EU-EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA - Gateway for ICT Research and Innovation

Welcome!

Dear Reader,

The EECA Cluster, composed of the two European Projects EAST-HORIZON and EECA-2- HORIZON and created in order to build a cooperation bridge between the EU and the countries of the broader Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) region, will come to an end on 31st July 2016. This last newsletter focuses on the Cluster's activities over the last few months, and on its overall achievements and forward looking plans. With this last issue we hope to further improve the awareness of the Scientific and Industrial Community in both regions on what has been done so far in terms of supporting the participation of the EECA R&I teams in the EU Research and Innovation Programmes and on how the Cluster plans to continue creating more cooperation opportunities, synergies and collaboration initiatives between EECA and EU R&I teams in the future.

Enjoy reading and hope to hear from you soon.

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Cluster Outcomes & Impact

The EECA Cluster projects aimed to have the following impact:

▪ Increase awareness on emerging opportunities for international cooperation under both EU and EECA R&I programmes.
▪ Bring together leading ICT research and industrial actors from both regions in areas of mutual interest and added value in view of a closer EU - EECA cooperation.
▪ Support the policy dialogue and cooperation between the EU and EECA countries, contributing to the setting up of joint initiatives, enhancing their ICT RTD&I collaboration.

Increase awareness on emerging opportunities for international cooperation under both EU and EECA R&I programmes

▪ Info-days and training sessions in all EECA countries to share insight on emerging opportunities under H2020-ICT, including proposal writing training resulted in the following:
  o More than 25 proposals were submitted: Kazakhstan - more than 3 project proposals were submitted to H2020 calls in 2014-2015; Belarus - more than 10 submitted proposals; Georgia - more than 7; Russia - Discussion and preparation of the project 'Service-oriented platform for Public eProcurement services' of the Institute of Mathematical Problems of Biology RAS.
  o Formation of international consortia.

▪ A publicly accessible Help Desk was set up which offered guidance and support related to the procedures of participation in H2020-ICT and Hands-on support to EECA researchers towards their involvement in EU-funded projects.

▪ A web portal was created acting as an on-line source of relevant information.

Bring together leading ICT research and industrial actors from both regions in areas of mutual interest and added value for EU – EECA cooperation

▪ A publicly accessible on-line database (Competence Platform) was created for the promotion of the research interests and achievements of prominent ICT RDT&I organizations and experts from the EECA region.

▪ Following are examples of outcomes from networking activities in EU and the EECA countries:
  o In Azerbaijan, twelve experts became members of NEM and NESSI.
  o Belarus experts became members of NEM and NESSI.
  o 25 EECA organizations became members of European networks.

▪ Involvement of EECA ICT NCPs, ICT Experts and Policy Makers in EU Level ICT Actions such as ICT Info Days, Conferences and Trainings, Brokerages and Networking.

▪ Creation of sustainable "ICT Communities" in areas of mutual interest and added value by linking and bringing together key actors from both regions and, thus, supporting the development of strategic partnerships.

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Support the policy dialogue and cooperation between the EU and EECA countries, contributing to the setting up of joint initiatives, enhancing their ICT RTD&I collaboration

- Analysis of the ICT research priorities in the EECA countries, with special focus on HORIZON 2020 RTD&I orientation.

- Better understanding of key ICT areas of mutual interest that may result in substantial socio-economic benefits and impact for all regions.

- Better understanding of INCO status between EECA and EU.

- The EaP@Connect project was launched and received support from the EC.

- Launch of "Harmonization of Digital Markets of the EU and the Eastern European partner countries" (HDM) Initiative created by Belarus/Lithuania IT associations supported by the Cluster:
  o Supported by the European Commission.
  o Approved by the Ministerial Meeting on Digital Economy June 2015, Luxemburg.
  o It is planned to submit a proposal for further development of several spheres within this initiative.

- Launch of an open discussion forum, including policy dialogue, for the exchange of ideas on future indicative action plans to strengthen collaboration between the EU and the EECA regions. The national stakeholders as well as EC representatives and EU experts took part in the biggest Cluster and EC events.

- Implementation of Cluster projects has fostered policy dialogue between the EU and EECA countries, and increased the interest of the ICT communities in the EECA to cooperate with IT related business, research and public sectors of the EU.

Sustainability Plan

Now that the cluster projects have almost finished, we hope the following actions will ensure continuation of activities and achievements of the project:

- The EECA partners can take advantage of established collaboration links (particularly, with ETPs) towards future joint RTD&I activities. E.g. representation of EECA countries on ETPs; bilateral and regional workshops.

- Continuing from training workshops, the EECA partners will provide services to inform, train, and support ICT stakeholders to participate in H2020, including support with partner search and proposal writing.

- Follow-up H2020 projects focusing on EECA regions. Thus the IncoNet EaP PLUS project will be launched in September 2016. Although ICT is not a focused area in it, the areas of Health, Energy and Climate Change & Environment have ICT applications, so cluster results will be partly exploited there.

- European Technology Platforms (ETPs):
  o the NESSI and NEM ETPs are open for further integration of EECA experts in
  o At present, there is an idea to create the first ETP in Georgia on the basis of the Georgian National Academy of Science in smart specializations and innovations, etc.

- Research Diaspora: Exploit the research EECA Diaspora the highly qualified EECA PhD students, professors, researchers, etc. who already work in EU, in order to increase awareness in Europe about ICT R&D organizations and structures in the EECA.

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EECA Cluster Final Conference

The Final Conference of the EECA Cluster successfully took place on 13-14 June 2016 in Chisinau, Moldova.

The aim of the conference was to validate the Cluster projects' findings and share this knowledge with key ICT actors from the EU and EECA regions as well as to enable networking among EU and EECA ICT teams in order to establish future initiatives on EU-EECA ICT RTD&I cooperation.

The conference was combined with the 3rd ICT Communities' building event (13/6/2016) and the workshop on "ICT in Societal Challenges" (14/6/2016).

140 participants from both regions attended the event including R&D&I specialists from universities, research centers, companies, representatives of ICT associations, policy makers in ICT sector.

Main Objectives

- Inform ICT R&I teams from both regions on upcoming collaboration opportunities.

- Discuss future cooperation between the NESSI and NEM European Technology Platforms (ETPs) and the EECA region, namely on the common R&I priorities, the factors hindering this collaboration as well as actions to overcome them.

- Facilitate networking among EU and EECA ICT teams.

Support for experts

A number of experts were financially supported to attend the event, more specifically:
- 19 experts from European Union Member States; and
- 45 experts from the EECA region.

A catalogue of the event participants including short profiles, photos, overviews of R&I competencies, fields of expertise and application areas, was prepared for the event.

Structure of the event

Day 1 (13th June) focused on the outcomes of the Cluster activities including: collaboration among the ICT Community members as well as among the European Technology Platforms and similar EECA structures; outcome of previous EECA Cluster events; emerging opportunities for EECA countries as well as barriers for international cooperation with EU in Research, Technology Development and Innovation (RTDI) programmes.

Parallel sessions – Open discussions were held to determine common research areas among the Networked European Software and Services Initiative (NESSI) and the New European Media initiative (NEM) ETPs and the EECA region and factors hindering active involvement of EECA ICT teams in ETP activities. 49 participants attended the session dedicated to NESSI and 32 participants attended the NEM session.

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The event facilitated an exchange of views on EU-EECA RTDI collaboration potential in the field of ICT as well as to share knowledge with all stakeholders and strengthen RTDI collaboration links in ICT.

Day 2 (14th June) was divided into two parts:

- **Workshop "ICT in Societal Challenges"** – focused on ICT RTDI areas of mutual interest for EU-EECA collaboration and their contribution to major societal challenges (Health, Energy, Transport etc.).
  The workshop provided a unique opportunity to bring into direct contact ICT experts from both regions and facilitated their interaction. ICT R&I teams presented 19 (6 from EU and 13 from EECA) proposal ideas tackling ICT in Societal Challenges.

The examples of EU-funded RTDI projects addressing major Societal Challenges through ICT research were presented and experiences shared such as the robot that folds clothes, user recognition using physiology signals, 3D haptic Web browser and many others. The full list is available on the EECA portal.

- **Networking session** where participants presented their competencies and ideas for international research projects. **19 proposal ideas** focusing on fundamental & applied ICT research ideas were presented by EECA ICT R&I teams at the networking session.

Presentation pitches are available on the Cluster's website

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ICT Proposers' Day 2016, Bratislava, Slovakia

To keep the momentum in the EECA-EU cooperation

SAVE THE DATE!

The ICT Proposers' Day 2016 is organized by the European Commission, on Monday & Tuesday, 26-27 September 2016, as part of the Digital Week in Bratislava. This is a great networking event promoting European ICT Research & Innovation and focusing on the Horizon 2020 Work Programme for 2016-17.

Registration is open!! Until 19/9/2016

The event will focus on the Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2016-17 in the field of Information & Communication Technologies. It offers a unique and exceptional opportunity to build quality partnerships with academics, researchers, industrial stakeholders, SMEs and government actors from all over Europe. More information about the event, the networking opportunities, as well as practical information about how to get to Bratislava and the venue can be found on the ICT Proposers' Day 2016 website.

Important note: *you can find partners for all your developing proposal ideas by attending.*

Ideal-ist face2face brokerage event: Ideal-ist, the ICT National Contact Point Network, is organizing in cooperation with the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), a brokerage event with pre-arranged face2face meetings. It offers an additional way of networking and possibly meeting potential cooperation partners at the event.

We wish you good luck with your ideas and new projects!

Cluster Services on-line

A new ICT Call will be open in the autumn 2016, so it's time to start with proposal preparation. Keep in mind that you can continue to use our supportive on-line tools! Just **a reminder of our services** available especially for you!

Help-Desk – for any advice on H2020

Participation in the HORIZON 2020 Programme (H2020) is quite a complicated process even for experienced actors. That is why we created an on-line Helpdesk that enables you, the EECA ICT community, to have the opportunity to ask any question, in your own language. The Helpdesk service aims at providing direct hands-on personalized support to EECA researchers for participation in ICT related topics within the H2020 Programme. Answers are managed by the ICT National Contact Points (ICT NCPs) and/or EECA Cluster Country Representatives. Their contact details are available here. We will continue to respond to your request within a maximum of **2 working days** from the first call/question.

Competence Platform – for your promotion

The EECA Cluster database of ICT R&I profiles can be found here and includes organizations throughout the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region. This database aims to facilitate the formation of international consortia among key ICT research and industrial actors from the EU and the EECA region. More specifically:

- EECA R&I ICT teams have a unique opportunity to promote their competencies and increase their visibility, which will lead to participation in international consortia focused on H2020 upcoming Calls.
- EU experts may identify and contact regional key players to form future collaborations via a search engine mechanism.

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H2020 Related Upcoming Autumn Events

Federated Conference on Computer Science and Information Systems
11th – 14th September 2016, Gdansk, Poland

IEEE International Smart Cities Conference
12th – 15th September 2016, Trento, Italy

i-KNOW:International Conference on Knowledge Technologies and Data-driven Business
18th – 19th October 2016, Graz, Austria

it-sa – the Highlight for the IT security Sector
18th -20th October 2016, Nuremberg, Germany

2016 Smart City World Congress Brokerage Event
15th -17th November, 2016 Barcelona Spain

Smart Systems Integration
8th – 9th March 2017, Kork, Ireland

Upcoming Events in the EECA Region

International Grand Forum "Business and IT – BIT 2016".
15 September, 2016, Minsk, Republic of Belarus

Information Control Systems and Technologies (ICST-ODESSA-2016)
20-22 September, 2016, Odessa, Ukraine

South-Caucasus Grid & Cloud Computing Workshop
October 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia

EU EaPConnect project annual conference
October 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia

9th Regional Georgian ICT Development and Cyber Security Event GITI 2016
November 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia

BIT-2016 International Forum: cloud technologies, data centers, IP communications, Internet of Things, IT services for business
3 November, 2016, Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan

Development of Informatisation and the State System of Scientific and Technical Information" (DISTI 2016)
18 November, 2016, Minsk, Republic of Belarus

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EAST-HORIZON

EECA-2-HORIZON

Cluster farewell Note

As the EECA Clusters projects come to an end on 31 July 2016 we would like to say a big thanks to all of you who participated in our events and received our support. We are grateful for the positive feedback we have received from EECA and EU research and innovation stakeholders for providing useful information on H2020, on the European Research and Innovation Programmes and for introducing new opportunities for networking and finding partners, in an effort for more active and successful participation in H2020 and beyond.

We will all be available for your comments and questions and ready to support you for the years to come!

…..Till we meet again……

www.eeca-ict.eu