

Report on the Results of
Questionnaire 1
(For Coordinators of the EU-U.S.
Programmes, Initiatives, Thematic Task
Forces, /Working Groups, and
ERA-Nets)

BILAT-USA

BILAT-USA Project aim to improve the awareness towards EU-U.S. Science & Technology cooperation through setting up a sustainable, knowledge based, and bi-regional dialogue platform between S&T key players as well as stakeholders from the EU-Member States and Associated countries and from the U.S. Project is funded by European Union's Capacities Programme on International Cooperation under the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Cooperation.

More detail information can be found on the project web-site:

<http://www.euussciencetechnology.eu/bilat-usa>

Background

T1.2 Communication and Synergies with EU-U.S. programs/initiatives, thematic taskforces/working groups, and ERA-Nets

It is essential to establish effective communication and create synergies with all major EU-U.S. programs, projects, joint U.S.-EU thematic task forces such as U.S.-EU Energy Council, EC-US Task Force on Biotechnology Research, Task force to combat antimicrobial resistance or with initiatives such as EURAXESS Links, Access4EU, and the Pilot Projects (European Parliament initiative) in order to benefit from their experiences in working together and exchange of information. This task also aims to increase the visibility of these groups to a broader public by providing information on their ongoing activities and achievements, and search for synergies between these groups and the BILAT-USA.

The original target group of T1.2 has been adopted based on results from the LINK2US project (05/2010) that showed that there is no US participation in ERA-NET programs.

Data collection

1. Survey

With the help of the coordinator, an online survey was developed to collect the specific experiences, ideas, recommendations of project and programme coordinators on collaboration in the field of S&T between the EU and U.S,

The coordinators of the pilot projects and the FP7 LINK2US project received an e-mail invitation and later on repeated telephone support to collect specific input for the survey questions.

The survey was completed by 8 project coordinators.

The results of the survey are summarized below:

The frame of cooperation activities with US RTD partner organizations				
Cooperation Frame	Excellent	Good	Avarage	Poor
EU Framework Programme		1	3	
Other EU Initiative	2	4	1	
U.S. Federal Intiative			1	

EU-U.S. Joint Initiative		1	
Other (Please specify)		1	1

Main fields of cooperation with US RTD partner organizations

Cooperation	
Cooperation home	
Health	3
Information and communication technologies	2
Nanosciences, nanotechnologies, materials and new production technologies	1
Energy	3
Environment	1
People	
Initial Training Networks	1
Industry-Academia Partnerships and Pathways	3
Capacities	
International Cooperation	3

Which outcomes would highlight in cooperation activities with the US?

Outcomes	Very important	Important	Not important	Not Relevant
Access to complementary knowledge	4	4		
Access to wider US scientific community	4	3	1	
Additional funding		5		3

Insight information on U.S. /EU S&T culture and mechanisms	2	3	3	
Access to other markets		4		4
Establishing new partnerships for future collaborations	1	5	2	
Joint publications	3	3	1	1
Higher international visibility	3	4		1
Gain in prestige	1	5	1	1

The difficulties during cooperation

Difficulties	Very difficult	Difficult	Not difficult
Difference in management/culture	4	1	
Communication	3	1	1
Travel	4		3
Lack of complementary funding	3	3	1
Contractual issues and intellectual property	4		3
Lack of support from EU/U.S. Authorities	5	1	2
Lack of support from own organization	4	1	1
Other, please subscribe	3		1

Which approach would recommend to enhance EU-U.S. S&T cooperation?

top-down	7
bottom-up	1

Is there enough information available on EU-U.S. reciprocal funding schemes?

Yes	4
No	4

Missing informations if the answer was NO

More information when calls come out to be directed through research offices at Irish universities.

Access to funds by non-governmental advocacy organisations.

In our case funding is unidirectional (only from EU)

More information when calls come out to be directed through research offices at Irish universities.

The reciprocal funding schemes for EU-U.S. collaboration should be increased?

Yes	1
No	6

Recommended ideas/actions to facilitate EU-US RTD collaboration

Support is needed for transatlantic multi-stakeholder dialogues that focus on specific policy recommendations for a broad range of environmental issues (e.g. Arctic management, ocean governance, agricultural policies, etc)

E-Newsletter

Definition of common longer term roadmaps in R&D

This is another comment: I had difficulties filling in this survey - I am not sure I understand all the questions and am not sure how many of them relate to the polit project we are implementing.

Data collection
2. Interviews

In order to collect the experiences of not classical project based cooperations, joint U.S.-EU thematic task forces such as the U.S.-EU Energy Council, EC-US Task Force on Biotechnology Research, Task force to combat antimicrobial resistance and the EURAXESS Links initiative was approached with interview questions to gain insight into their experiences in relation to EU-US S and T cooperation.

Report 1

EURAXESS Links USA, Mrs Izabella Zandberg, programme manager.

The transcript of her response on behalf of EURAXESS Links USA is shown below:

How can EURAXESS LINKS facilitate EU-US S&T cooperation?

EURAXESS Links USA is a networking tool for European researchers in the US. The primary objective of our program is to provide information about research in Europe, European research policy, opportunities for research funding, for international collaboration and for trans-national mobility. Our activities include the following:

- The network’s monthly newsletter features the latest EU science and research policy news, interviews and updates on funding programs, and informs on upcoming European events in the US.
- Our network organizes occasional meetings and events across the United States, as well as attends and co-organizes career fairs with the US partners to provide a forum for researchers to meet with European funding agencies and employers, both public and private.
- Additionally, the EURAXESS Links website supports the network’s activities with updates on what’s new in European research, reports from the network’s past events and announcements of upcoming meetings and conferences, as well as useful links, information on collaboration opportunities and much more.
- The EURAXESS Links USA network also provides email alerts on employment and funding opportunities, upcoming events, training opportunities and other relevant issues.
- An on-line EURAXESS Links USA community supplements those activities, providing a forum for the network members to share ideas, post documents and messages, launch discussions and stay actively involved with the community of European researchers in the United States. The forum is open to the network members and is not very active at this time.

Our primary audience are European researchers in the USA (although about a quarter of our members represent non-European countries and a substantial number of our members reside outside of the United States). They should be seen as potential “bridges” facilitating the EU-US collaboration at the individual level, whether they stay in the US or go back to Europe at some point of their careers. Therefore, the more information and understanding of how to build those collaborations they have, the more effectively they can be in making those connections.

Our secondary audience are American researchers, and research administrators, who may be potentially interested in working with Europe.

So our contribution to facilitating the EU-US S&T cooperation is based on information dissemination to the interested parties and the outreach that we conduct by organizing meetings and events, participating in job fairs and scientific conferences, etc. This includes our outreach to the Academic institutions across the US when we organize events such as our “European researchers; get-togethers,” where we discuss the FP7 and EURAXESS programs; “European Science Series” events that showcase European scientists or research policy-relevant issues; workshops on how to apply for research funding; job fairs, etc.

It also includes our occasional Help Desk assistance to US-based individuals interested in pursuing collaborative projects.

Please describe best practice/s for your operation

As described above.

One of the most effective ways of promoting this collaboration is engaging in in-person meetings and direct interactions with potentially interested individuals. Therefore one of our best practices that I would like to mention is organizing events across the US where information can be provided to participants on a more individual and targeted basis.

A good example would be my presentation at the National Cancer Institute last week, attended by the Institute's research coordinators. By engaging in an informal discussion and answering individual questions, I was able to provide information that was targeted to their interests and the institutional context within which they operate. Another example are our "European researchers' get-togethers" around the US, where we attract European scientists and provide information about European programs for research, research policies, etc. In many cases, those participants are not aware of the opportunities that are available.

Where do you see bottlenecks for EU-US S&T cooperation?

Based on my experience, as the Project Manager of EURAXESS Links USA, I notice a couple issues that might constitute a barrier to this cooperation at the individual and institutional level. First of all, it is the lack of equivalent mechanisms of funding for research on both sides of the Atlantic. For example, participants from the United States are eligible to join research proposals under the Cooperation schemes. To do so, these programs require at least three partners in three different EU or associated countries plus a partner in the United States. However, except for the Health proposals, there is no funding from the European Union for the U.S.-based partners unless the participation of the U.S. partner is deemed necessary for the success of the program. At the same time, there is no equivalent American funding currently available to cover the expenses of the US-based partner to participate in such a consortium.

A similar lack of equivalent funding can be observed in the case of the Marie Curie International Staff Exchange Scheme. While this Marie Curie Action will pay for the European staff members to travel to the US through this exchange scheme, there is no funding available for the US-based partners to send their staff members to Europe.

Based on the two above examples, I see that such a lack of "harmonization" of funding, so that equivalent mechanisms are available on both sides of the Atlantic, may constitute a considerable barrier to establishing those collaborations.

Another barrier is the lack of information among the US audience and also US-based European researchers about various opportunities for engagement with European partners. We are doing our best to fill up this gap.

What action would you recommend for improving EU-US S&T cooperation?

- Increase information dissemination targeting the US research community, including both researchers and university administrators. Also include commercial research organizations in this outreach. Target this dissemination and customize the information depending on the area of research and the objectives you want to achieve.
- Facilitate the process of identifying potential partner institutions on both sides of the Atlantic (“match-making”).
- Provide hands-on training programs in the US on how to involve US-based research organizations in cooperative projects with European partners.
- Negotiate creation of equivalent funding mechanisms in the US, so that American research organizations interested in joining a European research program could apply for it in parallel with the European partners applying for the European funding.

Report 2

EC-US Task Force on Biotechnology Research, Gertrud Matthiessen Guyader, task leader

The transcript of her response on behalf of EC-US Task Force on Biotechnology Research in September is shown below:

What were the causes behind setting up the EU-US Biotechnology Task Force? Who initiated it?

The establishment of Task Force in 1990 came at a time when the world was changing dramatically. The rapid advances in global computing and communications that altered every aspect of daily life presented new opportunities for scientific coordination and collaboration. The genomics revolution, which allowed scientists to investigate the structure and function of organisms on a genome-wide scale, was also marked by an increasing international cooperation, initially because of the sheer scope and cost of the first projects.

The European Commission and the White House Office of Science and Technology acknowledged in the late 1980s that the emerging area of biotechnology would become a ‘megascience’ and seized the new opportunities for international cooperation by establishing a forum for policy makers and scientists from European Union and the United States to exchange ideas and spur the full development of biotechnology to the benefit of society.

What are the main activities of the Task Force? How does it operate?

The Task Force's stated aim is "to promote information exchange and coordination between biotechnology research programmes funded by the European Commission and the United States Government". However, the Task Force has also developed into a unique 'think-tank' for science policy makers and scientists on biotechnology research.

For 20 years, the Task Force has looked to the future aiming to anticipate the needs of tomorrow's science, today, hoping to stimulate new interdisciplinary scientific communities to form across the Atlantic.

The mandate behind the Task Force is renewed every five years (next time in 2011).

Presently the accent of the work of the Task Force is on the major global societal challenges and the opportunities for the biosciences to provide solutions to critical challenges such as:

- Food security and healthier food and the fight against obesity
- Finding alternatives to fossil resources from terrestrial or marine resources
- Detecting, monitoring, and removing environmental pollution

Who are the members of the Task Force?

Task Force members are European Commission and US Government science and technology administrators who meet annually to enhance communication across the Atlantic, and to encourage collaborative research.

How does the Task Force facilitate EU-US cooperation?

We have set the goal to find common grounds on scientific and technical aspects of the topics mentioned above, as well as on governance and ethics in order to promote scientific and social values with the same pace and effort.

Each year the Task Force sponsors many workshops, which involve both U.S. and European researchers. The recommendations from these workshops flow directly into the research programmes of the U.S. Federal research agencies that participate in the Task Force, as well as into the Framework Programmes of the European Commission.

We are also training the next generation of scientific leaders in biotechnology to work

collaboratively across the Atlantic. Since 1995, through the activities of the working group on environmental biotechnology, the Task Force has succeeded in training hundreds of early career scientists through three types of activities:

- Workshops on the use of molecular methods and genomics in environmental biotechnology
- Short courses with theoretical, laboratory and field elements
- Short terms exchange fellowships

More than 100 grants have been awarded to postdoctoral students in Europe and the United States, in particular for research on the use of biotechnology and molecular biology, to clean up environmental pollution such as the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

In many cases, young scientists who were trained in some of the first short-term training and exchange fellowships sponsored by the Task Force, are now leaders in their fields, and continue the transatlantic dialogue which they began as students.