

Introduction to NCP systems



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Building Bi-regional Partnerships for Global Challenges



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What is an NCP system

A National Contact Points (NCPs) system

is national structure/network established and financed by governments of the EU member states and associated countries, as well as of ICPC, to support the promotion of the EC main funding instrument for Research and Innovation

NCP System characteristics

Compulsory characteristics:

- Be fully capable of communicating competently with their European and international colleagues, and be well-informed about the nature, objectives and principles of the EU Framework Programmes and the technological areas concerned.
- Be competent to provide assistance services to different kinds of actors (e.g. SMEs, industry, academics, etc).
- Be able to work to strict deontological requirements, that is, to act as independent organisation(s), being committed to complete impartiality in delivering their services and avoiding any situations which may give rise to a conflict of interests.
- Be able to act with complete confidentiality as regards the information which comes into their possession or has become known to them as part of their advisory activities towards clients.

NCP System characteristics

Recommended characteristics:

- Participate actively in trans-national NCP network activities with a view to seeking continuous improvement of their NCP services and practices.
- Have skills in RTD management and financing.
- Show the experience and acceptance necessary to reach the research community concerned and have good knowledge of the national research landscape.
- Have adequate human resources and equipment (e.g. IT)
- As a minimum service level it is considered essential that the individual NCPs are reachable by phone and/or email during usual working hours and that they have a public website with basic information on their services.

The NCP System

- The Member States and Associated Countries and third country are responsible for the selection of the hosting organisation(s) of their own NCP system and for its setting up according to national prerequisites and requirements, taking into account EC specific guidelines.
- In order to ensure the coherence of the system, a co-ordination mechanism should be put in place in each Member State and Associated Country and participating third country to maintain its overall operational consistency. This mechanism should be a light, non-bureaucratic co-ordination.

NCP services

- The type and level of services offered differ from country to country. In general, the following basic services will be available in accordance with the Minimum standards and guiding principles:
 - Guidance on choosing thematic priorities and instruments
 - Advice on administrative procedures and contractual issues
 - Training and assistance on proposal writing
 - Distribution of EC documentation (forms, guidelines, manuals etc.)
 - Assistance in partner search and networking

NCPs– a system with flexibility and diversity

The NCP systems in the different countries **show**

- A wide **variety of architectures**, from highly **centralised** (All thematic NCPs are affiliated to one organization) to **decentralised networks** (Scattered thematic NCPs with a National Coordinator linking them all and aligning their work with the National Strategies),
- A number of very different actors, from ministries to universities, research centres and special agencies to private consulting companies

**flexibility to each country to establish a tailor-made
NCP structure**

Some basic characteristics – Human Capacity

- In about a quarter of the countries the NCP service is provided centrally by one single organisation.
- Other countries have more decentralised systems with up to 32 different organisations involved.
- National ministries act as NCPs in 2/3 of the countries, with two countries (Israel & The Netherlands) having the ministry as sole organisation.
- Private enterprises are NCPs in 6 countries.
- The number of full time equivalent staff delivering NCP services ranges from 3 to 43 per country.
- In total, about 400 persons (full-time equivalent) are working as NCPs in the 33 Member and Associated States.

Some basic characteristics – Financing

- NCPs are financed by (in order of importance): national governments, regional authorities, private funding, own revenues, EU funding.
- In half of the countries, the NCPs are nearly exclusively funded by the national governments.
- In most of the countries, services provided by NCPs are free of charge.
- In only seven countries do fees have to be paid for some of the services.

Thank you



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