

ALERT: misconceptions concerning industrialised third country participation in FP7

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The Australian National Contact Point (NCP) and coordinator of BILAT² for Australia, the Forum for European–Australian Science and Technology Cooperation (FEAST), is currently conducting an evaluation of Australian involvement in the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) covering both successful and unsuccessful proposals. The on–going evaluation has brought to light some misperceptions among European researchers regarding the participation of industrialised third countries, in particular those with a science and technology (S&T) agreement with the European Commission (EC).³

Initial results demonstrate that there is a lack of information and misconceptions amongst European project coordinators about the rules for participation of industrialised third countries in FP7 projects. The evaluation has shown that over 60% of Australian participants are being given incorrect and/or misleading information by the project coordinator about the rules for participation in FP7.

A majority of the evaluated researchers contacted by FEAST have relied solely on the European–based project coordinator for information and guidance on engaging with FP7. Some researchers have been told they are not able to join projects as full participants. Others were informed that they are ineligible to request or receive EC financial contributions under FP7. A number have also been told that they are not eligible for travel funding. It seems that some project coordinators are either relying on information regarding programmes prior to FP6, or are simply unfamiliar with the exact status of industrialised third countries in FP7.

Hence, FEAST would like to remind all NCPs and project coordinators that:

- Industrialised third countries that have an S&T agreement with the EC can fully participate in FP7 projects.⁴
- Most of these S&T agreements do not include access to reciprocal funding mechanisms, however industrialised third country partners are eligible for EC contributions under the following conditions:⁵
 - The participation of the industrialised third country partner in the project is considered essential to the success of the project;
 - Provision is made to that effect in the specific programmes or in the relevant work programme;
 - The EC contribution can cover all eligible activities, including travel costs of industrialised third country participants and experts engaging with project partners in Europe.
- Industrialised third country participation follows the same general rules for participation as for Member States and Associated Countries, including subcontracting.
- The inclusion of industrialised third country participants in consortia often brings added value and key expertise to FP7 projects, in many cases translating into higher success rates.

Industrialised third country participants should contact their relevant NCP (or equivalent) to obtain specific advice about FP7 issues relating to their country. The complete NCP list is available from:

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/third-countries_en.html.

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² “Bilateral coordination for the enhancement and development of S&T Partnerships”, see FP7 call FP7-INCO-2007-2, http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/?fuseaction=usersite.CapacitiesDetailsCallPage&call_id=60.

³ These industrialised third countries include Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, and the USA.

⁴ Regulation (EC) No 1906/2006 “rules for participation”, Article 11, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:391:0001:0018:EN:PDF>.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Article 29, paragraph 2.



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