Successful in Europe

German researchers of the socio-economic sciences and humanities in the 7th Research Framework Programme
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Climate change, the demographic development and migration belong to the great challenges of the 21st century. We can master these challenges only by working together on the European and worldwide scales in the areas of education, research and the sciences. It is for that reason the EU Research Framework Programme (FP) – the world’s largest program of support to research and development – primarily funds transnational projects.

In the FP, the socio-economic sciences and humanities are not simply commentators of natural scientific research. They are, rather, indispensable partners that are in a innovative dialogue with the natural sciences and with technologies. And they deliver independent contributions in order to master the urgent responsibilities of the future. For this reason, a proprietary funding initiative was introduced in the area of the socio-economic sciences and humanities with the launch of the Seventh EU Research Framework Programme (FP7) in 2007.

This brochure – “Successful in Europe” – is comprised of brief portraits of German researchers in the area of the socio-economic sciences and humanities. These researchers are devoting their efforts to serving as coordinators of projects funded by FP7. The topics researched include the consequences of shrinking cities upon Europe and the protection of Europe’s diversity of languages. The successes visibly achieved by these should provide especially young researchers with the incentive to embark upon the path to researching on the European scale.

Prof. Dr. Annette Schavan, MdB
Federal Minister of Education and Research
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European collaborative research and its importance for the socio-economic sciences and humanities

by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Mackiewicz, chair of the Advisory Group Humanities and of the SSH Expert Advisory Group

Most of the collaborative projects depicted in this brochure are from the area of the socio-economic sciences. It should not be forgotten, however, that humanities-driven research is also capable of generating important new knowledge for Europe’s societies and politicians, and that it is particularly suited to do so. The research achieves this by taking on such topics as international conflicts, human rights, ethics, religions, the media, identities and cultural remembrances, and linguistic diversity – to mention but a few. Humanities-driven research can make an important contribution to the identification, analysis and mastering of new challenges, especially those resulting from the political agenda of the EU.

The conducting of research via European consortia constitutes, of course, a challenge to the humanities. They are far less internationalized than the socio-economic sciences, and are largely embedded in national scientific traditions. The humanities also show a tendency towards fragmentation. This is reflected primarily in the pursuing of careers involving the conducting of research into specific disciplines or sub-disciplines. The successes achieved by the “Initiative for Excellence” notwithstanding, interdisciplinary research is still, unfortunately, somewhat of an exception for scholars in the humanities. Many of them view the orientation toward politics of the EU’s research consortia as representing a restriction of their academic liberty. In this, the remembrance of the successful enlistment of the humanities by totalitarian regimes certainly also plays a role. My own experiences convince me that these hurdles can be best overcome by researching in European-level consortia.

The projects portrayed in the brochure provide eloquent proof that the societal challenges an integrated Europe and a globalized world face, can no longer be comprehended in national contexts, notwithstanding the fact that these challenges can take varying forms in the various countries and regions.

Through the participation in international collaborative projects and bodies Germany’s researchers in the humanities and socio-economic sciences gain a clear understanding of other traditions of research. This, in turn, is a prime precondition for the creation of a European research area. This participation enables researchers to take an international view of the contribution made by research to societal well-being.

The German point of view is that research in the humanities and socio-economic sciences is informed by two general changes.

• Our researchers (including the young ones) have to understand that no dichotomy exists between research pursuing excellence and that impacting upon politics. In this case, “impacting upon” is not to be confused with “political consulting”. We have to keep in mind that Germany’s humanities and socio-economic sciences are at a high level. It is precisely this fact that makes the involvement of our researchers in European collaborative projects so important.

• Our European collaborative projects have to formulate their objectives, methods and (preliminary) results in a way convincing their target groups of their relevance.

Perhaps the most important aspect is the personal experiences. I myself have seen that young researchers find working in European collaborative projects to be exciting and enriching.

Brochures such as this one are suited to arouse and strengthen interest in European collaborative projects.
Citizens participating to fight corruption

The European Union’s fight against corruption has largely relied upon laws, checks, public prosecutors and police. It has thus, as a general rule, employed the top-down principle. Measures are developed at the uppermost level for practical implementation on lower ones. Such an approach largely disregards the socio-cultural characteristics of the member states. Case-in-point is Eastern Europe, whose citizens only managed to survive the period ending with the fall of Communism in 1989 by undertaking barter deals. These took place in so-called “socialistic redistribution networks”, in which business entities also took part. The deals enabled them to proactively compensate for the lacks arising from the invalid goals set by state planners. Under these circumstances, corruption thus was a force for stability. As a result, it shaped the culture of behaviour characteristic of the region’s residents, who regarded such actions as being completely “normal”.

This has led sociologists to join with Transparency International in fighting corrupt practices by giving such measures a new direction. Setting forth a sociological investigation on the culture of corruption in Europe (“Crime and Culture” 2006-2009), the “ALACs” research project was launched in 2009. Taking into special account the bottom-up perspective (“what does corruption mean and how does it work in a particular situation?”), counter-measures fitted to individual countries are being investigated.

No success without a culture of trust

The focal point of the research undertaken by project coordinator Professor Dirk Tänzler and his partners is conducting an analysis of the anti-corruption work of Transparency International (TI). This NGO is a leader in fighting corruption. To that end, TI has set up Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres – “ALACs” – around the world. The team’s assumption is that values such as integrity, responsibility and transparency are essential components of efficacious anti-corruption work. Such a culture of trust between citizens and state institutions constitutes an essential prerequisite for the effective and long-term defeat and prevention of corruption. The primary orientation of the fight against corruption upon prevention means pursuing a lengthy process of societal learning. This has to take the form of a new societal contract. It has to lead to an alliance among the political and business communities and citizens. Role models are provided by Transparency International’s ALACs.

The EU project compiled ethnographic case studies on the ALACs that have been set up over the past few years in Romania, the Czech Republic, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Azerbaijan. The results and analysis formed the starting point of the project’s second phase, which looked at the implementations being undertaken by the ALACs in Ireland, Finland, Latvia and Hungary. The objective is optimizing societal anti-corruption efforts by fostering inter-cultural exchanges of experiences. The focal point is promoting the socio-cultural embedding of these measures.

Promotion of Participation and Citizenship in Europe through the Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres of Transparency International

Acronym: ALACs
Budget: €1 million
Term: 36 months (01.09.2009 – 31.08.2012)
Number of partners: 11
Internet: www.soziologie.uni-konstanz.de/alacs/
Project/
“Coordinators enjoy a high level of prestige among their colleagues”

Interview with coordinator Dirk Tänzler

What personal benefits are you experiencing from your work as coordinator of the ALACs project?

The work enabled me to forge very good contacts with Brussels. The networking prevailing among EU projects is better than in those undertaken on the national level. One receives a large number of invitations and a much greater degree of attention, with this especially applying to the general public. I also noticed that discussions on the EU level facilitate a different kind of access to topics. This has been very enriching to me. EU projects and their coordinators enjoy a high level of prestige among colleagues.

What key skills should a coordinator contribute to an EU project?

A coordinator has to have strong nerves and the ability to pull strings. Also important is the ability to approach people with openness and to enter into dialogues with them. This is even more the case on the international level than on the national one.

What advice would you have for young researchers striving to work in an international project?

They should first take a very detailed look at the requirements and should ask themselves, self-critically, if they are ready to fulfill them. The researcher’s attitude towards this kind of work is of decisive importance. You have to be prepared to try new things, and to configure your actions to meet the requirements of an international grouping. This is not always easy. It is helpful to keep in mind that research has the capability of facilitating problem solving.

Which are the most important objectives that you are pursuing in your project?

The highest priority has been the implementation of the results on the practical level. To that end, we were able, in response to an invitation from the UN, to present the ALACs at an international get-together of experts staged in Vienna. Our presentation met with great interest.

What measures are you implementing to achieve these objectives?

To transfer these results, we have joined with Transparency International in offering training sessions for staff members at ALACs. Such sessions have proven their mettle as instruments for the implementation of our recommendations on the practical level.
Improving the management of the economy

Steady, stable and high-quality growth in Europe can only be induced and managed by establishing, collecting and evaluating the factors yielding it. Doing this will enable Europe to develop in a way from which both its business community and its citizens will profit. The upheavals resulting from the economic crisis eloquently detail the strong need for purposeful management of the continent’s economy.

The EU’s objective is having the most viable and dynamic economy. To ascertain whether or not it is making progress towards this objective, and to analyze why, the Union requires a system comprehensively benchmarking performance. To that end, the EU Commission has commissioned the gathering, selection and analysis of a range of indicators. The results are published annually. One of the major challenges facing a transnational system of benchmarking is the development of indicators describing all major characteristics and key factors. Meeting this challenge gives rise to the question what Europe regards as economic growth that is worthy of being fostered. The development of these indicators and the answering of this question are being undertaken by the consortium pursuing the AMELI project led by Professor Ralf Münnich of the University of Trier.

Growth and societal belonging

The development of societal belonging is an important indicator – important in that its depiction of economic trends could well be more telling than previous evaluations, which are all based upon the gross national product of a country. The compilation of these so-called “Laeken” indicators requires a clear definition of the term and a set of universally-recognized and high-quality statistics capable of determining it.

In order to use the Laeken indicators to calibrate societal belonging with an adequate degree of reliability, the team of the AMELI project has developed a more efficient methodology. It takes into account both national characteristics and practical special features arising from the newly-developed statistics compiled by the European Union on income and quality of life (EU-SILC). The most important objective of the evaluation of the indicators’ result is to impart a greater reliability to political decisions by basing them upon data with a quality that is superior to previous ones.

Advanced methodology for European Laeken indicators

Acronym: AMELI
Budget: € 1.1 million
Term: 36 months (01.04.2008 – 31.03.2011)
Number of partners: 10
Internet: www.uni-trier.de/index.php?id=25157&L=2
“You have to take on responsibility for an important idea”

Interview with coordinator Ralf Münnich

What personal benefits did you experience from your work as coordinator of the AMELI project?

Although exhausting, working with so many highly-motivated researchers from a variety of countries was a lot of fun. It was a privilege, and one not offered to this extent by ordinary research.

Did you plan from the start to coordinate the project, or was that a result of the preliminary work?

The question of who would serve as coordinator was completely up in the air at the beginning. After talking about it, we finally decided that I should do it. Serving as the coordinator is not my favourite job. But if pursuing an idea is important to you, you have to be prepared to take on the responsibility for doing it.

How would you describe your role as a coordinator?

Being a good and reliable colleague is especially important in the international sphere. “Eurocracy” can be highly confusing. For that reason, I place a high priority on intensively meeting the needs of partners who haven’t had so much experience.

Which are the most important objectives that you are pursuing in your project?

We are of course conducting exciting new research. We are also fulfilling a contract that we have entered into. You have to be prepared to adapt your original concept – should the course of events make it necessary. There is always a gap between research theory and “real world” application. This especially applies to political decision-makers.

What is your assessment of the evaluation process in FP7? Would you change anything about it?

I wouldn’t have any idea how else to conduct it. The important thing is for the evaluators to be experts in the subject areas the applications come from. This will preclude their compiling erroneous evaluations, something that could arise from their not having the necessary knowhow in the respective areas.

To me, success means ...
the opportunity of getting to know new areas, and to see things develop.

I get angry ...
whenever somebody avoids work. That’s not the way to be a good colleague and behaving like this imperils the project. I have hardly experienced this problem up until now.

When I was young, I wanted ...
to become all sorts of things – with the exception of becoming a professor of statistics.

Whenever my work starts getting to me, ...
I take a break from it, even though it’s sometimes quite difficult.

The best way for me to unwind from work is ...
to have a glass of wine or to play with my kids.
Making urban development more humane

By 2050, two thirds of the world’s population will live in metropolitan areas. This fact raises one of the most urgent issues humanity is facing: how can cities be brought to grow in a sustainably healthy way? Answering this question is especially important for the explosively growing mega-cities in the developing countries. By comparing decision-making processes in ten of the world’s mega-cities, the chance2sustain project facilitates the resolving of this issue. The consortium pursuing this project intends to reveal which processes and forms of citizen participation are most efficient, and what leads to creating knowhow which is locally accessible and which can be best employed to induce sustainable urban development.

To meet these objectives and to investigate these matters, the international project team is using the concept of shared spatial knowledge management. Locally-available knowledge is perceived to be a resource deployable by all stakeholders in the sustainable development of municipal processes. This knowledge comprises both the knowhow possessed by experts and the various forms of information amassed by citizens from experience and other sources. Expertise on sectors and on the sociology of neighbourhoods and urban ecology are also comprised.

New strategies of urban development

The strategic importance of commonly-pursued processes of municipal planning and management is derived from cases in which knowledge prone to lapsing spatially has to be exploited. As a general rule, this approach is not incorporated into models of municipal planning, even though this exploitation can enhance the effectiveness of such planning. This is because its incorporation strengthens the acceptance of such planning by joining experts’ knowhow with the knowledge of the local community. The success of the shared municipal management of knowledge depends, however, upon external political and economic factors.

The impact of these factors on the local level has yet to be investigated. A perspective spanning socio-political contexts and thus yielding comparisons is still needed. Lacking has been a perspective capable of transcending differences in socio-political contexts and thus yielding comparisons. This perspective is, however, of importance for the determination and explanation of the causes of political conflicts that can arise through the dichotomies existing among environmental, social and economic goals.

The ten cities to which the project devotes itself are located in India, South Africa, Peru and Brazil. The cities are characterized by an extreme diversity of economic and political conditions. The project’s objective is to create a model of shared spatial knowledge management that enables the shaping of municipal processes and the inducing of sustainable development.

Urban Chances: City growth and the sustainability challenge; Comparing fast growing cities in growing economies

Acronym: chance2sustain
Budget: € 2.6 million
Term: 48 months (01.04.2010 – 31.03.2014)
Number of partners: 7
Internet: www.chance2sustain.eu
“An authoritarian style of management does not work”

Interview with coordinator Can Akdeniz

What personal benefits did you experience from your work as coordinator of the chance2sustain project?

Partners from the entire world were involved in this project. Our experiences were totally different than those of EDC 2020 (see page 12). Despite this and cultural differences notwithstanding, we also worked together well in this project.

What advice would you have for young researchers striving to work in an international project?

Researchers often work in isolation, and often neglect to forge a range of contacts. Networking is, however, indispensable on the international level. You have to be open to the world around you to survive in the project business. It is important to also be able to develop your ideas in areas outside of your expertise.

Did you plan from the start to coordinate the project, or was that a result of the preliminary work?

The role of being the coordinator resulted from my work in the consortium. I was part of the project from the start. That gave me the requisite expertise. Also speaking for it was our experience in bringing together researchers on the European level. That meshed very well with requirements listed in the call.

How would you describe your activities as a coordinator?

An authoritarian style of management does not work. Part of the job of coordination is, however, employing a non-emotional professionalism when demanding the supplying of results, so as to meet a deadline. I always strove, however, to be a good colleague to my partners in these cases.

Which goal is the most important of those that you are pursuing in this project?

In general, we want to help create knowhow capable of showing the way. While doing this, our job is acting as the consortium’s service provider. One of our responsibilities is briefing the general public on the project’s findings.
Can less be more? Transforming social and environmental policies

One of the EU’s long-term objectives is inducing sustainable development in the economic, environmental and societal spheres. What happens, however, in cases in which social and ecological sustainability is confronted with the economic pressures ensuing from the ongoing processes of globalization or from fiscal and economic austerity programs enacted by countries? The CONSENSUS project is dedicated to the question of how the growth of international trading relationships and national-level economics impact upon environmental and socio-political standards in Europe.

CONSENSUS is striving to enhance appreciation for the inter-relationships of economic, ecological and social aspects of sustainable development, and for the inducing of synergies in the process. To achieve such, Professor Christoph Knill, a political scientist at the University of Konstanz, and his team are investigating political practices, to see whether they attempt to resolve such conflicts of objectives by enacting further regulations or by eliminating such rules. To determine this, the researchers developed a comprehensive process capable of measuring transformations of policies. By deploying it, the team compiled a long-term comparison of the environmental and socio-political policies communicated by the OECD’s 25 member nations.

Quantitative analysis of transformation of policies

The researchers investigated laws enacted between 1975 and 2005 to ascertain to which extent and why environmental and societal policies in these respective countries have been transformed. This comprehensive and transnational analysis served as the basis for the conclusion reached by the consortium pursuing CONSENSUS: that, in general, there had been an increase in the number and strictness of regulations during the period analysed. This trend was, however, far more pronounced in the environmental area than in the social one. As a general rule, politicians find it more advantageous to present themselves as innovators rather than “terminators”. A further factor is that each attempt to curtail extant regulations is often met by broad-based societal resistance. This fosters the tendency towards the ongoing expansion of the body of policies. This expansion does not, of course, preclude individual processes of policy dismantling.

Such well-established fields as social policies feature a high density of measures. This density greatly confines the space available for further innovations. This effect of satiation largely explains the low – in comparison to that of environmental policies – rate of expansion observed. This is the way in which the CONSENSUS study provides an important overview of how the EU has responded to problems and challenges arising in certain fields of policymaking during the ongoing process of integration.

Confronting social and environmental sustainability with economic pressure: balancing trade-offs by policy dismantling or expansion?

Acronym: CONSENSUS
Budget: € 1.5 million
Term: 36 months (01.03.2008 – 28.02.2011)
Number of partners: 5
Internet: www.fp7-consensus.eu
“The exchange of ideas was highly enriching”

Interview with coordinator Christoph Knill

What personal benefits did you experience from your work as coordinator of the CONSENSUS project?  
The first thing to say is that the work was a lot of fun. I took part in workshops held in a variety of countries and got to know a large number of interesting people there. The exchange of ideas and information with our partners was highly enriching and occurred on a regular basis. We worked closely together for three years. Through this, intensive relationships developed.

Which were the most important objectives that you were pursuing in your project?  
We wanted to develop the first process capable of systematically comparing transformations of policies on the aggregate level – referring to entire fields of policies and not individual segments thereof. We also systematically investigated the reciprocal relationships existing between ecological and social situations in a country.

What measures did you implement to achieve these objectives?  
Our research plan foresaw the conducting of a long-term comparison. We investigated the changes undergone during a thirty-year period by environmental and social policies in 25 countries. To that end, we evaluated legislation in both areas of policies. In addition, we employed a mixture of qualitative and quantitative case studies.

Prior to this, did you have any experiences on the national level with support?  
I had led a number of DFG projects and one from the Thyssen Foundation. By now, the calls published by DFG feature requirements resembling those of the EU, and especially those of the European Research Council. The challenge of formulating an EU application consists of portraying the basic research in a way convincing the evaluators.

What is your assessment of the evaluation process in FP7? Would you change anything in it?  
My experience in writing a proposal tells me that luck is involved in getting an application approved. Evaluators are from a variety of countries. This means that they have a variety of perspectives. To arouse the same high level of enthusiasm in all of the evaluators for your project can be very difficult for that reason.
Development policies of the future

Development aid is primarily undertaken to improve the standard of living in the countries in which it is provided. This assistance can, however, also produce many other benefits. In a best case scenario, it can at the same time be of use to the country providing it – by improving climate protection, by providing access to important raw materials, and by imparting greater political stability to sensitive regions of the world.

The EDC 2020 project is investigating the premises of the future’s development policies. Europe’s relationships with developing countries give rise to new and interlinked areas of investigation. New players have been appearing on the scene of international development, of Europe’s energy policies and of climate change. The debates ensuing from these developments are taking place at a time in which far-reaching and worldwide challenges require mastering.

A joint strategy of development for the EU

It is important that future decisions and laws are made and based on thorough research and compelling proof. Further, the debate carried out in the public arena has to encompass the findings of research. The EDC 2020 (European Development Co-operation) project is being coordinated by Can Akdeniz of the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI) in Bonn. The three-year project’s objective is to make the EU’s legislators and other societal players more aware of the challenges the EU’s development strategies face. To achieve that, the project is scrutinizing three major topics:

- new players in international-level cooperation
- energy security, democracy and political development
- European development strategies and climate change

The project teams up research and communication. Its goal is to foster close working relationships between legislators and researchers. To that end, it promotes cooperation among renowned European research institutes.

European development co-operation to 2020

**Acronym:** EDC 2020  
**Budget:** €1.3 million  
**Term:** 36 months (01.04.2008 – 31.03.2011)  
**Number of partners:** 5  
**Internet:** www.edc2020.eu
“A coordinator should get to know his or her partners at the very start”

Interview with coordinator Can Akdeniz

What led you to submit an EU application?
We saw it as a good way of expanding our activities. Another reason: the support from the EU meshes with the brief of our organization. We are a pan-European consortium and thus well networked. Networking is a precondition for the submission of an application on the EU level.

What personal benefits did you experience from your work as coordinator of the EDC2020 project?
We worked exclusively with European partners on the EDC 2020 project. In my role as coordinator, I started out having reservations as to the project’s costs and complexity. My experiences were, however, very positive, thanks to the professionalism shown by the partners. We had a very good working relationship with all of them.

What key skills should a coordinator contribute to an EU project?
A coordinator needs to have management skills and a great stock of patience when dealing with partners. Of decisive importance is also to lead the project from the moment of placing the application. The coordinator should get to know the partners at the beginning, and should create the structures at an early stage, so that they can be deployed during the life of the project.

To me, success means ...
not harming myself and others.

I get angry ...
... nothing actually makes me angry. I strive to accept that some things are the way they are.

When I was young, I wanted ...
to become an engineer and design airplanes.

Whenever my work starts getting to me, ...
I take a break and go out and get some fresh air.

The best way for me to unwind from work is ...
not to regard it as an inevitable chore, but rather as an essential component of my life.

What recommendations would you have for your colleagues wishing to submit an EU application?
Research institutes tend to overestimate their capabilities. They often lack the ability to criticize themselves. Those placing an EU application should, however, be aware of their own weaknesses. This is the only way of alleviating them – by selecting partners making up for them.

What advantages arise from working with an international consortium?
Working on an international level constitutes a path whose popularity will grow in the years to come. The biggest advantage is that it offers a way of improving the quality of research – by using the strengths of others, and by joining them with those of one’s own. This gives rise to an open-field process of knowledge generation, the results of which you can no longer claim to be exclusively yours.

Improving the evaluation of research

The indicators usually used to evaluate the quality of research are the number of publications and citations it produces. Employed, for instance, in educational sciences, this traditional method yields, however, a distorted picture, and is to be replaced by one deploying new and better-balanced indicators of quality. Coordinated by Professor Ingrid Gogolin of the University of Hamburg, EERQI has set itself the objective of improving the viability of research conducted in Europe in the area of educational sciences.

Traditional methods of evaluating scientific publications largely rely on rankings derived from the frequencies with which the respective publications are cited or from the “Journal Impact Factor”.

Disadvantaging of research in Europe conducted in the humanities and social sciences

These numbers of publications and citations do not adequately depict the quantity of European scientific output. Suffering under the resultant disadvantaging are Europe’s researchers, institutes, disciplines and, even, the languages in which the sciences are pursued. In addition to English, the number of languages taken into account by traditional instruments is less than a dozen. To remedy this, the EERQI project has developed a preliminary model to deploy and test new indicators of quality. In doing so, the research team is using new technologies such as instruments of processing natural speech in the conducting of semantic analyses. A search engine has been developed which uses a variety of languages and which enables the mining of digitally-maintained scientific documents.

Their project work has enabled the researchers to develop indicators and methods to be used for the evaluation of publications covering research in educational sciences. To foster the practical use of these indicators and methods, a multilingual handbook has been created in English, German, French and Swedish. The team also deployed the EERQI indicators in other areas of the humanities and social sciences, and has drawn up a sustainability plan for the prototype developed.

Thanks to these steps, the project has improved the methods used in the ascertainment of the quality of research publications produced in the humanities and social sciences, as well as in other areas.

European educational research quality indicators

Acronym: EERQI
Budget: € 1.5 million
Term: 36 months (01.04.2008 – 31.03.2011)
Number of partners: 19
Internet: www.eerqi.eu
“What fascinated me most was the lively exchange of ideas”

Interview with coordinator Ingrid Gogolin

What led you to submit an EU application?
The extant instruments used in the measuring of the quality of scientific texts upset me. These instruments were developed for use in the natural sciences, and are not suitable for our discipline. Since I am investigating multilingualism in Europe, I was convinced that the EU would help me pursue my research.

What personal benefits did you experience from your work as coordinator of the EERQi project?
Nineteen partners from eight countries and a large variety of disciplines participated in the project. What fascinated me most was the lively exchange of ideas arising in this heterogeneous group.

What advice would you have for young researchers striving to work in an international project?
They should work closely with their National Contact Points, and should maintain good relationships with Brussels. It is also productive to talk to colleagues who have already worked on the international level. To get the ball rolling, you can take part in seminars and workshops designed to get you ready to be part of EU projects.

What advantages arise from working with an international consortium?
Encounters with others yield insights about yourself. This maxim also applies to research. Working with researchers from other countries makes you aware of the extent to which theories of research are determined culturally. Speaking a common language does not suffice to enable you to understand each other. You also have to be prepared to question your habits, and to accept the others’ ways of thinking.

What is your assessment of the application procedure in FP7?
It does not, unfortunately, adequately take the research part into account. The focus is on the answering of bureaucratic questions on the project’s management or exploitation of the project’s results. The procedure’s volume as a whole should be reduced, as it incites the production of prose that is in some cases redundant.
Language is comprehension

The European Union has 23 official languages. More than 70 languages are spoken in Europe. If you also take into account those languages spoken by immigrants to the continent, it becomes apparent why this large number of languages constitutes a challenge for Europe’s policy-makers. Their job is not only to protect this linguistic diversity but also to foster reciprocal comprehension.

ELDIA is an interdisciplinary research project headed by Professor Anneli Sarhimaa of the University of Mainz. The project’s objective is to promote multilingualism among Europe’s citizens and societies. Working on this project are experts from eight universities in six countries. Their expertises are in applied and social linguistics, in law, in sociology and in statistics. Their goal is to improve our comprehension of the interplay between locally, nationally and internationally-spoken languages in today’s Europe.

A representative selection

To this end, the researchers selected several examples of multilingual communities. This encompassed a selection of minor languages. Among them: the Finno-Ugric family of languages. This has been paid very little attention in the internationally-accessible social linguistic literature. Its small size notwithstanding, the area in which Finno-Ugric languages are spoken depicts the broad and variegated spectrum of political and socio-economic conditions experienced by Europe’s linguistic minorities. As is the case with all linguistic minorities, this one is highly heterogeneous. It is comprised of languages that are either comparatively small or large, either autochthonous or having arisen through migration, either robust or imperilled, and either formally-formulated or scarcely-standardized.

The project’s findings are meant to be transferrable, and to promote the researching of multilingualism and the development of language policies in other multilingual contexts and also outside of Europe. To this end, the ELDIA project team is developing a tool intended to help determine the degree of imperilment of minor languages.

European Language Diversity for All: Reconceptualising, promoting and re-evaluating individual and societal multilingualism

Acronym: ELDIA
Budget: € 2.7 million
Term: 42 months
(01.03.2010 – 31.08.2013)
Number of partners: 7
Internet: www.eldia-project.org
“Coordinators have to be able to trust others”

Interview with coordinator Anneli Sarhimaa

What personal benefits did you experience from your work as coordinator of the ELDIA project?

I consider the networking with my colleagues to have been especially valuable. I will stay in touch with them in the post-project period. I also learned a lot about myself. For instance, I had to accept that friendliness sometimes does not suffice to get the job done. To keep the project moving forward, I was sometimes required to be confrontational.

What key skills should a coordinator contribute to an EU project?

A coordinator has to be able to trust others and to delegate work. If he lacks these abilities it will prevent him or her from handling his or her main responsibility – maintaining an overview of the project as a whole. It is also beneficial to be patient. In addition, you simply have to accept the fact that the work will never be done – that’s helpful!

What recommendations would you have for colleagues wishing to submit an EU application?

Women are reluctant to apply for large sums of money. My advice is not to think small. Coordinators should set goals for themselves that are both reachable and ambitious. A precondition for that is having conducted a realistic prior assessment of the potential of your team.

Did you plan from the start to coordinate the project, or was that a result of the preliminary work?

Since the idea for the project originally came from me, I was the logical choice to be its coordinator. I also had the feeling that the coordination represented the best way for me to make sure that the project was a success.

What is your assessment of the application procedure in the FP7?

The application procedure is demanding, but not more so than, for instance, the one in Finland. Looking back, it was a good idea that we spent so much time preparing for it. That enabled us to know exactly where we wanted to go and how we could achieve our objective.

Did you use the consulting services supplied by facilities dedicated to FP7?

We were briefed by the NCP and by the consultants at the University of Mainz. Both showed a great deal of respect for our project.
A family-friendly Europe

Each of Europe’s countries has its own form of family life. These forms are, additionally, subject to never-ending changes. How can one employ this heterogeneity as a base to induce optimal conditions for families? The “FamilyPlatform” project has the objective of finding answers to this question, and, by doing so, increasing Europe’s family-friendliness.

Led by its coordinator, Professor Uwe Uhlendorff of Dortmund’s Technical University, the “Family-Platform” project is comprised of 12 organizations jointly working to improve European families’ quality of life. To attain this objective, the team is striving to enhance the awareness of the problems faced by families. This is due to the fact that the lifestyles of families have not been well-known or closely followed in the European context by the various stakeholders. These include politicians, the business community and societal players.

The consortium conducting the “FamilyPlatform” project is carrying out investigations of family life in Europe in the following key areas:

- family structures and forms
- family development processes
- laws pertaining to families
- families and lifestyles
- management of families
- social assistance and services
- societal inequities and diversity of families
- the media and education in families

Direct contact with families and interest groups

The special feature of the project was the participation of a large number of stakeholders. This was achieved through the direct personal contacts forged at conferences and workshops, or those that arose through the utilization of online tools to stage debates and discussions. These measures led to each groups’ proactive participation in the research being conducted by the team headed by Professor Uhlendorff.

The project was structured into four phases. The first delineated and evaluated the essential trends informing comparative research of families in Europe. The second phase took a critical look at the investigations conducted on these topics. The third one aimed to raise awareness of family-related topics, in order to compile scenarios of the development of and challenges faced by families. The fourth and final phase brought together all of the previous ones’ findings. It then used these to derive research topics for forthcoming European projects.

Social platform on research for families and family policies

Acronym: FamilyPlatform
Budget: € 1.5 million
Term: 18 months (01.10.2009 – 31.03.2011)
Number of partners: 12
Internet: www.familyplatform.eu
“Without the NCP’s advice, the application would have failed”

Interview with coordinator Uwe Uhlendorff

What personal benefits did you experience from your work as coordinator of the FamilyPlatform project?

The coordinator has to forge ties among all 160 participants. I learned how important it is to take unconventional approaches. All players signed off on the project’s underlying concept. Without everybody’s openness, we would have never brought that about.

What key skills should a coordinator contribute to an EU project?

It is indispensable to take a professional approach to moderation techniques. You have to be more than acquainted with them. You have to know precisely when they are to be employed. That requires your being capable of refraining from the voicing of your own opinion and of finding neutral ground.

What recommendations would you have for your colleagues wishing to submit an EU application?

You have to be an excellent researcher, and have to be well acquainted with other disciplines. You also have to be aware of the fact that research conducted in an international consortium is quite different from working by yourself at a university – and that an EU project places requirements that differ from those imposed by research on the national level.

What advantages arise from working with an international consortium?

Research is shaped by cultures. Working in an international consortium helps to free you of nation-specific ways of thinking, and helps you to reorient yourself. You are forced to find a joint approach with all your partners.

Which are the most important objectives that you are pursuing in your project?

The question investigated in the project is highly controversial in the EU. We hope that our findings will give a new direction to the discussion. We also want to help attract greater attention within the EU to topics involving family-related policies. We also want to foster the paying of greater attention in the EU to topics involving family-related policies.

Did you use the consulting services supplied by facilities dedicated to FP7?

Had we not had access to the consulting services provided by the NCP, we would not have managed to submit the application. They were always open to our concerns. We knew we could count on their support even in times of difficulties.

To me, success means ... leveraging your ideas into getting the ball rolling.

I get angry ... at people who are not prepared to accept other ways of thinking.

When I was young, I wanted ... to become a veterinarian.

When work starts getting to me, ... I make a date with friends to cook or work in my garden.

The best way for me to unwind from work is, ... by packing my suitcase and going off on a trip.
Europe’s interdependent financial markets – where are they headed?

The upheavals experienced during the last few years on Europe’s financial markets have left their marks. The lack of solvency of banks and of entire nations has impaired economic growth and questioned the accuracy of traditional ways of analyzing financial markets. While this has occurred, the interlinkages of Europe’s markets have proceeded, albeit at a variety of speeds. How will these interlinkages of financial systems impact upon economic growth, employment and competitiveness? The EU-financed FINESS project contributes to the delineation of a firmly-established “blueprint” of the new outline for Europe’s financial markets.

A new outline for Europe’s financial market – a base for growth?

The results of the FINESS project are designed to supply Europe’s economic policy-makers with better insights into the performance of financial institutes and with options for courses of action enhancing the operating efficiency of both well-established and young companies. The economic researchers led by Christian Dreger expect their comprehensive and comparative analysis of the financial markets in the EU’s member states (incl. the new ones) to yield valuable clues as to the nature of the catalysts and bottlenecks of sustainable growth. This analysis represents an important contribution to the research on the ongoing integration of Europe’s financial markets.

**Financial systems, efficiency and stimulation of sustainable growth**

- **Acronym:** FINESS
- **Budget:** €1 million
- **Term:** 24 months (15.02.2008 – 14.02.2010)
- **Number of partners:** 8
- **Internet:** [www.finess-web.eu](http://www.finess-web.eu)
“Partners have to believe in the project’s value”

Interview with coordinator Christian Dreger

What key skills should a coordinator contribute to an EU project?
A coordinator often has to establish his or her expertise via scientific publications. He or she should also have a large network within the international community. This facilitates the recruiting of a competent team. He or she must also be capable of formulating convincing project proposals. After all, what use is an exciting research project if its application doesn’t arouse the evaluators’ enthusiasm?

What advice would you have for young researchers striving to work in an international project?
They should “go international” at an early stage. This gathering of experience can also take place via stints at the European Commission. It is not important to begin at the top — by assuming a position of leadership. A position that allows young researchers to watch others work on an international level enables them to take note of what is really important.

What recommendations would you have for your colleagues wishing to submit an EU application?
Having a good basic idea does not suffice to make an application successful. You should also have a precise concept about the project’s structure and cooperation partners. You should allow at least half a year for the preparation of the application.

To me, success means ...
improving my standing. Coordinating projects is a good way of doing so.

I get angry at...
having to deal with incompetent people.

When I was young, I wanted ...
to become a philosopher or historian.

When work starts getting to me, ...
I am in the fortunate position of being able to decide for myself if and when I need a break.

The best way for me to unwind from work is ...
playing computer games.

What advantages arise from working with an international consortium?
You don’t normally have the opportunity of working with colleagues from other countries in the staging of conferences and issuing of publications. This international networking does, however, have its costs. The partners have to believe in the value of the project, and have to be certified experts in their fields.

What is your assessment of the evaluation process in FP7? Would you change anything about it?
I don’t believe the criteria are properly weighted. Management skills and zeal in getting research published are indispensable, but are too strongly emphasized in the evaluation.
Who in the knowledge-based society makes the decisions on education?

Dropouts, applicants for vocational training who do not have the qualifications needed, teachers wrestling unsuccessfully with social problems, pressure-plagued pupils and parents, very expensive tutoring – all of Europe’s educational systems are confronted with these problems. Ever since our post-modern society has increasingly remodelled itself to be knowledge-based, education has become a life-long process, one that is of ever-greater importance as a determinant of opportunities in life. The question arises: which players and which factors make and influence the decisions on the shaping of our education?

Project coordinator Professor Andreas Walther, an educational scientist, views the key factors informing the decisions on whether or not to drop out or to end secondary education at an early stage as including school systems featuring a variety of educational tracks, the poverty level, the treatment of minorities and, especially, the readiness by the business community to participate in the training of school leavers. For that reason, the GOETE project is examining how such complex reciprocal relationships impact upon the educational decisions made by Europe’s children and young people.

Greater opportunities in education in Europe

The primary focus of the international team headed by Andreas Walther lies on the decisions made during the transition from elementary school to the lower form and, from there, to vocational education. To study the factors determining these decisions, pupils, students and parents in eight EU member states were interviewed. One topic being looked at is whether or not these persons received adequate support. Questionnaire-based surveys are also being conducted of managers in the areas of educational policy, business, schools, educational authorities, municipalities and assistance for the young.

The EU’s “Europe 2020 strategy” has resolved to cut the rate of early-stage school leavers to under 10% by 2020. GOETE wants to help achieve that goal by facilitating children’s and young peoples’ access to education, by furnishing appropriate forms of support, and by initiating a dialogue encompassing all stakeholders and involving the issue of which kinds of education are needed by advanced, knowledge-based societies. The close working relationship within a European research consortium allows GOETE’s researchers to learn directly from other systems of education, and enables them to take searching looks at habitual patterns of behaviour prevailing in proprietary ones.

Governance of Educational Trajectories in Europe. Access, coping and relevance of education for young people in European knowledge societies in comparative perspective

Acronym: GOETE
Budget: € 2.7 million
Number of partners: 12
Internet: www.goete.eu
“An EU project is a kind of social experiment”

Interview with coordinator Andreas Walther

What led you to submit an EU application?
I had submitted nearly a dozen applications since 1998. That’s why I can’t identify a general reason. My first attempt involved, among other things, comparing on the international scale approaches taken to researching how young people are experiencing changes in the transition to adulthood. These emphases made it logical to submit an application on the EU-level.

What key skills should a coordinator contribute to an EU project?
They have to work hard at maintaining cooperation, one that will last until the next meeting. Especially difficult is getting partners to relinquish habitual ways of working for new ones. A coordinator has to be aware of the fact that an EU project is a social experiment, in which he or she is required to get all participants on board and dedicated to achieving a common goal.

What advantages arise from working with an international consortium?
As its coordinator, I developed the project from a specifically German point of view. The consortium offers the benefit of having an international one mixed into it. Thanks to this, one learns to place a different value upon one’s own perspective – and to better understand it.

To me, success means ...
realising that my instinctive decisions were correct.

I get angry at ...
unnecessary administrative responsibilities keeping me from doing my real work.

When I was young, I wanted ...
to make movies. That is also a profession requiring the meshing of your ideas with those of others, and seeing what develops from it.

When the work starts getting to me, ...
I take time off on a regular basis. On these days, I cannot be reached.

The best way for me to unwind from work is ...
to cook, swim and travel.

How would you describe your role as a coordinator?
I place a high value upon democratic processes. For that reason, I strive to maintain cooperation with the partners characterized by openness and two-way communication. In certain cases you do have to insist upon sticking to agreements that we have committed to in our contract with the European Commission. As the project’s coordinator, I am responsible for our adhering to it.

Which are the most important objectives that you are pursuing in your project?
Dominant in educational policies and research is the technocratic concept of being able to measure the development of skills. We are striving to detail the large number of factors responsible for this development, and how structures of decision-making – and thus skills – come into being. Processes of upbringing play an important role in this regard.
Companies bear responsibility

Until recently, the evaluation of successful business activities focussed upon the health of the company’s balance sheet and upon achieving a high shareholder value. The question of how society as a whole benefits from these activities was generally not posed, even though companies do require secure and stable environments for their operations, too.

“Corporate Social Responsibility” (CSR) is becoming a guiding concept in EU policies and in the business community. This is because the pursuit of CSR can yield substantial benefits for economies, societies and the environment. This growing importance notwithstanding, there is too little empirical material on the impact of CSR upon the performances of individual companies and of economies as a whole, because researchers have developed very few tools or methods capable of investigating CSR.

Measuring social benefits

To remedy the incompleteness of this empirical base, the consortium pursuing the IMPACT project is developing new tools and fine-tuning existing ones. Led by coordinator Regine Barth of the OEKO Institute, the team plans on deploying the resultant instruments in the investigation of the influence exerted by societal and social responsibility on the various levels in which Europe’s companies, their sectors and their regions operate. To this end, the researchers are analysing and comparing the CSR initiatives undertaken by companies so as to then investigate the benefits arising from them for the company itself and for the economy, society and environment in which it operates.

The objectives and thrusts of the EU’s Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies – enhancing competitiveness and inducing innovations, growth, quality of work and sustainability – may well be better furthered by purposefully employing CSR measures. Both the European Union’s economy and society will benefit from this.

IMPACT will involve relevant stakeholders and experts in various ways throughout the entire project. The expertise of the consortium will help to investigate the relations between businesses, society and the state, which are specific for each country and which influence CSR impacts. The work of all IMPACT members will create the largest integrated research effort on CSR impact assessment in Europe to date.

Impact measurement and performance analysis of CSR

**Acronym:** IMPACT

**Budget:** € 2.7 million

**Term:** 36 months (01.03.2010 – 28.02.2013)

**Number of partners:** 16

**Internet:**

www.csr-impact.eu
“A two-stage application procedure would avoid unnecessary work”

Interview with coordinator Regine Barth

What advice would you have for young researchers striving to work in an international project?

They should take a look at what others have experienced, and use this as a primer. I consider keeping a watchful eye to be important. It is also important to take advantage of every opportunity of getting to know other fields of expertise. One way is to take part in conferences not involving your field of expertise.

What recommendations would you have for colleagues wishing to submit an EU application?

The formulation of an application takes a lot of time and energy. You should therefore only commit yourself to doing so in cases in which you totally believe in your consortium. You should restrict yourself to topics in which you have exceptionally high expertise.

Which are the most important objectives that you are pursuing in your project?

We want to equip the EU and companies with an instrument facilitating their implementation of CSR. We also hope that our data will provide a better overview of which measures work and which don’t.

What measures are you implementing to achieve these objectives?

We have set up “policy roundtables”, to which the heads of directorates general are invited. There is also a “high-level group” in the European Council as well as a “stakeholders’ roundtable”. It is attended by, for instance, representatives of the unions and of the business community.

Have you taken part in other EU projects?

I participated twice in projects staged during the previous research framework programme – once as a partner and once as coordinator. In addition to IMPACT, I am also currently working on another FP7 project. This one is in the environmental area.

What is your assessment of the application procedure in FP7?

I would prefer it to have a two-stage procedure. One would only submit sketches in the first round. It would be only in the second round that a full-scale application would be submitted. This would preclude the investing of a lot of work in applications that do not receive funding.
Europe is ageing faster than ever

The population of the EU’s member states is getting older and older. In 2030, nearly 25% of the residents of the EU will be older than 65. By mid-century, there will be nearly two over 65 year-olds for each resident of employable age. This unprecedented phenomenon will have far-reaching ramifications upon our society. These, in turn, have yet to be adequately investigated and comprehended.

The LEPAS project is being coordinated by Professor Holger Strulik of the University of Hannover. It takes the biological process of ageing, which is understood as the gradual worsening of the functions of body and mind, and applies it to advanced and dynamic macroeconomics. This is due to the fact that all European states share the phenomenon of the rapid ageing of their populations. The team led by Professor Strulik is employing theoretical and quantitative methods to investigate how ageing ramifies upon society and productivity. Models of endogenous economic growth are being deployed to ascertain how the effects of the ageing of population will impact upon education and investment, and thus upon the economic growth, ability to compete and standard of living evinced and found in the EU’s member states.

Solidarity between the generations

The international project team is developing models of various countries to determine the extent to which the ageing of the population impacts upon the agglomeration of human capital and upon migration in Europe. The models facilitate the identification of the factors revealing how ageing affects the ability to work, and how the elderly can contribute to the labour market. The project is also designed to depict ways in which the solidarity between the generations comprising an ageing society can be strengthened.

Further objects of investigation include the effects of ageing upon technological progress and the import of it upon the EU’s abilities to innovate and develop. The project’s researchers are ascertaining the overall impact of the ageing process upon health and health care, and how this, in turn, spills over upon the economy as a whole. The project is also agglomerating information designed to establish how and to which extent market economies and their public sectors offer such care within the EU. All of this data will play a key role in delineating the course taken by Europe’s ageing society.

Long-run economic perspectives of an ageing society

**Acronym:** LEPAS  
**Budget:** € 1 million  
**Term:** 36 months (01.04.2009 – 31.03.2012)  
**Number of partners:** 4  
**Internet:**  
[www.lepas-fp7.de](http://www.lepas-fp7.de)
“EU support enabled our project“

Interview with coordinator Holger Strulik

What led you to submit an EU application?
Third party funding from the EU is very important to the administrations of universities. We could not have carried out the project had we not received this support.

What key skills should a coordinator contribute to an EU project?
You have to be a good networker. I got to know my project partners and their research many years ago. That is why I was sure that the project could be successfully completed.

Did you plan from the start to coordinate the project, or did that occur in the course of the preliminary work?
It is of course more relaxing to be a partner than the coordinator. My concern was that if I didn’t do it, no one would.

What benefits arise from working with an international consortium?
The international pool of researchers is much larger than the national one. It is much easier to find a partner who has the same goals and capabilities if you do not confine your search to national borders.

How are you striving to attain your project’s objectives?
The project’s partners meet on a regular basis. We organise a workshop once a year, during which the partners discuss their findings with experts – including those from other disciplines. An upcoming workshop will, for example, feature not only economists, but also demographers, biologists and medical experts.

What is your assessment of the evaluation process in the FP7?
I would recommend performing a preliminary selection based on a brief – a maximum of three pages – sketch of the project. The second stage of the long and complex application procedure should only begin for the applicant if its sketch is evaluated positively.

And what’s your view of the application procedure?
The application procedure is extremely complex. You have to draft flow and Gantt charts detailing the project’s schedule. You have to work through hundreds – or so it feels – pages of guidelines written in the jargon of EU bureaucrats. I believe that the procedure could be substantially shortened.

To me, success means ...
that my work makes sense.

I get angry ...
... well, what does really make me angry?

When I was young, I wanted ...
to become anything but an economist.

Whenever work starts getting to me, ...
I take a break.

The best way for me to unwind from work is ...
to take a long vacation in a place where there is neither Internet nor telephones.
Our digital era is marked by a progressive concentration of the media and by a dramatic revamping of journalism. These processes are imparting an ever-greater importance to the issues of how the media in this area live up to their responsibilities toward society. Among these issues are, for example: how Germany’s media uses its press council to supervise its members; do such well-established instruments still meet the needs of the time?; can the Social Web enhance the trust accorded to journalism? The MediaAcT project is researching the extent to which such traditional instruments of media self-supervision are still capable of mastering new challenges. Which new ways of media self-supervision and transparency are evolving in the Social Web?

The team coordinated by Susanne Fengler analyses on an international level how the established forms of media self-supervision – including press councils and ethics codes – work. The next step is to determine the influence of these established forms upon the media and the journalists working for them. This broadly-based case study comprises a comparison of 11 eastern and western European countries and two countries in the Arabian world – Tunisia and Jordan. A further objective of the team’s research is digital journalism. Which methods of supervision are offered by such innovative instruments as media blogs and by online ombudspersons serving as independent agencies of mediation in the Internet? A further question: what is the role of Web 2.0?

Watchblogs: the press councils of the 21st century?

Professor Fengler is the head of research and managing director of the Erich Brost Institute for International Journalism in Dortmund. She sees a close link between the influence exerted by the instruments of self-supervision upon the media, the media system and the culture of journalism extant in the respective country. Several countries in Eastern Europe have, for example, yet to found a facility comparable to Germany’s press council. Countries with restrictive political systems – such as Jordan – strive to quash the freedom of the press and independent self-supervision. In a first, MediaAcT is conducting an empirical investigation of the attitudes held by journalists and media managers towards old and new instruments of media self-supervision. The project is also querying its respondents to determine which incentives best motivate journalists to meet their responsibilities towards society. A thrust of MediaAcT is encouraging journalists, media managers and media users to push for independent and responsible media in this era of medial change. Workshops and online training sessions are being developed to set up Internet-based encounters between students of journalism and media watchblogs. These, in turn, are involving, for the first time, broad segments of society in the topic of achieving media accountability. By doing this, the EU project is making a contribution towards attaining a self-supervision of the media that is innovative, responsible and, at the same time, transparent. This, in turn, is a basic precondition for the maintaining of a free and pluralistic media system in Europe.
“Working in a consortium expands the scientific perspective”

Interview with coordinator Susanne Fengler

What personal benefits did you experience from your work as coordinator of the MediaAct project?

I hadn’t expected that the team would come together in such a positive way. We don’t consider each other to be competitors but, rather, we work together in a relaxed way. Something I find especially positive is that so many ties have been forged on the various levels. Furthermore, the partners have a variety of theoretical approaches. This variety greatly enlivens our working relationship and expands the scientific perspective.

What key skills should a coordinator contribute to an EU project?

Along with expertise in your field, you need to be highly skilled in “lion taming”, in mediating among the various temperaments. The team determines the success of the project.

What recommendations would you have for your colleagues wishing to submit an EU application?

I would advise them to procure successful applications, so as to take a look and see how these applications were structured. You also shouldn’t delay in building networks. This will provide you with access to best practices. In the phase of placing the application, you definitely should secure assistance from external sources. This assistance can be highly useful when you work on the section of financial details.

How would you describe your role as a coordinator?

I view myself as part of the team, but I always keep my objectives and those of the project in mind. A coordinator has to manage to induce a positive atmosphere, and to keep the team working together. She or he should not, however, strive to please everybody. Successfully leading a project sometimes requires saying “no” and sticking to that.

Which are the most important objectives of your project, and how are you trying to attain them?

Our project is our attempt to further a discussion that is currently only being carried out on a normative base. We are securing the requisite empirical data by polling journalists based in 13 countries.

To me, success means ...
realising my goals and ideas.

I get angry at ...
people who don’t live up to their commitments.

When I was young, I wanted ...
to become an elephant keeper.

Whenever the work starts getting to me, ...
I switch off my BlackBerry.

The best way for me to unwind from work is...
going to the playground with my son.
A strong network

In the NET4SOCIETY project National Contact Points (NCPs) for Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities from more than 50 countries work together, exchange experiences and expertise which is then handed to the research community. This enhances and sustains the implanting of the successes already achieved in the socio-economic sciences and humanities within the EU’s 7th Framework Programme.

Close working relationships among the NCPs constitute a key precondition for the successes achieved in the socio-economic sciences and humanities within the EU’s 7th Framework Programme – and thus for the realization of the European Research Area. By fostering the creation of a strong and well-functioning network, NET4SOCIETY has played a key role in the attaining of these objectives. The project works closely with the European Commission. These ties, in turn, have facilitated the formulation of the topics building the cornerstone for the foundation of an NCP network designed to be long-term in nature.

A stable network for Europe

The coordination of the initial network of National Contact Points for Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities is being handled by the German NCP, which is headed by Angela Schindler-Daniels. The project team’s work is handling the following tasks:

- international networking and maintaining working relationships with all National Contact Points in the areas of the socio-economic sciences and humanities
- exchanging on a regular basis with a large number of contact persons at the European Commission
- exchange of best practices among the NCPs so as to achieve a uniformity of the level of service
- training sessions customized to meet the needs of the National Contact Points. These are primarily for the NCPs’ new colleagues.
- providing support on the European level for topics relevant to the socio-economic sciences and humanities

- raising the visibility of the National Contact Points in Europe and the world

NET4SOCIETY provides staff members of National Contact Points with professional training and with professional education programmes. NET4SOCIETY also offers services like consulting researchers concerning their applications in the socio-economic sciences and humanities of the 7th EU Framework Programme. Furthermore, the network has established a PartnerSearchService, as well as a transnational research directory, matchmaking events and an annually-updated synopsis of all relevant research topics of the current Work Programmes across the 7th EU Framework Programme with reference to the socio-economic sciences and humanities.

Transnational co-operation among National Contact Points for Socio-economic Sciences and the Humanities

Acronym: NET4SOCIETY
Budget: €2.6 million
Term: 48 months (01.02.2008 – 31.01.2012)
Number of partners: 52
Internet: www.net4society.eu
“The earlier you embark upon the EU adventure, the better”

Interview with coordinator
Angela Schindler-Daniels

What led you to submit an EU application?
I was convinced that the networking of the National Contact Points had to be improved. I also foresaw the project as a promising enrichment of my personal experience. Having gone through the phase of placing an application as an applicant was the most valuable schooling that I could possibly imagine for my work as an NCP.

What advice would you have for young researchers striving to work in an international project?
They should select a niche and then go for the EU adventure – be it as an evaluator, partner or expert. The earlier they get involved, the better. The reason why many fail is because they believe they have to get the job of being a coordinator from the very start.

Did you plan from the start to serve as coordinator?
Yes, I wanted to be the coordinator from the start, because I also saw it as a personal challenge.

How would you describe your role as a coordinator?
While pursuing a project, you can’t avoid making decisions that fail to please everybody. I can’t conceive, however, of an authoritarian style of management working in a network comprised of equally-entitled partners. It is precisely networks that thrive upon enthusiasm being transmitted among their members.

To me, success means ...
when our network is being perceived as the researchers’ ally.

I get angry at ...
someone pretending to have comprehended everything, even though this is not the case.

When I was young, I wanted ...
to become a press photographer for “Time” magazine.

When the work starts getting to me ...
I eat – too much – chocolate. If that doesn’t do the trick, I take a nap.

The best way for me to unwind from work is ...
to have stimulating talks with my friends while enjoying some wine.

Which are the most important objectives that you are pursuing in your project?
Our goal is enhancing the visibility of the socio-economic sciences and humanities – especially in regard to the upcoming research framework programme. We want to contribute to subjects of great societal importance and also be perceived on the political level.

What measures are you implementing to achieve these objectives?
We have initiated a dialogue with various stakeholders, and are striving to strengthen the operations of the individual NCPs. By doing so, we wish to get to the point at which we can jointly carry out campaigns on the national and European level. Our dialogue and working relationship with the Commission are both indispensable in this area.
Making use of the diversity of rural areas

Rural areas in Europe have been perceived to be agricultural in nature. Support from the political sector has been configured accordingly. Many regions have, however, experienced the emergence of new constellations, in which other stakeholders – including those active in tourism, nature protection and the skilled trades – play a major role in regional development. How can this variety of strengths be best exploited?

For many years, the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy – CAP – perceived rural regions to solely be the venues of agribusinesses. During the last few years, other stakeholders have been assuming the responsibility for the (economic) development of a number of rural regions. This trend has necessitated a rethinking of European policies, which have by now replaced a pro-farming approach with one striving to broaden the base of development by embracing the new concept of encouraging multifunctionalism in rural regions.

To realize this idea, the CAP has to be linked to a number of sectoral policies. In addition to energy supply and social issues, these encompass regional planning and environmental management. In order to sustain the development of rural regions, local authorities must increasingly work together, forming ever more complex structures in the process.

Tapping all of the potential of rural regions

The RUFUS project intends to equip legislators and advocacy groups with the requisite theoretical and practical knowhow by informing them on how CAP measures can be linked to other forms of measures implementing policies and impacting upon rural development. How can political strategies be joined to foster sustainable development? RUFUS is investigating ways of configuring rural development policies to support multifunctionalism, and to fully exploit the potential contained in rural regions. The project was coordinated by Professor Christina von Haaren of the University of Hannover. It encompassed both the infrastructure of rural areas and the various social factors and economic activities forming the areas’ potential for development.

The team pursuing the project placed a high priority on combining their findings with those of other research areas. The team then established a link between these findings and the political objectives and problems faced by legislative bodies. The final step was to parlay the result into recommendations for measures that are capable of being implemented.

Rural future networks

Acronym: RUFUS
Budget: €1.4 million
Term: 39 months (01.02.2008 – 30.04.2011)
Number of partners: 7
Internet: www.rufus-eu.de
“Evaluations are not interdisciplinary enough”

Interview with project manager Sylvia Herrmann

What key skills should a coordinator contribute to an EU project?
A coordinator has to have scientific expertise, empathy and the ability to communicate. These skills are required by his or her responsibility for comprehending the various approaches taken by the partners – and for mediating among them.

What recommendations would you have for colleagues wishing to submit an EU application?
They have to make sure – during the preparatory phase – that each of the partners shows the same high level of enthusiasm and motivation for the project. Another recommendation: the way to expedite the formulation of the proposal is to have already participated in a project, as this gives you a chance to gain expertise.

What advantages arise from working with an international consortium?
The consortium considers research issues from a large number of perspectives. These stem from the researchers’ coming from a variety of schools. You learn to relinquish biases and to deal with cultural differences. The work also gives you the feeling of doing your bit to foster integration in Europe.

How would you describe your role as a coordinator?
A coordinator of a research project has to take an authoritarian stance. You can’t simply be a good colleague in a project involving so many partners. There were times during the project when I thought that I was imposing too many requirements. In the end, however, I was assured that my approach was appropriate.

Had you already taken part in other EU projects?
I had. This experience freed me from fear of the application procedure. I also benefited from having access to the large network that I had put together during my work in international projects.

What is your assessment of the evaluation process in FP7? Would you change anything about it?
The procedure’s sequence is highly transparent. The explanations supplied for the decisions are very extensive. A way to improve it would be in the area of interdisciplinary scope, because there is often a lack of interdisciplinary evaluation.
Shrinking cities – causes and consequences for Europe

Declining birth rates, emigration and relocation to the peripheries of metropolises are causing a number of European cities to shrink. SHRINK SMART is an EU project which is investigating the causes, contributing factors and consequences of this process. Which response constitutes a way of sustainably dealing with these changes in Europe’s cityscapes? The project is being coordinated by Professor Dieter Rink of the Leipzig-based Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research and includes seven European partners. The project’s objective is to compile expertise to be used practically by senior urban planners and policy-makers.

Dieter Rink is an urban sociologist. To pursue SHRINK SMART, he has put together an interdisciplinary team comprising of sociologists, urban planners, economists, political scientists, geographers and cultural scientists. They work closely in the conducting of research, which is based upon comparative case studies of seven European metropolitan regions. A focus has been placed on disadvantaged regions in Eastern and Southern Europe. Contracts of cooperation have been concluded with the selected cities. These agreements have enabled the forging of close working relationships between the researchers and the respective municipal administrations.

A typology of shrinking cities

The initial step for Professor Rink and his team has been to investigate the causes and consequences of as well as the factors contributing to and the process of shrinking in urban areas. This process ramifications upon a large number of areas – from budget structures and income, to the job and labour markets. The team is also identifying the differences existing in operating parameters and paths of development. The team analyses the variety of measures used by planners and politicians in Europe to respond to this process. The objective of these efforts is the creation of a typology of shrinking cities, taking into account the diversity of structures found in urban regions by discerning the causes and forms specific to and characteristic of their processes of shrinking.

SHRINK SMART is using its analysis in the development of a box equipped with the tools and operating strategies needed by decision makers confronted with the various kinds of shrinking cities. International workshops serve as the venues for the discussions on the project results and proprietary experiences. The discussions feature representatives of the research community, the EU and the cities affected. These workshops thus represent an important step towards achieving a well-conceived and sustainable approach to the causes and consequences of shrinking European metropolises.

Governance of shrinkage within a European context

Acronym: SHRINK SMART
Budget: € 1.5 million
Term: 36 months (01.05.2009 – 30.04.2012)
Number of partners: 7
Internet: www.shrinksmart.eu
“The key is to be able to get others to accept your views”

Interview with coordinator Dieter Rink

What personal benefits did you experience from your work as coordinator of the SHRINK SMART?

Our team covers the entire spectrum of disciplines – from sociology and political science to economics, urban planning and geography. That provides me with a diversity of perspectives. I consider that a huge asset. I am also learning quite a bit about the various national contexts that scientists contribute to the project.

What key skills should a coordinator contribute to an EU project?

The key skill is being able to communicate, and being able to use this to convince others. In this way you are appealing both to those working for the project and to those not involved with it. The coordinator also has to have – at all times – a firm grip on the project. This ensures that the project’s milestones will be attained. You also have to show sensitivity to the partner’s needs, so as to appropriately satisfy them.

What advantages arise from working with an international consortium?

The consortium offers the opportunity to enrich your approach by incorporating the partners’ perspectives. This enables the precluding of narrow viewpoints. In addition, you are perceived as a European and not just as a German researcher. This imparts a greater legitimacy vis-à-vis other researchers and politicians.

Are there disadvantages?

It takes some time for everybody to start speaking the same language. There are a large number of key terms that are interpreted in nation-specific ways. The conceptual approaches are also highly variegated. This requires that the project starts with a roundtable bringing all partners together, and then deciding on a joint approach to the task ahead.

What measures are you employing to reach your project’s objectives?

We plan on developing instruments assisting shrinking cities in coping with associated problems. We have entered into contracts with cities experiencing this. We are working closely with their public authorities. International workshops are also being planned. At them, we will convey and exchange our findings and experiences to and with representatives of the municipalities.
How are Europe’s young to be best prepared for the labour market?

In several European countries, the transition from manufacturing to knowledge-based economies is being accompanied by rapid technological development and a high rate of unemployment among the young – along with a commensurate degree of insecurity. What is the best way to prepare the young to get off to a successful start on labour markets? The WORKABLE project is striving to discover which skills hold the key to young people’s becoming productive members of society, and to enabling them to take their occupational development in their own hands.

A focal point of the work of Professor Hans-Uwe Otto and his team is scrutinizing the period of transition experienced by young people who are either in school or unemployed, and who are looking for work. The WORKABLE project is being pursued by 13 partners in 10 European countries. They are conducting a comparison of the various labour laws and systems of education in Europe. The first step is to compile an inventory of the extant educational strategies and policies and measures taken to implement them on labour markets. To this end, decision-makers and young people are being queried on their views of the demands placed by labour markets.

Successful systems of education for Europe

The thrust of WORKABLE is comprised by compiling nine case studies on employment promotion programs and on education authorities. These studies investigate the problems experienced by young people during the transition to the labour market. The studies are intended to deliver better insights into the causes determining the success or failure of such transitional measures. Another thrust is the compilation of best practices – measures successfully preparing a large number of young people for the labour market – and one serving as role models for other regions and countries.

The findings issued from WORKABLE are to be used by both political and educational decision-makers and by the target group itself – young people. To this end, the project’s results have been depicted in short films and have been placed on the online portal SecondLife. Hans-Uwe Otto from the University of Bielefeld, a behavioural scientist, is the project coordinator. For him, an approach to research incorporating trans-national comparisons provides an important component of advanced policies dealing with the education of the young and with the labour market. This constitutes the way in which WORKABLE can contribute to the deployment of the skills and proficiencies possessed by young people. This, in turn, will increase the economic productivity and viability of Europe.
“All partners work on the same level in the research community”

Interview with coordinator Hans-Uwe Otto

What key skills should a coordinator contribute to an EU project?

Tolerance is indispensable, since the coordinator has to work with people from a variety of origins. She or he has to be capable of not thrusting her or himself on to the center of the stage. This gives others the space they need to express themselves. It is also important to be adept at selecting staff members who will support you in difficult times.

What recommendations would you have for colleagues wishing to submit an EU application?

The first thing to do is to talk things over with colleagues who have applied successfully. You can learn quite a bit from them on what’s important in the application procedure, and on how to avoid mistakes. You have to expect, in every case, setbacks, and you have to expect things to take their time.

Did you plan from the start to coordinate the project, or was that a result of the preliminary work?

I strove from the very start to get the position of leadership. Those wishing to run the show have, however, to make sure that the others are in favour of this. Finding this out requires, in turn, showing a sensitivity to others and societal skills.

How would you describe your role as a coordinator?

The coordinator’s job is to be a “traffic cop”. He or she has to clearly indicate what is to be done. Aside from this, a topic can only be pursued by conducting a scientific dialogue. From the management point of view, the coordinator is rather the “primus inter pares”; from the research side, the coordinator has the same status as the project partners.

What is your assessment of the application procedure in FP7?

The applicants and evaluators often have highly divergent expectations concerning the application procedure. It is thus always difficult to satisfy both sides completely. One possibility might be to provide the applicants with more ways of orienting themselves on best practices. Aside from this – also speaking from my experience as an evaluator – I would not substantially change the procedure itself.
A multidisciplinary look at ageing in Europe

The “Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe” (SHARE) constitutes a multidisciplinary and trans-national research infrastructure. On a regular basis, it gathers information on the lives led by more than 45,000 people aged 50 and older. SHARE also investigates the ageing process experienced by people living in the European Union. The surveying of their lifestyle encompasses all aspects, with these including social and family-based networks, the socio-economic situation and health of each individual.

SHARE thus represents a response to the European Commission’s call to “examine the possibility of establishing, in co-operation with Member States, a European Longitudinal Ageing Survey”. SHARE is one of the main social scientific pillars of the European Research Area (ERA). In spring 2011, SHARE became the first European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC).

SHARE has become a pillar of Europe’s research on ageing.”

James Heckman, Nobel Laureate.

The international polling project was founded in 2002. It forms part of the worldwide consortium of studies on ageing. The project is coordenated by the Munich (formerly Mannheim) Center for the Economics of Ageing (MEA), which is led by Professor Axel Börsch-Supan. Several of the fundamental international responsibilities being undertaken by the project are being handled by national-scope teams based in Italy and the Netherlands. More than 150 researchers form part of the international and worldwide working groups and multidisciplinary teams engaged in carrying out and further developing SHARE. The study is being financed by the European Commission, by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, by the USA’s National Institute on Aging (NIA) and by a large number of national-based institutions.

“Working on a multidisciplinary scale is fascinating”

Interview with coordinator Axel Börsch-Supan

What led you to submit an EU application?

How else is one to finance a Europe-wide research infrastructure project? It is the natural level of financing for such a project as SHARE, in which all 20 countries represented have, symmetrically, about the same part.

What personal benefits did you have from coordinating the SHARE project?

A better understanding of the difficulties lying in the path of convergence of Europe’s countries. And many good friends who are more to me than merely valuable co-researchers.

What key skills should the coordinator contribute to an EU project?

The ability to think in the long-term and a lot of patience. Both are required to remove or circumvent financial, political and legal stumbling blocks. It would be great if the next Research Framework Programme were less bureaucratic, as had been promised for the present one.

SHARE is a highly-interdisciplinary project taking into account a wide range of perspectives offered by a variety of disciplines (medicine, social sciences, IT and more). How did you experience working on a multidisciplinary scale in a large consortium?

Interdisciplinary cooperation is fascinating. We social scientists can learn a lot from the methodologies used in the natural sciences. It is, conversely, impressive – even when taking into account advanced genetics – how we can discern and calibrate in which way social scientific phenomena shape a person’s physiology. Interdisciplinary working relationships only thrive when all participants are experts in their fields. I don’t have a good opinion of researchers who rush to operate on the interdisciplinary level because they are not good enough to pursue their original areas of research.
How does SHARE interact with non-European partners? Have these working relationships produced any especially positive or negative experiences?

In the final analysis, it is wonderful, provided that one is open to others and is capable of enjoying the diversity of countries.

How would you describe the development of Europe’s socio-economic sciences and humanities since FP5 and up until now?

Europe’s socio-economic sciences and humanities have largely caught up with those of the USA. We are still, however, not yet at their level. Playing an important role in this area are research infrastructures. These transport large quantities of data on people, their language and their patterns of behaviour. The USA started compiling such databases 20 years earlier than we did. This has provided them with a much better foundation for their research into the socio-economic sciences and humanities.

What do you foresee Europe’s society will look like in 2050?

It will definitely be older, and will also hopefully be, however, more active. The so-called "ageing process" means after all that we are living longer and healthier, and that we can thus be more active.

Europe will have hopefully continued to converge, and to have done so without having lost its national and regional identities.

In which way can SHARE contribute to the formation of Europe’s society?

SHARE can clarify who is doing well and who needs help, be it in the form of socio-political measures and/or medically. SHARE is helping sharpen our understanding of the ramifications – both striven for and unwanted – of the measures enacted by the public sector. This will improve their implementation.

In which ways do you see Germany as profiting from European research in the socio-economic sciences and humanities?

One way is that we now more clearly perceive the gaps in our health care and pension systems. All in all, Germany does have very good – by European standards – health care and pension systems.

How would you describe yourself as a project coordinator?

I set my sights a bit higher than others do.

To me, success means ...

to have truly understood something.

I get angry at ...

narrow-mindedness and bureaucracy

When I was young, I wanted ...

to become an architect.

The best way for me to unwind from work is ...

to go hiking with my wife, or to go skiing or to listen to music.

Further information is available at www.share-project.org and http://mea.mpisoc.mpg.de.
The Seventh Research Framework Programme: an overview

The Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7) was launched in January 2007 and will conclude at the end of 2013. Its total budget comes to more than €53 billion. It is essentially comprised of four specific programmes:

- **Cooperation** € 32.4 billion
- **Ideas** € 7.5 billion
- **People** € 4.75 billion
- **Capacities** € 4.1 billion

In addition to the four specific programmes, there is one programme undertaking the measures of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) outside of the nuclear area and another one comprising the Euratom Framework Programme. This programme is available for nuclear research. FP7 enables the European Community to support research being undertaken at the frontiers of knowledge, applied research and innovation, and herewith fosters the attainment of the exploitation of synergies arising from European research. This research is thus intended to make an important contribution to the societal, cultural and economic development of all member states.

The Specific Programme “Cooperation” constitutes the largest pillar of FP7. The programme supports all research programmes jointly conducted on the transnational and international level in the following ten thematic areas:

- health
- food, agriculture and fisheries, biotechnology
- information and communication technologies
- nanosciences, nanotechnologies, materials and new production technologies
- energy
- environment (including climate change)
- transport (including aeronautics)
- the socio-economic sciences and humanities
- space
- security

A work programme has been established for each of these topics and each programme is reformulated on an annual basis. The specific programme “Cooperation” is implemented via a “top down process”, in which the research topics to be covered are indicated in the annual work programmes.

The establishment at the beginning of FP7 of the Specific Programme “Ideas” represented the development of a completely new approach to the supporting of frontier research. To implement this approach, the European Research Council (ERC) was set up. This body operates independently, meaning that it is largely free from influence by political and other interests.

The ERC’s work is based on the promotion of the complete autonomy of the sciences, of the use of bottom-up actions in the supporting of pioneer research, of evaluations made solely using criteria of excellence, and of non-bureaucratic and transparent procedures.

The objective of the Specific Programme “People” and of the “Marie Curie” actions associated with it is the quantitative and qualitative strengthening of the human potential comprised in research and technology in Europe. This objective is to be achieved by awakening interest in pursuing the profession of being a researcher and by interesting European researchers working around the world in conducting their activities in Europe. To accomplish this, a range of measures has been set up. They address all phases of the researchers’ professional lives and are open to all disciplines.

The Specific Programme “Capacities” is being undertaken to improve research and innovation capacities on a Europe-wide scale, and to guarantee their optimal utilization. To this end, measures
have been implemented in the areas of “research infrastructure”, “research to benefit small and medium-sized enterprises”, “regions of knowledge”, “research potential”, “science in society” and “international cooperation”.

The socio-economic sciences and humanities in the Seventh EU Research Framework Programme

The increasing importance of European research in socio-economical and socio-cultural topics and the humanities was taken into account through FP7’s implementation of the “socio-economic sciences and humanities” (SSH) field. A total of € 623 million has been allocated to it for the entire term of FP7. The societal challenges within the European Union posed by economic, social, political and cultural developments formed the basis of the establishment on the European level of research topics and of transnational cooperation. The purpose of SSH in FP7 is to create a deep, common understanding of the complex, interwoven economic and social challenges which Europe faces.

These include: growth, employment, competitiveness, social coherence and sustainability, quality of life and global interdependence, especially with regard to creating a basis of knowledge and recommendations for politics.

The topics in the FP7’s “socio-economic sciences and humanities” theme have been summarised into eight so-called activities:

- growth, employment and competitiveness in a knowledge society
- combining economic, social and environmental objectives in a European perspective
- major trends in society and their implications
- Europe in the world
- the citizen in the European Union
- socio-economic and scientific indicators
- foresight activities
- strategic activities

Calls for proposals in these activities are issued annually and are specified by the so-called “topics”. These topics are the basis for applications that can be made for projects.

Participation by German applicants in topics in the socio-economic sciences and humanities in FP7

German researchers successfully coordinate projects in this theme. In addition, more than 140 German institutions are partners in the 155 projects supported by FP7 in the socio-economic sciences and humanities. An up-to-date overview of projects receiving support and featuring German participation is to be found on the Website of the NCP for Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (http://www.nks-swg.de/en/projekte.php).
Behind the UK, Germany is second on the ranking list of projects being coordinated by researchers from each country and is thus ahead of France, Italy and the Netherlands.

**A look into the future: “Horizon 2020 – Framework Programme for Research and Innovation”**

“Horizon 2020 – Framework Programme for Research and Innovation” will be launched in 2014. This new programme will take the place of and will join together the programme for research, technological development and demonstration (FP7), the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP), and the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT). The new programme will strive to foster the linkage of research and innovation. It is based upon the requirements laid down in the “Europe 2020” strategy published by the European Commission in autumn 2010. The “tackling societal challenges” pillar proposed for “Horizon 2020” will be of especial importance to the socio-economic sciences and humanities.

On February 9, 2011, the European Commission published its Green Paper on “From challenges to opportunities: towards a common strategic framework for EU research and innovation funding”. This Green Paper forms part of the preparations for Horizon 2020. Its publication has launched the official consultation process on the configuration of the future’s support for research and innovation in Europe.

The Green Paper contains a total of 27 questions. The online process of consultation ended on May 20, 2011. The evaluation of the consultation revealed that a total of 849 position papers and more than 1,300 online questionnaires had been submitted.

Consulting services from the National Contact Point for Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities

The team of the National Contact Point (NCP) for Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (German abbreviation: NKS SWG) provides you – on a free-of-charge basis – with up-to-date briefings on funding available for research on topics in the socio-economic sciences and humanities of the Specific Programme “Cooperation” and its cross-cutting topics. NKS SWG is operated under a commission from Germany’s Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and serves as the National Contact Point for all researchers wishing to take part in the EU’s framework programme for research on the socio-economic sciences and humanities.

Our service is free of charge and includes:

• individual support on FP7 both during the process of submission and during the implementation of the project
• critical review of all applications and project drafts
• organisation and realisation of information events, workshops and seminars
• a newsletter with current information on relevant calls, important documents, latest developments and references on interesting events
• a website containing up-to-date information on relevant FP7 topics and developments and other important references: www.nks-swg.de
• personal counselling interviews with applicants
• support on aspects of the socio-economic sciences and humanities as well as on options of involvement of SSH research in the 10 topics of the Specific Programme “Cooperation”
• and much more!

Our Website:
http://www.nks-swg.de/en

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