

D2.1. Concept paper for Algerian FP7 Contacts

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Introduction

The objective of this report is to provide information on how National Contact Point (NCP) systems in Europe work, how they are organized and structured. Based on this benchmarking approach and its conclusions, a comparison with the actual situation in Algeria will be done and recommendations to upgrade the existing NCP system will be presented.

This report is divided into five major sections:

First one explores the fundamentals of NCP systems. It starts with a reflection about the definition and rationale of NCP systems with the main functions of NCP systems as well as the different services and tools used by NCP systems all over Europe.

Part two consists in a typology and comparison of the different NCP systems existing in Europe from highly centralized to highly decentralized structures.

Part three presents the existing situation of NCPs in Algeria and how the system works, as well as a comparison with other Mediterranean Partner Countries.

Part four presents recommendations for an improved development of the NCP system in Algeria based on the conclusions of the previous parts.

Part one: Fundamentals of NCP systems in Europe

A. Definition and role

National Contact Points (NCPs) play a crucial role in European and International Science & Research cooperation as providers of information and assistance to public and private research, higher education and business organizations, and to researchers and managers all around Europe. NCPs inform and raise awareness about the funding opportunities of the European Framework Programme (FP) for Research and Technological Development (RTD) and they advise and assist potential applicants in the preparation, submission and follow-up of grant applications. NCPs also offer advice during the realization of projects – especially with respect to legal and financial issues.

Information and consultancy infrastructures to facilitate the participation of research organizations and companies in the FPs exist almost since the inception of the first FP in the early 1980s, and, thus, many years before the creation of the term National Contact Point (NCP) in official EU (European Union) terminology. In fact, the official recognition of NCPs by the European Commission (EC) happened in the late 1990s and was partly due to the pressure exerted by some EU Member States and the EC to improve the services of information and consultancy infrastructures through a better, and in fact more structured and less ad-hoc, interaction with European Commission services and the final beneficiaries (i.e. researchers from academia and industry). Since then, NCP systems gained not only cognition but importance as well. Today, NCPs operate in every country which is either part of the EU or associated to the FP. Information Points with similar structures even exist in many Third Countries.

The basic economic rationale of an NCP system, however, remained the same since the first national information and consultancy infrastructures have been created: it is the reduction of transaction costs for researchers to participate to the FPs and to increase - through a high participation - a good feedback, i.e. a pay-back of national contributions allocated to the FPs budget back to their own country.

The main functions of the NCP system are laid down in the *“Guiding principles for setting up systems of National Contacts Points (NCP systems) for the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and technological Development (FP7)”*. The latest version of this document, which had its origin in a document called *“Guiding Principles for Setting up Information and Assistance Network”* (from 30 October 1998), is dated from 12/12/2007/European Commission DG RTD A1.

This document stipulates that the basic principles of setting up systems of National Contact Points (NCP systems) are to inform and assist potential participants and contractors regarding ongoing projects. In fact, it seems that the main efforts provided seem to be higher in the setting up of proposals (i.e., proposal stimulation, proposal advice and proposal submission phase) than support for ongoing projects. The document also says that *“For the new structure and funding scheme of FP7, providing appropriate information and assistance to potential participants is vital for assuring transparency and equal access.”*

NCP systems are perceived as very practical and operational organizations which predominant function is to provide information and advice to those interested in participating to the FP. Secondly, the way NCP systems are organized is not prescribed in detail by the European Commission, leaving considerable degrees of freedom to the Member States and Associated Countries. It is thus basically up to the Member States and Associated Countries to select the hosting organization(s) of their own NCP system.

The EC, however, requests some minimum compulsory characteristics, such as:

- NCP systems should ensure competence in the different thematic and horizontal priorities of the FP, including a coherent approach and a high level of services to different kinds of actors (SMEs, industry, academics, etc.).
- National governments should be responsible for establishing, financing, nominating, supervising and monitoring NCP systems.
- NCPs have to act as independent organizations(s), being committed to complete impartiality in delivering their services and avoiding any situations which may give rise to a conflict of interests.
- NCPs should be able to act with complete confidentiality as part of their advisory activities towards clients.
- In order to ensure the coherence of the NCP system, a coordination mechanism should be foreseen. For this purpose, a NCP coordinator should be nominated.

In case of countries with a federal governmental structure, all nomination should be coordinated and forwarded by the federal authorities. For practical management reasons, nominations should be structured following the thematic and horizontal priorities of FP7.

In addition, other characteristics are also recommended, such as NCPs should actively participate in trans-national NCP network activities, have skills in RTD management and financing, show experience and acceptance necessary to reach the research community, have adequate human resources and equipment, be suitable to become part of an international systems to stimulate participation in FP7 and partner search, and are able to coordinate the different actors of the NCP system. Moreover, the individual NCPs have to be reachable by phone and/or e-mail during usual working hours and should have a public website with basic information and services.

The Commission services consider the NCPs as the main structure to provide practical information and assistance to potential FP participants and contractors. Thus, the EC treats NCPs in a preferential way in many aspects, such as:

- Invitation of NCPs to participate to information and awareness actions;
- Invitation of NCPs to thematic conferences organized by the programme directorates;
- Provision of timely information on work programmes and roadmaps, upcoming calls, changes in thematic priorities or administrative procedures, statistics of calls and evaluations, relevant information on funded projects etc.;
- Provision of leaflets, brochures and other relevant information;
- Provision of supports for the European wide networking of NCPs as a means of stimulating participation in Community RTD activities and a contribution to the realization of the ERA;

- Provision of trainings for NCPs;
- And, when appropriate, coverage of additional costs relating to special measures.

In addition, NCPs receive the same information on the outcome of proposal evaluations as the Programme Committee Members (but a little later). For FP7 contacts in Third Countries (i.e. countries which are neither Member States nor Associated Countries), aggregated evaluation data which are not attributable to individual proposals are provided.

B. Services provided and tools used by the NCP systems

The main NCP services are stipulated in the “Guiding Principles” document (<http://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/fp7-nCP-guiding-principles.pdf>)

They can be systematized in three main clusters:

- 1. Information and awareness raising;**
- 2. Advice, assistance and training;**
- 3. Signposting and feedback.**

Information and awareness raising subsumes activities of more general nature, very often in one-to-many formats, including:

- The circulation of general and specific documentation on FPs, including participation rules and conditions for submitting proposals through postings or eMail-distribution lists;
- Organization of promotional activities with or without Commission services such as info-days, presentations in conferences, establishment of web sites, production and dissemination of newsletters or participation in stands at fairs etc;
- Specific promotion activities to reach out for certain target groups such as SMEs or women, mainly through targeted workshops and road shows;
- Raising awareness on the fundamental objectives behind the FP and relevant Community interventions in the field of research and innovation through presentations at info-days;
- Raising awareness on other programmes such as CIP, Eureka and COST through distribution of promotional material, website hints.

Advice, assistance and training subsume activities of a more targeted nature, very often in one-to-few or even one-to-one formats including:

- Detailed explanations on administrative, financial and legal issues through group or individual consultancy sessions;
- Advice on how to set up appropriate management and legal structures in projects with large budgets and/or numerous participants or other structural challenges;

- Assistance in partner search by using CORDIS, co-operation networks, liaison with other NCP systems, business support network services etc.;
- Training seminars for newcomers and specific target groups to increase their participation in the FPs (e.g. SMEs, financial managers);
- Organization of targeted training seminars for other intermediaries and information multipliers (e.g. external relation offices at universities, chambers of commerce etc.);
- Proposal checks.

Signposting and feedback subsumes activities such as:

- Provision of feedback to the Commission services on any problems and difficulties in implementing and participating in the FP;
- Signposting to other research or business support network services those potential participants who requires assistance, for example in terms of innovation support or technology transfer, typically dealt with by these networks;
- Signposting potential applicants to other programmes or instruments which might be of benefit for them (e.g. CIP, COST, Eureka, national programmes, regional initiatives etc.);
- Informing the Commission services about planned NCP activities and events requiring participation of Commission staff.

NCPs, however, can provide also **additional services** which are not mentioned in the “Guiding Principles”, such as:

- Monitoring participation in FPs and provision of participation statistics;
- Production of publications (folders, leaflets, success stories);
- Information sessions and trainings for ministry staffs and other stakeholders;
- Delivering eMail based call alerts;
- (assistance in) Proposal writing;
- Provision of professional vocational education for researchers and research managers about European research funding mechanisms and project implementation;
- Mass media communication and PR;
- Pro-active networking and communication with EC, other NCPs and other relevant international stakeholders;
- Provision of a dedicated library to NCPs and their clients;
- Assistance in contract negotiation, management of projects, project reporting and drafting of consortium agreements;
- Provision of workstations for domestic researchers in the Brussels NCP liaison office;
- Encouragement for the participation of national experts in evaluation processes.

In addition, some but not all countries make use of additional tools in addition to the regular basic instruments (such as info-days, individual consultancy sessions or group mailings):

- Production of regular newsletters;

- Provision of intra-net functions to coordinate among the different NCPs (e.g. France) and sometimes even other FP relevant information and advice infrastructures (including document repositories etc.);
- Establishment of a liaison office in Brussels;
- Provision of project preparation funding and in some cases also provision of top up funding for selected FP projects.

In order to fulfill these services, the following essential resources and tools have to be compulsory available:

- Qualified (and sufficiently funded) personnel (and office infrastructure) to provide professional information and consultancy services;
- Establishment and continuous maintenance and development of a client database;
- A regularly updated website with a good information architecture and easy access.

Part two: Typology and comparison of the different NCP systems existing in Europe

In general, the following types of NCP systems can be identified:

- i. Inner-ministry NCP system
- ii. NCP system coordinated by a Ministry, but decentralized operations
- iii. Public agency based NCP-system
- iv. Project-based contracted NCP system with a public organization
- v. Project-based contracted NCP system with a private non-profit organization
- vi. Federal multi-level type NCP-system

Of course it can be said that several “transition” organizations between these prototypes exist. Moreover, with exception of the inner-ministry NCP system which has a strong centralization aspect and the federal multi-level type NCP-system which has a strong decentralized structure, all other NCP system prototypes are not necessarily organizationally pre-defined in terms of centralization/decentralization.

A. Inner-ministry NCP system

Under this system’s architecture, usually public servants are carrying out the work of a NCP, however seldom in full-time capacity. Example for such an approach is Slovenia where NCPs are mainly centralized within the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Directorate of Technology.

Abstracted from the very specific example of **Slovenia**, this prototypical inner-ministry approach has advantages and disadvantages. The most obvious advantage is seemingly cost-efficiency, since no external information and advisory structures have to be established and maintained, but existing inner-ministerial capacities are

upgraded with additional NCP functions. This might also be the main reason why NCPs in ministries are pre-dominantly working just on part-time basis as NCPs. Moreover, the costs of such inner-ministerial staff can obviously be easier subsumed in general budget appropriations. On the other hand, the absence of a dedicated NCP budget (whose main cost category doubtlessly consists in personnel costs) hinders a transparent full-cost based controlling of the NCP system.

Another evident advantage of the inner-ministry NCP system solution is the proximity of NCPs with the national ERA governance, which is exercised by state authorities (i.e. usually 17 Ministries). Many inner-ministerial NCPs are also at the same time Programme Committee Members or work very closely with delegates of important ERA bodies such as CREST. Vivid information flow, however, is not per se guaranteed by the inner-Ministry approach, but must also be secured through certain arrangements.

The most obvious disadvantage seems to be the ostensible distance from the final beneficiaries of NCP work and the organizational encapsulation in bureaucratic procedures which do not always provide necessary degrees of freedom for flexible work. The first issue might become even more problematic, larger the country is.

B. NCP system coordinated by a Ministry, but decentralized operations

This system's architecture is an example of a multi-level system, which is headed by a central NCP coordinator who is located in the responsible ministry, but supported by a number of NCPs who works in other organizational settings. Examples for this approach are **France** and **Greece**.

In France, the system in which NCPs are located mainly in major public research organizations, universities, agencies and associations, is managed and financed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research – Office for European Affairs. The most obvious advantage of this system is its ability to cover vast regional dimensions through assigning different organizations in different regions with NCP tasks. Another advantage is the concentration of the NCP leadership in the ministry, which potentially facilitates the coordination with the national ERA governance, if adequate administrative arrangements are in place.

A sufficient resource endowment of the NCP coordinator, especially indicated by the fact whether s/he is fulltime appointed or only part-time, is an important requirement to guarantee a pro-active flow of information to the other NCPs. Good information exchange and steering of the entire NCP system causes considerable efforts and time input.

If the NCP coordinator is only part-time employed, his or her work is endangered to become rather reactive than pro-active and might be reduced to a more or less retrospective monitoring function based on yearly reporting and occasional participations in national events.

The financial regime under this system's architecture is usually based on the additional funding principle, which subsumes conference organization costs, printing costs or travel costs of NCPs to Brussels or elsewhere (if not paid by the EC).

Personnel costs of NCPs are usually not directly paid under the NCP budget regime, but indirectly through the – mostly – public institutions which employ the NCP. These public institutions, however, are regularly paid through public budget allocations which include the personnel costs of the NCPs too (e.g. general university funds). Thus, a considerable part of the NCP costs are so to say “hidden”.

Other disadvantages of this approach are that sometimes services provided by the different NCPs are not homogeneous (due to the lack of central steering capacity and missing central quality assurance mechanisms) and that – due to the absence of public funding for representative business community organizations – sometimes a rather low level of cooperation with the private sector and especially with SMEs can be detected.

C. Public agency based NCP-system

This approach is often perceived as a possibility to combine the principle of public responsibility and accountability with more flexibility in terms of service provision than would be possible within inner-ministry procedures. Examples for this NCP system's architecture are **Austria** and **Sweden**. These examples are characterized by a preponderant centralized nature. The Austrian NCP system is centrally hosted by the FFG, the Austrian Research promotion Agency, a public non-profit organization owned by two Austrian Ministries (i.e. the Republic of Austria).

VINNOVA in Sweden is a governmental agency under the Ministry of Enterprise, covering also national funding programmes.

A characteristic for a public agency based NCP system is that its NCP operations are usually limited in time through a special contract or arrangement. This time-limitation can vary considerably between one year long assignments and multiple year assignments (usually for the period of a FP). Such NCP system architecture is usually regularly evaluated through external evaluators and characterized by internal full-fledged reporting and monitoring efforts. The costs of such NCP system architecture are transparently disclosed on full-cost model basis, which might look higher at first sight than in more “hidden” arrangements (see above), but can actually more easily be controlled.

Other advantages of this approach are:

- Higher organizational flexibility;
- More focus on the major NCP functions, developing services and closer contacts with the NCP clients;
- Better positioning the NCP system into its ‘market’;
- Good distribution of information across the NCPs and
- Higher opportunity to create critical mass of NCP expertise in developing the services provided, tools applied and participating in projects aiming these actions.

A disadvantage of this system's architecture might be that the establishment of a public agency usually requires a higher organizational effort and a legal act and is not necessarily free of political, non-professional interventions. Moreover, a public agency

might tend to become monopolistic (like a ministry) and, eventually sluggish and inefficient in its service delivery. Another difficulty is to find a good division of labor between the more strategic orientation of a ministry (which is usually the patron and donor of the agency) and the more operative orientation of the agency herself.

Overlaps, which might occur in dynamically evolving environments such as the European Research Area, can cause conflicts and irritations. An example of the integration of an originally agency-structure into the ministry can be found in The Netherlands, where EGLiaison merged with SenterNovem and became integrated into the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

D. Project-based contracted NCP system with a public organization

This NCP system's architecture shares a lot of characteristics with the public agency based one (see above). The main difference is that based on a clear contract, a suitable public organization is assigned with quasi-agency functions to implement the national NCP system. A difficulty in this respect is the identification of a suitable public organization, which does not constitute a conflict of interest.

An example for this NCP system's approach is **Poland**. There the NCP system was established under the roof of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN). In order to avoid any conflict of interest due to the obvious potential interest of PAN to get involved in European FP projects too, a separated governance and financial regime for the Polish NCP system was established on contract basis. Another example for this system's architecture, although already different from the prototype structure, is Germany, where the main NCP system has been located under the legal umbrella of the DLR (German Aerospace Center) without, however, any closer organizational integration into the host organization. The NCPs are consolidated there in the EU Bureau of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research hosted by DLR. The work is regulated through a framework contract with yearly adaptation mechanisms (also in financial terms). In addition, a vast network of regional and thematic contact points operate in Germany.

Both, the German and the Polish models dispose of a strong NCP centre, accompanied by decentralized regional and thematic focal points.

Also this project-based contracted NCP system approach is based on the full-cost principle. Another advantage is its more competitive character compared to the inner ministry solution or the public agency solution. It is also easier to terminate a project based contract with an independent organization, than to close down an established public agency, even when its services are not efficient or even not demanded anymore.

A disadvantage might be the relative distance of such a NCP system solution to other elements of the national ERA governance, which can only be overcome by pro-active communication and information-exchange arrangements and settings and a clear understanding of competences and division of labor especially on the side of the NCPs. Both the Polish and German NCP system demonstrate, however, that such an approach can bring fruitful results in terms of qualified human resources and

expertise and valuable contributions of the NCP system into the national ERA governance.

E. Project based contracting with private non-profit organizations

The only fundamental difference to the previously described NCP system's architecture is the fact that this approach does not limit itself on public organizations in terms of subcontracting NCP services, but has a wider outreach into the civil society and enables also private, usually not-for-profit organizations to become assigned with NCP functions. Evidently, such an approach is again project-based through dedicated contracting with limited duration, regularly monitored and evaluated and rooted in a full-cost model approach. An example for this NCP system architecture is Italy.

The NCP system in **Italy** is centralized within APRE – Agency for the Promotion of European Research – which has been nominated by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research as NCP host organization for FP7 in 2007, under the coordination of the Italian Research Ministry. APRE exists since 1990 as a not for profit association to support – inter alia - the participation of Italian researchers in international research programmes promoted by the European Commission. Next to the strong NCP centre located in the head office of APRE with 30 employees, also 18 helpdesks in almost every Italian region complement the system.

As the example of APRE shows, this prototype can be used to leverage, at least theoretical, also own funds. In the case of APRE, these are mainly membership fees from universities etc. as quid pro quo for information and advice services offered by APRE. But for more specialized services, APRE also charges additional fees. Certainly, an obvious disadvantage of this system is the structurally quite obvious distance between the NCP system and the national ERA governance, since the first is rooted in the private (civil society) sector and the latter in the public sphere. In order to create synergies between these two different modi operandi special formal and informal arrangements have to be deployed. Finally, it should be mentioned, that private providers operate on own risk and are subjected to liability (which might be an advantage for public services not to be concerned with this) and in principle endangered to enter into bankruptcy, an issue, however, which should not be overestimated in practice and which can be controlled to a certain extent.

F. Federal multi-level type NCP-system

A distinct decentralized NCP system's architecture can be found in **Belgium**. Here the NCP system is strongly rooted in the federal constitution of the country. Thus, NCP assignments and responsibilities are to be found on different constitutional levels: at community level, regional level and federal level. Thus, the federal NCP system for instance serves only the federal research institutes. In fact, five independent NCP systems operate in Belgium. The French speaking clients are

served by FNRS responsible for higher education institutions and by UWE (for the business sector). IWT serves the Flemish speaking clients and Brussels, the capital of the country (and also a region) runs its own NCP system (hosted by BEA).

Not surprising, significant differences in terms of service provision can be found in the actual practice. This is also caused by the different donors of NCPS and funding regimes, which vary considerably in size and scope. Also the introduction of a formal quality assurance system is hampered by different responsibilities and competences. The representation of the different constitutional levels might also be complicated from the outsider's point of view, since governments at each level have equal right to nominate NCPs and there is no central authority to approve or block such a decision. Some experts doubt if such a NCP system's architecture would be able to operate in an efficient manner and to functionally survive outside of Belgium, given the obvious proximity to the European Commission services. The advantage of this system is that it guarantees a good outreach to the final beneficiaries due to its decentralized structure and that it is fully respecting the constitutional requirements.

To abstract from the specific Belgium case, in general, such a differentiated system is perceived as very complex and difficult to align (not to speak about coordination and steering). Potentially, it could easily become cost-inefficient due to overlapping and duplicated work when neither a clear division of labor nor a clear assignment of the different system's elements towards separated target groups is implemented through adequate organizational structures.

Part three: Existing situation of NCPs in Algeria and other Mediterranean Partner countries (MPCs)

At the beginning of FP7, **National Information Points (NIPs)** have been nominated in Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs) in order to disseminate information about FP7 in these Countries and to facilitate and increase the participation of researchers in FP7 programmes.

Minimum 1 NIP per Country was designated and the NIP had to cover all programmes of Cooperation, Capacities, People and Ideas. This represented a big responsibility and sometimes this work was shared between 2 or 3 persons.

The participation in the EU's Framework Programme (FP) and consequently the stimulation of the researchers for such participation, through the setting up of sustainable NIPs, reflects a political willingness to cooperate with the EU in S&T. Such a decision and commitment in principle exists for all the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs), through their association to the Barcelona Process and more specifically through their participation in the Monitoring Committee (MoCo) of the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in S&T.

In addition to the political considerations, it is normal that every MPC foresees concrete benefits, in terms of participations in EU funded research projects. Such projects contribute to a mutual exchange of expertise, to the development of products and processes to address societal needs, but also to the financing of research teams.

With regards to the financial support, it mainly consists of the salaries of the staff dedicated to the NIP, in expenses for travels, the organization of information days and other activities, equipment and office space, printed material, etc.

Recently, following the model established in Europe, MPCs have nominated **National Contact Point (NCP)** for each thematic area of FP7. Sometimes a single NCP is responsible of 2 or 3 programmes at the same time.

This initiative has been taken after the signature of the bilateral agreements on S&T cooperation between the Europe Union and MPCs.

Situation in Morocco

In Morocco, the Ministry in charge of Research has nominated in June 2010 8 thematic NCPs representing 6 thematics and hosted by 8 institutions:

- NCP FAFB : IAV Hassan II
- NCP Health : Institut National d'hygiène
- NCP Energy : Faculté des sciences de Tétouan
- NCP ICT : Faculté des Sciences et Techniques Fès Saïss
- NCP Environment : Faculté des sciences et techniques de Mohammedia and Ecole Nationale de l'Industrie Minérale
- NCP SME/SMI : Faculté des sciences et techniques de Settat and Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de la PME

This system is coordinated by a NCP coordinator officially nominated.

All NCPs are working in universities, research centers and one national and governmental agency. Each NCP consist of a team of 2 or 3 persons (1 full time person in charge and 1 or 2 deputies).

Among the 8 NCP coordinators, 6 of them are both Professors/Researchers and the 2 others are administrative persons. Most of alternates belonging to the teams are also Professors/Researchers.

All NCPs have been selected after an official call of proposals launched by Ministry of Scientific Research. Among them 4 had already got an experience in European Framework Programme.

The institution is considered has the NCP legal entity and not the individual persons involved and sheltered.

Chairmen and managers of the institutions hosting NCPs have signed an agreement with the Ministry of Scientific Research describing and explaining their role and commitment. An annual lump sum of 200.000 Dhs (about 20.000€) is attributed to the overall NCP organization and provided by national funds for the promotion of scientific research.

The NCP coordinator, belonging to the Ministry of Scientific Research, organized a first training session for all NCPs in June 2010.

A second training session is planned at the end of May 2011. Until now NCPs are organizing information days in research and education institutes.

They also participate and contribute to general information days organized by the NCP coordinator.

Some of them have opened a dedicated page accessible from the website of their institute.

Regarding support activity for partner search and preparation of proposals, specifications are being set up now.

Situation in Algeria

In Algeria, 18 NCPs were nominated in January 2010, covering all the thematic areas - except transport, ICT and security which were not considered as priorities - and also horizontal activities of FP7.

Only 1 person is dedicated to each NCP activity except for INCO where there are 2 persons in charge from the same institution.

No national funding is attributed to the NCP activities meaning that the persons in charge have to take time on their regular activity to look after NCP activities.

Function	Name	Institution
Bio NCP	Dr. Aissa ABDELGUERFI	Institut National Agronomique Alger
JRC NCP	Dr Hamid AFRA	Centre National d'Études et de Recherches intégrées du Bâtiment
Ideas NCP	Prof. Mohamemed BELBACHIR	Université Es-senia d'Oran
Environment NCP	Prof. Djillali BENNOUAR	Université des Sciences et technologie Houari Boumediene
NMP NCP	Dr. Abdelhakim BENSAOULA	Université Abdoul Belkaid de Tlemcen
Legal and financial NCP	Mr. Mohamed BOUHICHA	Ministère d'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique
Infrastructures NCP	Dr. Meriem CHABOU	École Polytechnique d'Architecture et d'Urbanisme
Health NCP	Prof. Zahia CHENTOUF-MENTOURI	Agence Nationale du développement de la recherche en Santé
SSH NCP	Prof. Mohammed Yacine FERFERA	Centre de Recherche en Économie Appliquée pour le développement

Regional NCP	Prof. Djamel HAMANA	Université Mentouri de Constantine
INCO NCP	Mr. Djamil HAMOULI	Ministère d'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique
Space NCP	Dr. Salem KAHLOUCHE	Centre National des Techniques Spatiales
INCO NCP	Prof. Sifeddine LABED	Ministère d'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique
Sis NCP	Dr. Noria REMAOUN	Centre Recherche en Anthropologie sociale et culturelle Oran
Mobility NCP	Mr. Arezki SAIDANI	Ministère d'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique
National Coordinator NCP	Prof. Mokhtar SELLAMI	Ministère d'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique
Energy NCP	Dr. Abdelkader TOUZI	Centre de Développement Énergies Renouvelables Alger
SME NCP	Prof. Fatiha YUCEF ETTOUMI	Université des sciences et de la Technologie Houari Boumediene Alger

Until now, one year after the nomination of NCPs no activities have really started and been performed, meaning that modification or improvement of the system is needed.

In others Mediterranean Countries NCP systems are not really advanced and cannot give recommendations to the Algerian system.

Part Four: Recommendations for an highly efficient NCP system in Algeria

1) Typology of NCP system

Taking into account the particularities of the Algerian ST&I landscape and organization, it seems that the more appropriate system from the six described above is the system B, with decentralized NCPs or operations coordinated by a Ministry. This system is the present system existing in Algeria and the more suitable one regarding administrative situation of Algeria. This system has been adopted successfully in France and other European and third countries.

2) Number of NCPs

Algeria is willing to renovate its NCP system to make it more efficient. In order to maximize the results, it could be advisable to focus in a first stage on NCPs in strategic areas of the Cooperation Programme with a limited number of NCPs for other FP programmes or horizontal issues (for instance: Mobility, INCO and SMEs). In a second stage, the other NCPs could benefit from the experience of their colleagues.

3) NCP teams

The existing NCPs are relatively senior scientists with a good knowledge of their scientific field (main stakeholders, state of the art, potential breakthroughs in the coming years...). Their expertise is an advantage in their activities as NCPs.

However, as senior scientists, they cannot be expected to devote a large part of their time to this duty, be aware of all the technicalities of EU funding or implement the daily activities of NCPs. In order to support them and ensure a fully working system, it is recommended to nominate additional junior staff with complementary administrative and financial skills.

4) NCP Coordinator

The NCP Coordinator is meant to have an active role. According to the *Guiding principles for setting up systems of National Contact Points*, he/she should ensure the coherence of the [NCP] system, maintain overall coordination of the NCP activities within the horizontal and cross-cutting actions in FP7, and provide policy advice to the Commission regarding issues on the development and improvement of the NCP system in general. In order to fulfil these essential duties, it is recommended to nominate a coordinator of the NCP system who is able to devote half of his time to this activity and at least one junior staff to support him/her.

6) Financial support

The NCP system recommended (decentralized system coordinated by the Ministry for Research and Innovation) does not require a large funding for the NCPs. In particular, NCPs can be civil servants (scientific or support staff) devoting part of their time to this activity without any additional personnel costs. However, in order to insure that the NCPs are able to implement the necessary actions, a limited financial support is recommended. As in the case of Morocco, a lump sum might be attributed every year for the good operation of the Algerian NCPs system. The Ministry could restrict the use of this funding to a certain type of spending, and allocate different amounts depending on the planned and implemented actions for each NCP. This funding should be properly monitored with regards to the use of funds, in order to ensure that is used solely for the NCP tasks, without being too large a burden on the NCPs. EARN partners can further support the Algerian Ministry by providing examples for such reporting. The amount of money must be sufficient enough to stimulate the NCP system to provide a good performance.

7) Official commitment

The *Guiding Principles for setting up systems of National Contact Points* provides a list of potential activities to be implemented by the NCPs with regards to information and awareness raising, advising, assisting and training, and signposting and feedback to the EC. This list is however indicative, and should be adapted to the specific Algerian situation. In order to ensure a full commitment from the NCPs, it is recommended that a document listing the tasks and responsibilities of the NCPs and the Ministry towards each others should be signed. EARN partners can support them in drafting such a document.

8) Other issues

Additional issues have to be taken into account for the implementation of an efficient NCP system in Algeria, among which:

- provision of relevant training depending on the category of staff targeted
- support for the implementation of first activities (for instance: information days, support to applicants)
- support to communication from and between NCPs and activity implementation using a web portal

- link and exchange of experience with other NCPs in the Mediterranean, Europe and the rest of the world

These activities will first be implemented during the life-time of EARN, but the sustainability must be achieved in order for the system to continue on its own after the end of the project.

Conclusions

This Concept paper for Algerian FP7 Contacts recommends what is, for its author, the best, the most efficient and the most adapted structure of FP7 Contacts.

Since the beginning of EARN project, following informal exchanges of first drafts of this report, one of these recommendations - 3) NCP teams -has been followed as junior persons have been nominated to consolidate and enlarge each NCP strengthening administrative and financial skills. (see table below).

N°		NCP's	DOMAINES	Contact
1	Senior	(Dr.) ABDELGUERFI, Aissa	Bio NCP	Institut National Agronomique
2	Junior	(Dr.) Amiali, Malek	Bio NCP	Institut National Agronomique
3	Senior	(Dr.) AFRA, Hamid	JRC NCP	Centre National d'Etudes et de Recherches intégrées du Bâtiment (CNERIB)
4	Junior	(Dr.) AHMED. Brara	JRC NCP	Centre National d'Etudes et de Recherches intégrées du Bâtiment (CNERIB)
5	Senior	(Prof) BELBACHIR, Mohammed	Ideas NCP	Université Es-senia d'Oran
6	Junior	(Dr.) HARRANE Amine	Ideas NCP	Université Es-senia d'Oran
7	Senior	(Prof.) BENNOUAR, Djillali	Environment NCP	Université des Sciences et Technologie Houari Boumediene (USTHB)
8	Junior	EHADDOUDENE, Nacer	Environment NCP	Université des Sciences et Technologie Houari Boumediene (USTHB)

9	Senior	(Dr.) BENSAOULA, Abdelhakim	NMP NCP	Université Aboubekr Belkaid de Tlemcen
10	Junior	(Mr) BENARBIA, Rachid	NMP NCP	Université Aboubekr Belkaid de Tlemcen
11	Senior	(Mr.) BOUHICHA, Mohamed	Legal and Financial NCP	Ministère d'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique Directeur de l'Administration et du financement de la Recherche Scientifique et du Développement Technologique
12	Junior	(Mr.) KAZED, Hacène	Legal and Financial NCP	Ministère d'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique Direction de l'Administration et du financement de la Recherche Scientifique et du Développement Technologique
13	Senior	(Dr.) CHABOU, Meriem	Infrastructures NCP	Ecole Polytechnique d'Architecture et d'Urbanisme
15	Senior	(Prof.) CHENTOUF-MENTOURI, Zahia	Health NCP	Agence Nationale du Développement de la Recherche en Santé
16	Junior	(Prof.) NEGADI, M ^{ed} Amine	Health NCP	Agence Nationale du Développement de la Recherche en Santé
17	Senior	(Prof.) FERFERA, Mohammed Yacine	SSH NCP	Centre de Recherche en Economie Appliquée pour le Développement
18	Junior	AZIZ, Nafa	SSH NCP	Centre de Recherche en Economie Appliquée pour le Développement
19	Senior	(Prof.) HAMANA, Djamel	Régional NCP	Université Mentouri de Constantine

21	Senior	(Mr.) HAMOULI, Djamil	INCO NCP	Ministère d'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique Transfert Technologique et du Partenariat
23	Senior	(Dr.) KAHLOUCHE, Salem	Space NCP	Centre Natrional des Techniques Spatiales (CNTS)
24	Junior	HANED Nassim	Space NCP	Centre Natrional des Techniques Spatiales (CNTS)
25	Senior	(Mr.) LABED, Sifeddine	National Coordinator NCP	Ministère dfEnseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique Valorisation, Innovation & Transfert
27	Senior	(Dr.) REMAOUN, Noria	Sis NCP	Centre Recherche en Anthropologie sociale et Culturelle - Oran
28	Junior	(Mr) BENZENINE, Belkacem	Sis NCP	Centre Recherche en Anthropologie sociale et Culturelle - Oran
29	Senior	(Mr.) SAIDANI, Arezki	Mobility NCP	Ministère de l' Enseignement Supérieur et la recherche Scientifique Direction de la Coopération et des échanges inter-universitaires
30	Junior	(Mme) REYAD Zohra	Mobility NCP	Ministère de l' Enseignement Supérieur et la recherche Scientifique Direction de la Coopération et des échanges inter-universitaires
31	Senior	(Dr.) SELLAMI, Mokhtar	Coordonateur NCP	Ministère de l' Enseignement Supérieur et la recherche Scientifique (DREP)
32	Senior	(Dr.) SOUAMI, Feryel	ICT NCP	Ministère de l' Enseignement Supérieur et la recherche Scientifique (DREP)

Among the 18 NCPs nominated and covering both programmes and horizontal activities, 11 of them are now supported by a junior person. The nomination of junior persons has been implemented first for the most important NCP functions. In a second time this process will be extended to all NCPs functions.

The EARN project will offer the necessary and sufficient support to contribute to the setting up of all the recommendations suggested in this concept paper and during all the duration of the project.

After the end of EARN project, sustainability will be necessary for the continuation of the system with regular reviews and optimization in order to make it always efficient and adapted to the Algerian context.