



ALCUE NET Report Summary

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Periodic Report Summary 2 - ALCUE NET (Latin America, Caribbean and European Union Network on Research and Innovation)

Project Context and Objectives:

This report summarizes the effort results undertaken by the Latin America, Caribbean and European Union Network on Research and Innovation (ALCUE NET) project consortium and the support given to other EU-funded projects and related initiatives, and to the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation (JIRI) Senior Officials Meetings (SOM) and the JIRI Thematic Working Groups (WG) to further promote the process towards Policy Dialogue between the European Union & the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (EU-CELAC) Common Research Area and presents concrete suggestions for the delegates of the EU-CELAC SOM to enhance and give sustainability to this collaborative process. The ALCUE NET project is conceived, according last EU-CELAC Summit Declaration, as a useful operational instrument and follow-up of decisions for the implementation and scaling-up of the long standing EU-CELAC dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) and the Joint Initiative implementation during 2013-2017, reflecting the suggestions and recommendations of the Senior Official Meetings for a long-lasting bi-regional cooperation agenda on Research and Innovation (R&I), focusing on the following priorities : i) Energy; ii) Information and Communications Technology; iii) Bioeconomy; iv) Biodiversity and Climate change.

The leaders gathered at the EU-CELAC meeting in Brussels, in the occasion of the II EU-CELAC Summit on 10-11 June 2015, recognized the value of bi-regional cooperation and expressed their intention to revitalize this cooperation in a number of strategic areas, including research and innovation. The important result of this Summit is that research cooperation was confirmed as one of the cornerstones of EU-CELAC Action Plan. This was reflected in the Summit's final declaration which specifically mentioned the need to move towards a Common Research Area based on increased research cooperation, enhanced mobility of researchers and exchange of knowledge, infrastructures, innovation, and best practices. The implementation will be prepared in view of the next SOM to be held on 14 March 2016 in Brussels . On this occasion, the ALCUE NET project, as the technical secretariat of the SOM, will support the co-organization of the V EU-CELAC SOM Meeting. These meetings have been established as a regular bi-regional dialogue on R&I to consolidate the EU-CELAC cooperation to implement the JIRI by updating common priorities, encouraging mutual policy learning and ensuring the proper implementation and effectiveness of cooperation instruments through biannual Action Plans.

Objectives:

- Establish an EU-CELAC platform bringing together actors/organizations involved in R&I;
- Monitoring progress in the bi-regional STI cooperation;
- Achieve progress towards joint improvement of key aspects of societal challenges related to the 4 areas addressed by the JIRI Working Groups;
- Definition and preparation of joint activities, including appropriate funding modalities;
- Strengthen complementarities between Horizon 2020 activities with other EU policies and programs;
- Promote synergies and coordination between the initiatives and projects supported by EU programs and national

- programs in order to optimize the leveraging effect, the cost efficiency, and the socio-economic impact;
- Design and implement initiatives that contribute to bridging the gap between public and private actors and the dissemination and exploitation of research results;
 - Support the development of the bi-regional Policy Dialogue in STI within the EU-CELAC process and the SOM, providing up to date analytical evidence, monitoring and analyzing the progress and results of the cooperation in Research and Development (R&D), supporting the implementation of the dialogue recommendations;
 - Examine and make progress on the implementation of the “EU-CELAC Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation;
 - Organise and support the participation of research and innovation actors from both region, beyond project partner countries, in project and other networking events through travel grants scheme mechanism;
 - Support the training and extension of the network of National Contact Points (NCP) in the region.
 - Ensure appropriate quality control of the project deliverables by including an external review process.
 - Define and implement a proactive and comprehensive communication and dissemination plan to ensure optimal dissemination and uptake of the projects' results for the benefit of the broad STI community in both regions;
 - Encourage activities with other bi-regional initiatives and projects for sharing knowledge and good practices.

Project Results:

The project team has maintained a steady effort in completing the sequence of planned tasks, within a context of continuously increasing mutual understanding and cohesion among the partners, a fact that has been positively reflected in the encouraging outputs of the work done and, furthermore, set-up of the next steps of the project and its further sustainability. Results achieved so far have met project plans, as defined in the Annex I.

Activities performed during the second period of the project have been focused on following the decisions of the EU-CELAC SOM held in San Jose in April 2015 and on providing relevant input and recommendations to the subsequent SOM to be held in Brussels in March 2016. ALCUE NET project has contributed to strongly enhance the cooperation between both regions. Indeed, ALCUE NET is the first INCO NET that involves the regions of Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union, thus becoming a strategic catalyst for a number of countries which were less involved in previous FPs and EU best practices.

Within the ALCUE NET project, there are four thematic areas to enhance the cooperation and integration of Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union in the i) energy, ii) ICT, iii) biodiversity (including Climate Change, and iv) bioeconomy themes. The ALCUE NET thematic actions will especially benefit from the links and synergies already created with the new initiatives and newcomer countries from both regions in order to wider explore the utmost potentiality and added value of the bi-regional cooperation. A close work was done together with the EU-CELAC thematic SOM working Groups by holding back-to-back meetings as well as by supporting the elaboration of the thematic reports to present to the SOM meetings including relevant proposals and recommendation for SOM discussion. In this context, the ALCUE NET project is the main support platform of SOM Thematic WGs in the areas of Bioeconomy, ICT, Biodiversity & Climate Change and Renewable energies.

Thematic experts' and awareness raising workshops are at the core of the ALCUE NET support activities and as a result of such activities, main inputs for the EU-CELAC SOM JIRI WGs have arisen from the efforts implemented under ALCUE NET project. Throughout the project, the work done and the results obtained by the SOM, the JIRI Working Groups and H2020 Program, are gaining more visibility in both regions. Almost 25 meetings, workshops and information sessions have been carried out in the period. Approximately 400 stakeholders have participated in meetings organized by ALCUE NET and in synergies with other related initiatives and projects to improve the use of available funds and tools. In this regard, some of the meetings have been coordinated by videoconference through the RedCLARA.

With the aim of improving the bi-regional participation in the project supporting activities, ALCUE NET through a travel grants scheme, mobilized 13 experts from non-partners countries during this second project period. A total of 31 experts were mobilized since the beginning of the project.

ALCUE NET created a joint community platform of R&I stakeholders and policy makers who now participate on the project activities and collaborate in the preparation of supporting documents to be submitted to the thematic SOM Working Groups. Within the ALCUE NET project, the activities focused on “Capacity strengthening and networking” have the main

aim of further increasing collaboration between European and CELAC researchers by implementing a set of measures supporting capacity building and networking. During the second period of the ALCUE NET project, the main activity was the building of the CELAC National Contact Point (NCP) network in order to expand the LAC NCP network and help building national information systems. This strengthening process was supported by trainings and technical assistance. With the aim of increasing awareness on the STI potential of CELAC and on the benefits of EU-CELAC cooperation, the project presents “Information management, monitoring, evaluation and quality control” strategies to give greater visibility to the project were elaborated in order to i) implement the information and communication strategy with regard to information and promotion products; ii) promote outcomes and impact of the project by developing impact and success stories; iii) update, further develop and improve the ALCUE NET website content; iv) assure high quality of project activities by monitoring and evaluating the ongoing process; v) promote and disseminate the strengths of STI in Europe and CELAC and the added-value of bioregional collaboration to the wider public; vi) enable and maintain communication flows with all relevant stakeholders and vii) implement and feed project-wide communication tools. ALCUE NET has set up a support mechanism for EU-CELAC S&T dialogue focusing on each thematic area covered, NCP platform networks and HORIZON 2020 (H2020) promotion through a comprehensive website (<http://alcuenet.eu/>), which provides relevant and updated information, becoming a reference Portal for the EU-CELAC cooperation in R&I and the Political Dialogue process. The number of visits is smoothly increasing. New CELAC NCPs have been appointed according to the new thematic lines of the three H2020 pillars. The full list will be posted on the Participant Portal and the ALCUE NET project website.

Potential Impact:

Since the beginning of the project in December 2012, the ALCUE NET bi-regional consortium has been working to increase the coordination and cooperation between the European Union and the Latin America and the Caribbean countries, by encouraging and facilitating the participation of the R&I community from both regions, and by helping to overcome potential barriers and national/regional limitations for the success of such collaboration.

The impact of the project so far is to have contributed to the STI policy dialogue between both regions. The impact to the international social and economic challenges so far could be expressed through the capacity of the project to be an intermediary in STI policy dialogue between both regions as well as to broadly expand international cooperation opportunities in H2020 and other EU Programs. The project also acted as a centralized mechanism to further disseminate and identify organizations and key actors interested in developing joint new projects and initiatives. The project succeeded in creating and reinforces strategic synergies with related project and initiatives as well as with the European Commission Thematic Directorates. This has been done through direct contact with key actors and institutions in both regions in order to set up communication and experts platforms.

At the end of the second eighteen-months of the project, ALCUE NET has had considerable impact and synergies with a number of H2020 new initiatives and cooperation instruments in which most of project partners actively participated, such as ERANet-LAC project, Latin America Liaison Offices with the EU, Technology Platforms, Joint Programmes, European Research Council, European Bioeconomy Observatory, Biregional thematic R&I projects co-funded by the Framework Programmes (FPs), as well as other world known initiatives such as: CORDEX-LAC, CEPAL, CYTED, EUROCLIMA, BIODIVERSA, BELMONT FORUM, Global Alliances on Infectious and Chronic Diseases, EEN, ELAN2, INCONTACT 2020, RedCLARA, etc.

In terms of impact, it is worth mentioning that the ALCUE NET project has been executed and planned as an important support mechanism to the EU-CELAC Policy Dialogue on R&I. Under these activities, the project has established a Technical Secretariat for the SOM to contribute to the preparation of discussion documents and supporting material, design of the SOM agendas and update the Senior Official Representatives list. Almost all ALCUE NET partners are representatives at the SOM gatherings.

Almost all partners have presented and disseminated knowledge about the project on their respective countries as well as some European ALCUE NET partners have actively worked to represent their countries in activities related to cooperation in STI with CELAC. This action has been fundamental to enhance the impact of ALCUE NET activities in their countries and to increase visibility of these countries cooperation with CELAC.

ALCUE NET partners have been invited to participate and present the project in many related events in Europe, Latin America and Caribbean countries.

List of Websites:

<http://alcuenet.eu/>

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