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**EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA
COMMITTEE
Strategic Forum for International
S&T Cooperation**

Secretariat

ERAC-SFIC 1352/13

NOTE

Subject : SFIC Work Programme 2013-2014

Delegations will find attached the Work Programme 2013-2014 of the Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC) as adopted via written procedure on 4 March 2013.

SFIC WORK PROGRAMME 2013-14

This document sets out the Work Programme of the Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC) for the years 2013-2014.

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

SFIC is a strategic forum and an advisory body to the Council and the Commission with a view to implementing a European Partnership in the field of international scientific and technological cooperation (S&T cooperation). Member States and the Commission are members of the Forum while countries associated to the 7th Framework Programme have an observership status. SFIC's objective is to facilitate the further development, implementation and monitoring of the international dimension of the European Research Area (ERA) by the sharing of information and consultation between the partners with a view to identifying common priorities which could lead to coordinated or joint initiatives, and coordinating activities and positions vis-à-vis third countries and within international fora.

The rationale for such framework is provided by the Council conclusions concerning a European partnership for international scientific and technological cooperation of 2 December 2008¹.

In the past years, SFIC has played an essential role in driving forward the EU-MS partnership in international S&T cooperation as well as in contributing to the external dimension of the ERA, as shown in the Third SFIC Annual Report (March 2011-February 2012)². Moreover, substantial progress has been made in particular SFIC activities and initiatives, as it is the case with India, China and the USA, and a new initiative on Brazil has also been launched. This Work Programme aims at building on such initiatives, foster new ones and driving forward the EU/MS partnership.

¹ Doc. 16763/08

² Doc. ERAC-SFIC 1353/12

On 14 September 2012, the Commission published its Communication on "Enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in Research and Innovation: A strategic approach". The Commission's rationale for a new strategic approach to international cooperation is that Europe needs to engage more strategically in science, technology and innovation cooperation with its main partners in order to: strengthen the Union's excellence and attractiveness in research and innovation and its economic and industrial competitiveness; address global societal challenges; and support external policies. While SFIC will provide input to the roll-out of this strategy, the necessary resources and funding for the implementation of the strategy in the ERA context will be provided by Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, as well as the relevant national programmes. Contributions will follow the principle of variable geometry.

Moreover, the Competitiveness Council of 11 December 2012, in its conclusions on "A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth", recalled that the external dimension of the European Research Area is "a vital, cross-cutting and integral part of the ERA and that deepening and strengthening the partnership between the Commission and the Member States will therefore be an important element of the strategic approach towards enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in research and innovation"³.

1.1 Operational principles for the implementation of the Work Programme

SFIC will take into account the afore-mentioned past, current and future context in its activities and actions. SFIC activities will be implemented on a voluntary basis following the principle of variable geometry. SFIC will match the level of ambition with the resources available when implementing its Work Programme for 2013-2014. SFIC will reinforce links to other ERA groups to support the development of the international perspective of the ERA initiatives and new ERA activities. SFIC will take an active role in contributing to the realization of ERA and its international dimension, especially by contributing to the development of common principles/guidelines for international R&I cooperation, building up synergies with Horizon 2020 and relevant national programmes, and supporting the overall assessment of the impact of the EU's actions in international S&T cooperation. The added value of SFIC will be created by optimizing the use of national, European and global resources and avoiding duplication of activities and efforts.

³ Doc. 17649/12

2. STRUCTURE OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

The SFIC Work Programme 2013-2014 is based on the previous and current SFIC work and it has been developed with the input from delegations, mainly emerging from the strategic discussions that took place at the second SFIC Strategic Workshop in Helsinki on 10-11 May 2012. The discussions at the Helsinki seminar were followed up by deliberations at Task Force and plenary level. During the SFIC plenary on 11 June 2012, the SFIC Chair presented a conclusion paper of the Helsinki discussions as well as a draft SFIC Vision 2020-2025, with its goals, activities and means. With this background, the SFIC Work Programme 2013-2014 has its focus on **four different priorities and areas of action**, each one with specific objectives and goals:

- Added value and visibility;
- Common priorities and joint initiatives and actions;
- Analysis, collection and sharing of information;
- Networking and coordination.

This structure translates the strategic discussions and the objectives into a concrete work plan to be pursued during the next two years. The priority areas reflect SFIC's strategic mission and carefully balance ongoing SFIC initiatives with new activities deriving from global challenges – of which the most relevant ones will also be part of Horizon 2020 –, recent policy and economic developments, etc.

3. PRIORITIES AND AREAS OF ACTION

3.1 Added value and visibility

*SFIC's objectives for the **Added value and visibility** priority:*

- To be proactive with early strategic advice and evidence for policy formulation, development of joint strategies and European initiatives to be proposed to the Council and the Commission for international outreach*
- To intensify its reporting to the Council and ERAC*
- To search for synergies with other ERA groups*
- To enhance visibility of the external dimension of ERA*

SFIC will aim at being proactive with early strategic advice and evidence for policy formulation and at developing joint strategies and European initiatives for international outreach. To enhance this role, SFIC will, where appropriate, submit opinions/advice to the Council and the Commission while fostering uptake of this advice also nationally. It will develop a rolling plan (every year/6 months) to identify upfront relevant events and encourage timely intervention. In 2013-14, SFIC will have the objective to put in place (and develop in 2014) a process to allow SFIC to be a platform that contributes to the preparation of a European position ahead of EU summits, Senior Official Meetings (SOMs) and Group of Senior Officials (GSO) meetings when R&I issues are on the agenda. Moreover, coordination on mid-term objectives to be pursued in EU/MS-third country dialogues will be sought while monitoring the aforesaid dialogues.

SFIC will intensify its reporting to the Council and ERAC and will continuously search for synergies with other ERA groups. This means liaising with Irish, Lithuanian, Greek and Italian Presidencies, yearly reporting to the Council and yearly information to ERAC and other ERA groups about SFIC initiatives while encouraging reciprocity. In 2013-14, SFIC will propose to organise yearly joint meetings or SFIC-led seminars with other ERA groups, when appropriate.

Enhancing the visibility of the external dimension of ERA is more and more important. For this purpose SFIC will:

- publish regularly reports and results of SFIC events on the Council and Commission specific webpages;
- disseminate a SFIC leaflet as an information tool.

3.2 Common priorities and joint initiatives and actions

*SFIC's objectives for the **Common priorities and joint initiatives and actions***

priority:

- *To contribute to the development of common principles and guidelines for the conduct of international R&I activities*
- *To develop roadmaps for the SFIC initiatives and Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas (SRIAs) for priority countries and connecting them with the Horizon 2020 multi-annual roadmaps for international R&I cooperation and the relevant national roadmaps*
- *To contribute to the ERA Framework and the international dimension of Horizon 2020*

SFIC will contribute to the development of common principles and guidelines for international R&I cooperation, in order to provide guidance to ERA actors and stakeholders in their cooperation with third countries.

These common principles and guidelines will contribute to enhance the relationships between SFIC and other ERA actors and stakeholders while, at the same time, complementing the Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas (SRIAs) developed by SFIC.

Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas (SRIAs) are tools for bringing together European countries into joint activities and developing common understanding of visions and needs of collaboration between Europe and a third country or region.

Developing roadmaps and SRIAs with priority countries is considered a comprehensive way of working together at European level *vis à vis* third countries. For continuing the process of choosing common priorities and joint initiatives and actions, SFIC will in 2013:

- Continue its work on **China** by developing the China SRIA as well as by developing a joint understanding on how to dialogue with the Chinese side and promote the involvement of stakeholders (e.g. urbanisation workshop);
- Continue its work on **USA** by advancing on the implementation of the SFIC-USA roadmap and the realisation of the 5 action points; and by developing well-defined activities with specific thematic focus to identify possible short-, medium- and long-term measures for a more consistent STI cooperation and involvement of relevant stakeholders;
- Continue its work on **India** by following-up the implementation of the India SRIA and the work of the GSO and contribute to awareness-raising at national level;
- Compile an overview of R&I activities in Brazil with support from science counsellors based in Brazil and develop a SFIC roadmap for the **Brazil** initiative;
- Explore the possibility of launching an initiative with **Russia**;
- Contribute to let the SRIAs be taken into consideration in the multi-annual roadmaps for international cooperation in Horizon 2020.

In 2014, activities will focus on implementing and following up the activities related to the **China**, **USA** and **India** initiatives while paying attention to the implementation and the work of the **India** GSO and contributing to raising its awareness at national level. On **Brazil**, the focus will be on the development and implementation of the SFIC roadmap. In case a **Russia** initiative is launched, 2014 will also see the development of a SFIC roadmap for **Russia**.

Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation as well as national programmes are the tools to promote and support cooperation with third countries. Therefore, the roadmaps and strategic research agendas developed within SFIC initiatives will, where possible, go hand in hand with the Horizon 2020 multi-annual roadmaps and with national strategies. SFIC will also analyse on a case-by-case basis the need and added value for SFIC initiatives focused on other countries/regions.

3.3 Analysis, collection and sharing of information

*SFIC's objectives for the **Analysis, collection and sharing of information** priority:*

- To manage and share information*
- To contribute to monitoring and mapping activities*

For managing and sharing information effectively, SFIC members and observers will, in 2013-14, establish close collaboration and exchange of information with the FP7-funded INCO projects (ERA- and INCO-Net, BILAT projects, etc.) targeting India, USA, China, Brazil and Russia, other relevant FP7 and Horizon 2020 projects as well as relevant national activities and projects with a strong international focus. SFIC will also promote presentations at plenary level on EU/national STI strategies as well as R&I cooperation activities and projects. SFIC will also emphasise the need for its members and observers to identify opportunities for the development of Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas.

SFIC will further explore and elaborate the innovation dimension of its activities in the context of its mandate, in line with the innovation dimension being an integral part of Horizon 2020 activities. SFIC will also explore the possibilities of using the EU R&I Observatory with shared information sources. SFIC will play an active role in providing input to the development of the EU R&I Observatory (e.g. formulation of needs) and, where appropriate, in contributing to the definition of indicators for international R&I cooperation.

Monitoring and mapping of international policies and activities at national and regional level is one of the core elements of SFIC's work. SFIC will also reflect on and contribute to the monitoring of the external dimension of the ERA and the overall assessment of the international dimension of Horizon 2020 as of 2014. SFIC will aim at organising seminars on indicators on international cooperation in 2013 in line with the Council, ERAC and Commission activities in this area (e.g. indicators for Horizon 2020 and indicators for the EU R&I Observatory or other monitoring initiatives).

3.4 Networking and coordination

*SFIC's objectives for the **Networking and coordination** priority:*

- To invite/involve the EEAS and other stakeholders to SFIC-organised events or SFIC meetings*
- To make science counsellors/attachés networks in third countries more inclusive*

To assure the visibility and the effectiveness of SFIC's work, SFIC will invite and/or involve the European External Action Service (EEAS) and other stakeholders to SFIC-organised events or SFIC meetings. This may be done, for instance, by inviting EEAS to any 2013-14 SFIC plenary, when agreed, or by promoting links with networks of main stakeholders at EU and national level while involving them through consultations and workshops. SFIC will also reflect on and propose optimized ways of cooperation within national and European administration structures to further improve coordination between the different actors.

The contents of the seminars and workshops will support the objectives of SFIC's work. During 2013, seminars and workshops on priority areas, countries and themes should include topics such as strategy analysis, state of play of research and innovation in priority areas/countries, state of play of STI cooperation and science diplomacy (with EEAS and Foreign Affairs ministries, if required) and scientific excellence and quality of activities. Topics such as links to higher education, IP management in international cooperation between European and Non-European partners⁴, taking into account the related ERA Guidelines on IP will receive priority during 2014.

One of the findings emerging from discussions at the last SFIC Strategic Workshop was the need to make networks in third countries more inclusive. This includes, for example, liaising more closely with EU and MS/AC science counsellors in priority countries.

⁴ Appropriate emphasis will be given to Intellectual Property management, taking into account the “ERA Guidelines on IP Management in international research collaboration agreements between European and Non-European Partners” (source: http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/international_cooperation_guidelines_erac_kt_group.pdf)

4. MONITORING AND DISSEMINATION

The Annual Reports of SFIC to the Council and the Commission in spring 2014 and 2015 will take stock of the state-of-implementation of this Work Programme and the progress made in the different priority areas and themes. Previously, the Council and the Commission, in spring 2013, will be informed about the work carried out during 2012 and the implementation of the previous Work Programme 2011-2012.

SFIC will also inform the European Research Area Committee (ERAC) about its activities.

The Annex attached to this Work Programme gives a snapshot overview of the different activities and their timing for 2013 and 2014.

ANNEX: SFIC PRIORITIES AND AREAS OF ACTION 2013-2014

	<i>Objective</i>	<i>2013 Activity</i>	<i>2014 Activity</i>
ADDED VALUE AND VISIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SFIC to be proactive with early strategic advice and evidence for policy formulation, development of joint strategies and European initiatives for international outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit SFIC opinions/advice when relevant to the Council and the Commission and foster uptake of this advice also nationally Develop a rolling plan (every year/6 months) to identify upfront relevant events and encourage timely intervention Put in place a process to allow SFIC to be a platform that contributes to the preparation of a European position ahead of EU summits, SOMs and GSO meetings as well as for agreeing on mid-term objectives to be pursued in EU/MS-third country dialogues, while monitoring these dialogues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit SFIC opinions/advice when relevant to the Council and the Commission and foster uptake of this advice also nationally Update a rolling plan (every year/6 months) to identify upfront relevant events and foster timely intervention Develop SFIC as a platform that contributes to the preparation of a European position ahead of EU summits, SOMs and GSO meetings as well as for agreeing on mid-term objectives to be pursued in EU/MS-third country dialogues, while monitoring these dialogues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SFIC to intensify its reporting to Council and ERAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with Irish and Lithuanian Presidencies Yearly reporting to Council and Commission Yearly information to ERAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with Greek and Italian Presidencies Yearly reporting to Council and Commission Yearly information to ERAC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SFIC to search for synergies with other ERA groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yearly information to ERA groups about SFIC initiatives and encouragement of reciprocity Joint meeting or SFIC-led seminar with other ERA groups when appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yearly information to ERA groups about SFIC initiatives and encouragement of reciprocity Joint meeting or SFIC-led seminar with other ERA groups when appropriate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance visibility of the external dimension of ERA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish regularly reports and results of SFIC events on the Council and Commission specific webpages Disseminate a SFIC leaflet as information tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish regularly reports and results of SFIC events on the Council and Commission specific webpages Update and disseminate a SFIC leaflet as information tool

	<i>Objective</i>	<i>2013 Activity</i>	<i>2014 Activity</i>
COMMON PRIORITIES AND JOINT INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contribute to the development of common principles and guidelines for the conduct of international R&I activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contribute to the development of common principles and guidelines for the conduct of international research and innovation activities and actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contribute to the development and update of common principles and guidelines for the conduct of international research and innovation activities and actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop roadmaps and Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas (SRIAs) with priority countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work on China: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development of the China SRIA ○ Develop a joint understanding on how to dialogue with the Chinese side and promote the involvement of stakeholders (e.g. urbanisation workshop) ▪ Work on USA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue the implementation of the SFIC-USA roadmap and realisation of the 5 action points ○ Launch of well-defined activities with specific thematic focus to identify possible short-, medium- and long-term measures for more consistent STI cooperation and involvement of relevant stakeholders ○ Contribute to the Destination Europe initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work on China: Follow-up and implementation of the China SRIA and related activities ▪ Work on USA: Follow-up and implementation of the SFIC-USA roadmap and related activities

	<i>Objective</i>	<i>2013 Activity</i>	<i>2014 Activity</i>
COMMON PRIORITIES AND JOINT INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work on India: Follow-up the implementation of the India SRIA and the work of the GSO and contribute to its awareness-rising at national level ▪ Work on Brazil: Compile an overview of R&I activities and develop a SFIC-Brazil roadmap for the Brazil initiative ▪ Work on Russia: Explore the possibility of launching an initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work on India: Follow-up the implementation of the India SRIA and the work of the GSO and contribute to its awareness-rising at national level ▪ Work on Brazil: Development and implementation of the SFIC-Brazil roadmap ▪ Work on Russia: If initiative is launched, development of a SFIC-Russia roadmap for Russia ▪ Analyse the need and added value for SFIC initiatives on other countries/regions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contribute to the ERA Framework and the international dimension of Horizon 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide guidance to ERA actors and stakeholders in their cooperation with third countries (e.g. by providing common principles and guidelines in the conduct of international R&I activities) ▪ Contribute to let the SRIAs be taken into consideration in the multi-annual roadmaps for international cooperation in Horizon 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide guidance to ERA actors and stakeholders in their cooperation with third countries (e.g. by providing common principles and guidelines in the conduct of international R&I activities) ▪ Contribute to let the SRIAs be taken into consideration in the multi-annual roadmaps for international cooperation in Horizon 2020

	<i>Objective</i>	<i>2013 Activity</i>	<i>2014 Activity</i>
ANALYSIS, COLLECTION AND SHARING OF INFORMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manage and share information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SFIC Members to establish close collaboration and exchange information with the FP7 funded INCO projects (ERA- and INCO-Net, BILAT projects, etc.) targeting USA, China, Brazil and Russia and other FP7 projects or national activities with a strong international focus ▪ Presentations at Plenary level on EU/national STI strategies as well as R&I cooperation activities and projects ▪ Continued update of web-based tool or contribution to the EU R&I Observatory with shared information sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SFIC Members to continue close collaboration and exchange information with the FP7 funded INCO projects (ERA- and INCO-Net, BILAT projects, etc.) targeting USA, China, Brazil and Russia and other Horizon 2020 projects or national activities with a strong international focus ▪ Presentations at Plenary level on EU/national STI strategies as well as R&I cooperation activities and projects ▪ Contribute to the update of the EU R&I Observatory with shared information sources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring and mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contribute to the monitoring of the external dimension of the ERA ▪ Contribute to the development of the EU R&I Observatory and the definition of indicators in the international R&I cooperation field ▪ Organise seminars on indicators on international cooperation connecting with the Council, ERAC and Commission activities in this area ▪ SFIC Members to take a more active role in identifying opportunities for the development of Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contribute to the monitoring of the external dimension of the ERA and the overall assessment of the international dimension of Horizon 2020 ▪ Contribute to the development of the EU R&I Observatory and the definition of indicators in the international R&I cooperation field ▪ SFIC Members to take a more active role in identifying opportunities for the development of Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas

	<i>Objective</i>	<i>2013 Activity</i>	<i>2014 Activity</i>
NETWORKING AND COORDINATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invite/involve the EEAS and other stakeholders to SFIC-organised events or SFIC meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invite EEAS to any 2013 SFIC plenary, when agreed ▪ Promote links at national and European level to networks of main stakeholders and involve them through consultations and workshops: workshop(s) in 2013 ▪ Organise seminars and workshops on priority areas and countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invite EEAS to any 2014 SFIC plenary, when agreed ▪ Promote links at national and European level to networks of main stakeholders and involve them through consultations and workshops: workshop(s) in 2014 ▪ Organise seminars and workshops on priority areas and countries
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make science counsellors/attachés networks in third countries more inclusive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Liaise with EU and MS/AC science counsellors in priority countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Liaise with EU and MS/AC science counsellors in priority countries