

Summary of the Mid Term Report by the University of Geneva on the Science & Technology Cooperation Programme Switzerland Russia (STCP-CH-RU)

www.unige.ch/collaborateurs/recherche/STCP-CH-RU.html

Goals

Established in 2007 by the Swiss government to promote scientific and technological cooperation between Switzerland and Russia, the STCP-CH-RU rests on the principles of mutual interest, scientific excellence and reciprocity (matching funds). The first call for proposals of STCP-CH-RU was launched in September 2008. The delay was caused by the still ongoing process of discussions on a bilateral science and technology agreement between Switzerland and Russia. As the interest of the research community in both countries is very strong, the parties decided not to wait for the conclusion of the formal agreement to successfully start with the cooperation programme.

Swiss budget: CHF 7.3 million (first funding period 2008-2011)
Coordination: University of Geneva (Swiss Leading House)
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne, EPFL (Swiss Associated Leading House)

Priority research areas (as foreseen by the pending agreement):

- Engineering and IT
- Nanosystems and Materials
- Life Sciences
- Natural Resources and Energy
- Transportation Systems
- Economic Sciences
- Human and Social Sciences

Funding instruments: to strengthen existing research partnerships, foster the formation of new scientific networks and support knowledge transfer and innovation in Switzerland and Russia, STCP-CH-RU implements:

- Joint Research Projects (JRPs)
For 2008-2011, 24 JRP proposals were selected by the STCP-CH-RU National Steering Committee out of 40 eligible proposals. There was a clear concentration on Life Sciences and Engineering (9, respectively 8 out of 24 projects).
- Faculty and student exchanges and mobility for the use of specific infrastructure (FEs, SEs, USI):
47 exchange grants were approved in 2009; and 17 in 2010 as result of the 3rd call for proposals launched in autumn 2009. They show a similar priority in Life Sciences (16 projects) followed by Engineering and IT (14) and Nanosystems (9)

Achievements 2009

- 24 JRP proposals were selected in December 2009 and could start in the first half of 2010.
- STCP-CH-RU exchange activities actually started in 2009 with implementation of the projects selected in the first and second calls for proposals.

Geographical Distribution

- In both JRPs and exchange projects, STCP-CH-RU involves researchers from a wide geographical range. In Switzerland, it covers Basel, Bern, Fribourg, Geneva, Lausanne, Lugano, Neuchâtel, Zurich (City and Canton) and Aargau. In Russia, the programme succeeded in drawing researchers not only from Moscow and Saint Petersburg but also from the Novosibirsk area as well as half a dozen other towns. This is quite an achievement.

Higher Education Partners

- EPFL, ETHZ and 7 out of 10 cantonal universities, PSI, WSL and EMPA as well as 3 universities of applied sciences (SUPSI, NWS, BFH) as well as most of the leading Russian universities are involved.

Private Partners

The programme managed to draw a few private partners, who now run one JRP and two exchange projects. These private partners are also involved in 4 more JRPs. This is a high success rate if we consider private sector participation rates in similar programmes.

Promotional Activities

- STCP-CH-RU Information: In 2009, three calls for proposals were issued. Information on these calls for proposals was sent to all potentially interested institutions through the rector's offices and the offices for international relations of the institutions concerned. This information was then forwarded to the scientists, which generated a huge amount of information and promotion work, mainly by phone and e-mail. Most of the scientists contacted greatly appreciated the opportunities and information provided as clearly demonstrated by the quantity and variety of the submitted proposals.
- Two articles in "Business Mir" - a bilingual English-Russian business magazine.
- Web outreach: the STCP Web site was launched in 2008. From January 2009 to February 2010 it was visited 950 times a month on average with peaks of over 1500 during the JRP call for proposals and up to 1000 and 1200 during the exchange and mobility calls for proposals.
- Event presentation in Switzerland: The programme was presented on 15 July 2009 in the framework of the visit of industrial representatives to the Canton of Geneva as well as in May 2009 in Zurich to academics and business representatives interested in working with the Novosibirsk region.
- Promotion in Russia: Since the Swiss-Russian bilateral agreement is still pending, there is no Russian Leading House promoting the Programme. Therefore several visits were done specifically to present the programme to Russian academics: at the Moscow Education Fair in February 2009, in Rostov-on-Don and in Novosibirsk (including Akademgorodok). It is worth noting that the JRP call for proposals was announced on the Web site of the Russian Federal Agency for Science and Innovation (FASI).

Outlook

After having laid the foundations for cooperation in the first 18 months, the second phase between now and the end of 2011 will include the following actions:

- Complete a 4th call for proposals dedicated to mobility projects
- Create a new project category: Institutional Partnerships
- Work with other federal agencies (particularly SER, SNSF and CTI) to examine the possibility of Swiss participation in the EU's ERA net - RUS programme
- Enhance visibility among researchers by taking part in specific events in Russia and Switzerland

August 2010.