** in total were held by AEER with RINs;
- FFG developed the **methodology** for the survey (definition and identification of target groups, online questionnaire, semi-structured interviews) and carried out the survey in cooperation with the RINs,
- **training workshops/seminars** for RUSERA RINs in Moscow (March 2007) and in Vienna were held; 5 RINs' managers were trained in order to improve their capacity to support Russian research teams with their participation in EC-funded programmes, in particular FP7;
- **911 consultations** were made by RIN managers;
- A Call for proposals for WORKING VISITS was launched in RU and the EU, 43 applications were received and 8 RU and 8 EU researchers were selected for carrying out RUSERA-EXE working visits;
- RUSERA-EXE Project funded **15 working visits (8 working visits at EU research organisations and 7 working visits at RU research organisations)**, that were held to bring together European and Russian partners to keep and foster the established contacts;
- **47 long-lasting contacts** in total were established: **18 project proposals** were submitted, **17 joint EU-RU research articles** published, **10 joint oral presentations** at international conferences were made; 2 joint EU-RU conferences/workshops were made. **3 joint project proposals were approved for funding (!!!)** – **2 project proposal under FP7 and 1 project proposal under the joint call of national research programmes;**
- **59 Regional Information Days** on FP7 organised by RINs and RUSERA-EXE project consortium;
- **2 fliers and Leaflet** of RUSERA-EXE project were created;
- **8 Newsletters** were elaborated;
- **RUSERA-EXE web-site** (<http://www.rusera-exe.ru>) was designed, launched and updated;
- **23 publications** in EU and Russian media, websites, journals, etc. were made.

Project work performed

WP1 Project management (AEER)

Project management activities were carried out on a day by day basis to ensure completion of the project tasks and operational management of project activities. Monitoring of the project progress has been done through preparation quarterly reports and phone consultations.

Management of the Project is realised by Project Management Board (PMB) that consists of Project Co-ordinator (Russian Association for Engineering Education) and Project Partners (FFG and EKT) – 2 persons from each Project Partner. The Project Management Board is responsible for the overall global success of the project.

During the reporting period the Project Management Board (PMB) of the RUSERA-EXE project had opportunities to hold a number of meetings which coincided with project activities. So the partners had an opportunity to discuss issues to be addressed and actions needed. Shared workspace on the RUSERA-EXE web-site was set up by AEER for exchange and filing of the project documents and deliverables.

Mostly communication between the Project Management Board members was realised by e-mails and phone.

AEER participates in the project through 5 Russian RINs. Their activities are coordinated by Tomsk Polytechnic University (TPU). TPU provided RINs with daily support and consultations on different aspects of FP7 and RINs activities in Russian under the RUSERA-EXE project.

Each RIN provided TPU with on results of its activities. Monitoring of RUSERA-EXE network activities was carried out via e-mailing or phone conversations and quarterly reports from RINs.

WP2 Creation of long lasting EU-RU RTD partnership (AEER)

FFG developed a methodology for the survey and conceived an online questionnaire as well as guiding questions for semistructured interviews by involving the RIN's as well as two native Russian speaking experts in the field.

104 researchers participated in the survey, 66 located in Russia and 38 located in Europe. Respondents addressed for the majority FP6 (54% of European / 40% of Russian respondents) for funding, followed by INTAS (22,9% of European / 19,8% of Russian respondents). Furthermore, respondents are involved into TEMPUS, TACIS and joint bilateral programmes of Russia and individual EU Member States. All European respondents which were interviewed are coordinators of FP6-projects which were actually funded.

The individual experiences compiled reflect up-to-date experiences made for the majority within ongoing RTD-cooperation projects which were funded through competitive calls for proposals, for the majority in FP6.

FFG summarised the international cooperation RTD experience of EU and RU researchers and research managers in the "Handbook for Russian and EU researchers and research managers"/D2b.

Apart from the detailed analysis of the outcomes of the survey, the methodology resp. handbook comprises key messages resulting from the analysis, and detailed background information about issues like IPR in Russia, visa requirements, Russian research funding and a brief overview of the history of EU-Russia RTD cooperation since 1991 until today incl. future perspectives (association in part or in full to FP7). As the collection of this background information about Russia required good insight and Russian language skills, FFG involved (by a subcontract) a native Russian researcher, Dr. Alexandra Bykova, to analyse and collect background information on the above mentioned issues related to Russia.

There will be a long version (127 pages) and a short version (111 pages) of the handbook. The short version doesn't comprise the recommendations of European coordinators and the background information on RTD in Russia.

To provide Regional Information Nodes of AEER with knowledge on FP7 as well as topics related to crosscultural cooperation and communication two training seminars were organised by RUSERA EXE: one in Moscow, organised by AEER & one Vienna, organised by FFG.

RINs managers were trained in order to improve their capacity to support Russian research teams with their participation in EC-funded programmes, in particular FP7, and with insight how practical obstacles to a smooth cooperation and communication can be overcome.

The goal of the project is to establish "researcher-researcher" long lasting contacts between Russian researchers and EU researchers from targeted organisations. This goal is being achieved by RINs day-to-day activities and 15 RUSERA-EXE working visits that were held to bring together European and Russian partners to keep and foster the established contacts.



There are 47 “researcher-researcher” long lasting contacts established under RUSERA-EXE Project (joint project proposals submitted, joint papers published, joint oral presentations made, joint international workshops/conferences organised) vs 12 “researcher-researcher” long lasting contacts planned in RUSERA-EXE Project Technical Annex. Three joint project proposals were approved for funding.



WP3 Continuous FP7 advice (FFG)

A methodology and a relevant questionnaire have been prepared and disseminated to RINs. A “virtual Helpdesk” was established, operated and supported by the appropriate team of EKT. The virtual Helpdesk provides advices on FP7 and its rules on the permanent base to the RINs and the Scientific and Research Community of Russia.

Dissemination via email to all project partners’ information about FP7 opens calls for proposals and opportunities of participation of Eastern European countries.

The experience of the RUSERA EXE project shows that intercultural issues are a sensitive topic where RINs were not likely to ask for advice per email or phone.

However, RINs gained benefits and experience from the RUSERA EXE project in the area of cultural issues: FFG used different opportunities to address the topic, to promote a sharing of experiences and good practice involving the RINs as well as European experts and to provide support:

- Brainstorming/ Sharing of experiences at the RUSERA EXE Training Course in Moscow, Minutes handed over to RINs;
- Recommendations of EU FP6-coordinators, handed over to the RINs;
- Exchange of experiences, discussions at the RUSERA EXE Training Course in Vienna;
- Provision of the Handbook for Russian and EU researchers and research managers.



WP4 Information dissemination (AEER)

Information dissemination activities in EU reached approximately 9600 people and about 50000 people in RU, apart from the users of CORDIS (280 000). RUSERA EXE gained thus considerable visibility and recognition among the EU and RU research communities.

FFG promoted each key activity – the start of the project, the working visits, the training workshop in Vienna – via CORDIS and other channels, e.g. the NCP network and FFG where FFG was involved. A dissemination plan for the recently finished D2b/”RUSERA EXE Handbook for Russian and EU researchers and research managers” is ready. Dissemination will start in April and will be carried out during the next months.

Detailed information about information dissemination by FFG and EKT can be found in D10; for RU in D11.



Conclusion

In the project duration the RUSERA-EXE consortium gained valuable experience in establishing collaboration between EU and Russian researchers. RUSERA-EXE consortium suggested and implemented the methodology and approaches for international research cooperation as well support for RU proposers, training for RIN managers and continuous advice helpdesk.

In the project duration RU R&D community proved its high interest in collaboration with EU colleagues. The Network of Regional Information Nodes will continue its activities after the project completion to support RU researchers in their participation in EC R&D programmes.



2. Dissemination and use

As a Support Action, the project does not have results which can be promoted by CORDIS for wider exploitation.