

BOOST MT



Project no. **INCO-CT-2004-510482**

Acronym: **BOOST MT**

Project Title: **Support to Maltese Organisations for achieving a good level of Participation in the Sixth Framework Programme and Beyond**

Instrument: **Specific Support Action**

Thematic Priority: **International Co-operation Activities**

Final Activity Report the BOOST MT project

Period covered: from **1st April 2004** to **31st March 2007**

Date of preparation: **May 2007**

Start date of project: **1st April 2004**

Duration: **36 months**

Project coordinator name: **Michael Refalo**

Project coordinator organisation name: **Malta Council for Science & Technology**

Project Execution

The overall objective of the work in the *Boost MT* project was to stimulate, encourage, and facilitate the participation of Maltese Organisations, including SMEs, in all the domains and instruments of the 6th EU Framework Programme (FP6), with particular attention to the participation of Maltese organizations in the new instruments – Integrated Projects and Networks of Excellence. Thus, *the Boost MT* project contributed towards achieving a strong involvement of Maltese entities, thus fostering European integration and the long-term objectives of the European Research Area (ERA). Participation in FP6 was not only relevant to Private organisations, but also to Public bodies and Research institutions. With its approach, the *Boost MT* project ensured adequate activities in favour of substantial involvement from all the sectors in the Maltese Economic and Social environments, thus contributing to the strong and actual integration of Malta into an enlarged and unified Europe.

Malta was a new comer to the Framework Programmes, having been fully associated to the FP5 in June 2001. This meant that Maltese organisations which had the capacity to be involved in the Framework programmes were as yet largely unaware of the possibilities that the Framework programmes could provide towards their research and technology needs. As from Malta's association in FP5 till its end in 2002, Malta had been involved in 44 projects throughout the seven areas of FP5. This might look as a very encouraging figure for a small country such as Malta, but upon closer examination, one can see that these projects only had the involvement of a small group of Maltese entities. These entities were the ones which were the most informed on FP5 and which had a close collaboration with the NCP organisation, the Malta Council for Science & Technology (MCST).

Upon the start of FP6, MCST started to realise that more Maltese organisations, especially private enterprises, needed to be involved in the Framework Programmes in order to ensure a true impact of FP6 on Malta's research and innovation scenarios.

One of the most important tasks of this project was to set up a platform on national stakeholders with an interest in research and innovation and use the experiences and knowledge of the platform to formulate an FP strategy for Malta. In this respect,

MCST went a step further. It not only set up an advisory council composed of academia, public bodies, private entities and individuals but embarked on the development of a national Research & Innovation strategy for Malta. This was exactly in line with what the BOOST MT project set along to achieve. Thus, after numerous meetings with the relevant stakeholders and collection of data regarding the participation of Malta in research projects, the BOOST MT project provided valuable input towards the drafting and publishing of the national R&I strategy, of which the Framework Programme is an integral part.

The BOOST MT project wasn't only aimed at the development of a strategy for research but also to increase the awareness on the research and innovation opportunities that existed for Maltese stakeholders. Thus this project set forth in publishing periodic newsletters, both electronic and hard copy. These newsletters not only provided information of research in Malta and Europe but also provided a means for Maltese researchers to publish their successes. Through this project, Maltese researchers were also given the possibility to describe their projects first-hand, either through video success stories or through the active participation of events which were organised by the project.

These event were mainly designed to increase the awareness on the importance of research and the benefits that could be derived from participating in research programmes. During its duration, the BOOST MT project organised various events ranging from innovation to the launching conference of the Seventh Framework Programme. The BOOST MT project also organise a brokerage event in Malta for the ICT sector. Brokerage events are usually very difficult to hold in Malta due to its limited size in research capacities and the costs associated to bring interested foreign researchers to the country. However the project had used the partnership that the Government of Malta has with IBM to co-organise a brokerage event during which researchers from IBM would explain their project ideas for FP7 to Maltese researchers and try to find parts of the project in which the Maltese researchers could participate.

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Apart from the above mentioned activities, the project also organised specific info-days on the different areas of FP6 and then on FP7, thus also providing a first look to the new framework programme well before its launch.

However information is sparsely enough for a newcomer to the Framework Programmes to effectively participate in the programme. Thus MCST utilised the feedback from its clients to devise and publish simple guide on how to participate in the programme. Moreover, specific training workshops were organised on different issues of submitting and preparing and managing a project.

The BOOST MT also aimed at increasing the participation of the FPs by effectively assisting the National Contact Points that manage the FPs. The project embarked on the development of IT management tools that are embedded within the project website (www.mcst.org.mt/fp7) and provide valuable assistance to NCPs in carrying out their work.

But IT tools are not enough for assisting NCPs in their work and the BOOST MT project organised twinning visits of NCPs so that they could learn from the experiences of their colleagues in other countries. Moreover the project also focused on the development of a quality manual for NCPs to provide the best service possible.

Finally, the project also kept the general public informed through the issuing of press releases to the local media and through the participation of MCST staff in programmes and fairs directly related to the opportunities that the EU provides to its citizens.

At the start of FP6, many thought that Maltese entities would not be able to participate in the programme due to the nature of its large projects. At the end of FP6 over 500 proposals having a Maltese entity were submitted to the European Commission. Of these, over 100 projects have a Maltese partner within the consortium. This does not mean that the BOOST MT project was responsible for all this success but it surely would have been a different picture if the BOOST MT project didn't carry out its activities.