

**PLAN OF ACTION**  
**OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP**  
**ON COOPERATION IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**01.07.2012-30.06.2014**

**Country-Coordinator: REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**

**GENERAL OBJECTIVES:**

- To enhance the level of coordination in the area of science and technology among the Member States;
- To develop cross-cutting activities that would match the needs of the region in the priority areas identified by the Second BSEC Science and Technology Action Plan 2010-2014,
- To create synergies with other international programmes, i.e. EU Framework Programmes, and to support joint initiatives under different frameworks to further strengthen regional initiatives;
- To coordinate Science and Technology affairs in a way to serve the objectives defined in important policy documents of the Organization (i.e. BSEC Economic Agenda).

**ENVISAGED MEETINGS OF THE WORKING GROUP:**

S&T Working Group Meeting, 6-7 November 2012, Istanbul, Turkey (Adoption of the Plan of Action)

S&T Ministerial Meeting, under the Country-Ccoordinatorship of Turkey, tbc (Mid-term Review of the Action Plan 2010-14)

S&T Working Group Meeting, Fall 2013, tbc

S&T Working Group Meeting, Spring 2014, tbc

## **INTRODUCTION**

Located at the juncture of Europe, Asia and the Middle East, Black Sea Region possesses a distinct place in the world due to several reasons, i.e. its strategic location, rich energy resources, economic potential etc. The importance of the region has increased in the recent years substantially, with the undeniable effect of latest enlargement of EU. There are various different countries in the region with differing priorities, yet with the efforts of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) for the last twenty years, an institutionalized cooperation and dialogue platform has been established. BSEC, via its varying working groups and affiliated bodies, tries to harmonize national policies and develop region-specific policies with the aim of carrying Black Sea Region to a more prosperous future.

Science and Technology is a field that has achieved much progress since BSEC's foundation. Being one of the first established Working Groups, Science and Technology Working Group (STWG) has shown great advancement, especially with the adoption of 4 year Action Plans that not only put Region's priorities on the paper but also served as a basis for carrying any effort from a theoretical level to implementation level. Taking into consideration the achievements so far, S&T is an area that has the potential to be further exploited and advanced.

### **S&T PLAN OF ACTION (2012-2014)**

Turkey has assumed the role of Country Coordinator of the STWG for the period of 2012-2014. Within the framework of the 2nd BSEC Action Plan on Cooperation in Science and Technology 2010-2014 (thereafter referred to as Action Plan), in her two year period of duty, Turkey proposes to undertake the following activities under the following policy domains:

#### ➤ Human Resources:

The need to “strengthen, stimulate and exploit” the potential for human resources and the long lasting tradition of Member States in science and technology has already been acknowledged in the Action Plan. With reference to Articles 2, 3 and 4 of the relevant section of the Action Plan, it is proposed to organize summer schools for the researchers in the region – short trainings for

especially the young researchers – with the aim of enhancing and distributing the know-how. Another aim would be to increase the commitment of the researchers for the region. The first of these trainings, entitled ‘First Training School For The Promotion And Application Of EU Marine Environmental Policy Frameworks In Non-EU Mediterranean And Black Sea Countries’ was organized by Greece in the June 2012 successfully. The ultimate goal of any activity under this heading should be to ensure the continuum of such activities in the long run and establish it as a periodic BSEC event.

➤ Capacity Building:

The main aims of capacity building measures are to establish benchmarking activities, exchange of good practices, sharing experiences, etc. The support for international events that would bring the scientists together in the Black Sea Region is crucial in this sense. In parallel, activities of Member States, any bilateral or multilateral programme, that would serve as best practice examples or would set as examples as cooperation models in the region should be encouraged to be presented in the WG. There are efforts in some international projects (i.e. EU FP7 projects like Black Sea ERA.NET, ERA.NET-RUS) that aim to analyze the ongoing cooperation efforts and prepare a database of such cooperation schemes. Such databases should be utilized by BSEC more actively (Article 7 under Capacity Building in Action Plan).

➤ Research Infrastructure:

The development of a registry of research infrastructures in the BSEC region has been emphasized in previous documents as well. However, the efforts were limited. Such a registry has been developed under FP7 Black Sea ERA.NET project which will end at the end of 2012. The development of such a database would not only increase the visibility of available research infrastructures in the region but also will pave the way for further interaction among the researchers in the region. In the later stages even schemes that would promote cooperation models among these centers could be developed. The STWG is encouraged to take use of the registry to further exploit and enhance it, or develop other initiatives to establish a regional database of research infrastructures.

➤ Innovation:

Carrying the knowledge from the research side and transforming that into concrete products is a general challenge. Challenges on commercialization constitute a problem for the Black Sea Region as well. Innovation plays a critical role in BSEC as well, as the organization's main aim is to foster economic prosperity and cooperation in the region. "Training of specialist and managerial personnel involved in innovation structures" is an action defined in the Action Plan. Such efforts at individual level should be combined with international efforts. Benefiting from relevant EU FP Calls (i.e. the newly introduced Research to Innovation Call) in this sense is an important tool for such structures to form consortiums and benefit from other experiences.

➤ Synergies and support to multilateral horizontal projects

There are many projects specifically targeted the wider Black Sea Region until now under EU FP 6, i.e. BS-ResPot, and a lot of initiatives are recently finished/ongoing under FP 7, among which Inco.Net EECA (S&T International Cooperation Network for Eastern European and Central Asian Countries), Inco.Net CA/SC (International Cooperation Network for Central Asian and South Caucasus Countries), Black Sea ERA.NET (Networking in Science and Technology in the Black Sea Region), ERA.NET-RUS (Linking Russia to the ERA) and SEAS-ERA.NET (Towards Integrated Marine Research Strategy and Programmes) can be given. These projects have intensified cooperation attempts among the stakeholders in the region and developed concrete activities – like joint calls – that would allow for large scale multilateral initiatives to materialize.

Among such efforts, the Black Sea Research Programme (BSRP) deserves a special place as it foresees to establish a sustainable joint programme specifically designed for the Black Sea Region. The priority of Turkey as the Country Coordinator of the STWG in the upcoming two years will be focusing on joint initiatives that could be developed on a variable geometry basis. There are many stakeholders and funding institutions in the region, and they should be encouraged to get together and form joint programmes to enable researchers in the region to

implement joint projects. Although there is a strong tradition of bilateral programmes among Black Sea countries, and despite the few ongoing multilateral initiatives, there is still need for multilateral programmes that would encourage research for the similar problems that BS countries face. Therefore, any initiative that would allow for such joint projects could be supported by the STWG.

Another initiative worth mentioning is the Black Sea Strategic Research Agenda produced in the SEAS-ERA.NET project that aims to formulate marine research priorities and roadmap for the Black Sea. The report foresees important challenges and priority areas in marine research for the countries in the region, and develops short and long term strategies to address common challenges. There will be a Joint Call for the Black Sea Region under SEAS-ERA.NET in the beginning of 2013, which will be a first step of a longer roadmap. Both the Strategic Research Agenda and the Call are good initiatives for the region that complement already ongoing efforts. The STWG is encouraged to support SEAS-ERA.NET's activities with regard to Black Sea, which also constitutes a priority for the country-coordinator term of Turkey.

## **ANNEX I – SPECIFIC ACTIONS AND TIME SCHEDULE**

*This part involves specific events that will be held under the term of Turkey's country coordinatorship for the STWG. Activities that are organized under different platforms/projects have been given as well, as they contain a regional dimension that would appeal to Black Sea. Those activities involve either BSEC as an invitee and/or two or more Member States take active role in them.*

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Half of 2012

- ❖ ERA.NET-RUS event entitled “From Dialogue to Joint Programmes: Achievements and Perspectives of Stakeholder Coordination in Science, Technology and Innovation between EU, Associated Countries, Russia and Other Eastern European and Central Asian Countries” (10-11 October 2012, Bonn, Germany).
- ❖ Organization of the BSEC Science and Technology Working Group (6-7 November 2012, Istanbul).
- ❖ Final Conference of the Black Sea ERA.NET (11-12 December 2012, Bucharest).

### 2013

- ❖ 2<sup>nd</sup> SEAS-ERA Strategic Forum (6 February 2013, Brussels).
- ❖ Deliberation on the “2nd Summer School for researchers from BSEC member states”, (Summer 2013).
- ❖ Final Conference of the ERA.NET-RUS Project (Summer 2013, Istanbul, tbc).
- ❖ Deliberation on the establishment of the Black Sea Research Programme.
- ❖ Organization of the BSEC Science and Technology Working Group
- ❖ 2nd Summer School for researchers from BSEC member states (July/August 2013, tbc).
- ❖ Organization of the BSEC Meeting of the Ministers Responsible for Science and Technology, (tbc, Istanbul).

### 1<sup>st</sup> Half of 2014

- ❖ Organization of the BSEC Science and Technology Working Group