



Summary
of
“A SNOWMAN’s Navigator through Research Funding
Programmes across Europe”

August 2005



Funded by the
European Commission
ERAC-CT-2003-003219



SYNOPSIS

Alternatives to Framework programmes are needed to increase funding for collaborative research in Europe. European Research Area Networks (ERANETs) are being supported by the Commission as one possible route.

The name **SNOWMAN** is an acronym for "Sustainable management of soil and groundwater under the pressure of soil pollution and soil contamination". The overall objective of this ERANET is to enhance quality, relevance and utilisation of resources in Europe regarding research in the field of soil-water-sediment system. The SNOWMAN team consists of the partner countries: Austria, France, Germany, The Netherlands, United Kingdom.

This report "A **SNOWMAN**'s Navigator through Research Funding Programmes across Europe" surveyed the national funding programmes for research on contaminated soil and groundwater in Europe to answer the questions asked at the beginning of the project:

What do we have? Which research programmes are on stage? How do they overlap? What hinders co-operation? What are the contents to be focussed?

SNOWMAN identified 30 national programmes handling a total annual budget of about € 38 Mio. **SNOWMAN** guesses that this is only about 0,06% of the total costs for remediation. About half of the programmes surveyed are focussing on applied research.

All data referred to in this report can also be seen at :

<http://www.eugris.info/Funding.asp>

On EUGRIS **SNOWMAN** will constantly place updated information during the project's lifetime.

From the **SNOWMAN**'s survey on the European research funding landscape it can be concluded that more than half of Europe has no special funding programme related to contaminated soil and groundwater and those countries which have, have no coordination what so ever among them. It was concluded that there is the need to run through the process of a coordinated call.

The **SNOWMAN** consortium agreed on the scope of a coordinated call as "Sustainable land management under the pressure of soil contamination" after consulting 12 European countries. This topic is consisting of three main fields of research:

- Sustainable land management approaches
- Soil system processes
- Toolbox for sustainable land management approaches

SNOWMAN will work to define how to run such a call and will first experiment a coordinated call which uses pilot projects. This is not only a necessity of "learning-by-doing" but also a trust building tool to raise awareness and trust of those national funders which are not yet convinced of cooperation and to enlarge the **SNOWMAN** network.

CONCLUSIONS

"Improve the European cooperation"

There is the clear need for coordinated call activities to increase European RTD activity. Several topics are covered by different research programmes. Here we find a good opportunity for a coordinated call.

International cooperation is not fully applied neither synergetic effects of international collaboration of programmes are seen nor the researchers have realistic access to funds of an other nation. As a positive change one could see that more programmes are potentially open for international cooperation. But the reality shows that hurdles for researchers such as

application in national languages, only national published calls etc. are still existing. The aspect of internationality of programmes is even faded by the fact that there is still no approach to adjust national programmes and/or to make a coordinated effort to solve research gaps.

A total annual budget of € 38 Mio. for contaminated land research of national funding programmes is substantial and makes it worthwhile to improve cooperation on the European level. The focus of all programmes is more or less the same, much attention is given to the solution of contamination problems, less for the



underpinning soil processes. By better cooperation in SNOWMAN on the solution research could be more efficient and effective, so there might be more money left to do the underpinning research.

“Contaminated sites are still a problem”

During the last three years the national budgets spent on research on contaminated soil and groundwater increased, which shows that the struggle with problems caused by contaminated sites is far not over. Taken the amount of money spend on remediation as an indicator one may conclude that contaminated sites are still a problem. In comparison to that the respective costs for research are rather low.

“Funders do not know each other”

There are only few personal contacts, sometimes funders even have not heard each others names. In some cases funders of one nation were strangers to each other

before the SNOWMAN Think Tank workshop.

Research Funders do not have a common platform (regular meetings, newsletter, homepage etc.) on the European level which would offer them the possibility not only to exchange their working experiences but also disseminate project results.

Those who execute funding programmes are not always the ones defining the scientific content of it.

“Dissemination of research knowledge is a major task”

SNOWMAN found that many programmes have only vague rules how to disseminate research results.

Many programmes do not cover dissemination costs of e. g. workshops, conference participation; no budgets for translation; not enough pressure to link results of single projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

“Improve the European cooperation”

Research Funders should create a common platform for their exchange of information and knowledge.

SNOWMAN found 30 programmes; on the long term each programme could be involved in a cooperation.

SNOWMAN is convinced that a coordinated call gives more results for the same money and brings up the best overall science. Within the present frame of national funding laws and rules a coordinated call with pilot projects on a financial “just-retour” basis seems the most appropriate solution. SNOWMAN established itself as a unique trust building platform for funders of research of contaminated soil and groundwater and is proceeding in searching for new partners for cooperation in the future.

“Contaminated sites are still a problem”

There is the need to shift away our thinking away from dealing with single sites to a system approach with wider considerations. SNOWMAN found that the research topics of different national programmes are similar. This helps in an approach of cooperation.

“Funders do not know each other”

Researcher in the field of contaminated soil and groundwater established themselves already as a “community”. On the other side of the fundingsystem the funders have hardly any personal contacts. This imbalance has to be vanished. A good flow of information between funders and researchers of all nationalities is essential to stay up-to-date with science. Exchanges personal experiences (good as well as bad ones) is already a way of cooperation!

“Dissemination of research knowledge is a major task”

Dissemination of projects results have to become part of the funders responsibility too.

Coordinated calls serve a broad dissemination of knowledge both within the funders as well as amongst the researchers very well. Funders shall make use of the opportunity of coordinated calls.

As a short term tool in enhancing dissemination there should be at least an English executive summary of each project as an obligation

Funders shall pro-active look for cooperation.