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**EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA  
COMMITTEE  
Strategic Forum for International  
S&T Cooperation**

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**Secretariat**

**ERAC-SFIC 1354/13**

**NOTE**

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Subject: Fourth Report of Activities of the Strategic Forum for International S&T  
Cooperation (SFIC)

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Delegations will find attached Fourth Report of Activities of SFIC (1 March 2012 - 28 February 2013) to the Council and the Commission, as adopted via written procedure on 5 July 2013.

**Fourth Report of Activities of the Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC)  
1 March 2012 - 28 February 2013**

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## I. Report summary and recommendations

### 1) *Progress on the implementation of the European Partnership for international S&T cooperation*

This document is based on the reporting duties of SFIC as stated in its mandate<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, progress is reported on achieving the objectives of the European Partnership in the field of international scientific and technological cooperation ("S&T cooperation") between the European Commission and the Member States, with a view to implementing a European strategy for international S&T cooperation.

In line with its 2011-2012 Work Programme, SFIC has, since March 2012, developed activities related to its mandate and objectives, as follows:

- 1) Development of the external dimension of the European Research Area, notably by:
  - Providing strategic advice and commitment to common priorities and European added-value by giving **input to the formulation of a European strategy for international STI cooperation** as well as through the SFIC Chair's **input to the Council conclusions on "Enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in research and innovation: A strategic approach"**;
  - Increasing networking and cooperation by articulating **clear synergies** between SFIC activities and international aspects of the activities of other ERA groups, Commission DGs or EU bodies (e.g. EEAS), other intergovernmental R&I mechanisms (i.e. COST) as well as with BILAT projects and other relevant FP7 projects. This has also been accompanied by a **stronger engagement with relevant stakeholders and science counsellors** in relevant third countries;

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<sup>1</sup> Council Conclusions of 2 December 2008 concerning a European partnership for international scientific and technological cooperation. Official Journal of the European Union, C 18, 24.1.2009, p. 11- 13.

- Developing a joint **set of guidelines for enhancing the Forum's contribution to the STI part of summits and bi-regional dialogues** for SFIC to engage more actively in the policy-making process as a key advisory body;
- Providing visibility of SFIC's work with, amongst others, the **presentation of the SFIC Third Annual Report to the Competitiveness Council** on 31 May 2012, **contributing to workshops and conferences** (two under the USA initiative in Brussels and Vienna, and one joint workshop with SGHRM in Brussels), representing SFIC at major events and disseminating a SFIC leaflet.

2) Development of joint EU/MS (AC) - SFIC initiatives, notably with:

- *India:* Developing the India initiative into a political partnership between Europe and India, laying the foundation for the **Indo-European partnership on research and innovation**, based on the work carried out towards the strategic research and innovation agenda (SRIA);
- *China:* Developing the China initiative from a roadmap to the implementation of the listed activities focusing on the **development of a strategic research and innovation agenda**, including involvement of stakeholders at national level;
- *USA:* Developing the USA initiative has resulted in the **roadmap entitled "Approaching US"** which includes 5 objectives with specific action points for SFIC to proceed with further work. This initiative has been fed by several events, including the Destination Europe initiative as well as a workshop of the JPI on Neurodegenerative Diseases (JPND) and the BILAT project;
- *Brazil:* The **launch of a Brazil initiative** at the 11 June 2012 plenary with an approach focusing on collecting information on EU/MS/AC S&T activities towards and with Brazil, organising an EU/MS/AC-Brazil Workshop on STI, analysing the variety of on-going successful cooperation activities and recommend areas where there is potential added-value for a more coordinated EU/MS approach vis-à-vis Brazil;

- Russia: Starting the discussion on a potential initiative with Russia.

3) Information sharing, notably by:

- Adopting **Information Sharing Guidelines** as recommendations for information tasks to be undertaken by SFIC Members and Observers and/or science counsellors towards SFIC target countries;
- **Exchanging best practices** on the link between SFIC and the national administrations and the role of SFIC at national level via a peer learning exercise activity (PLA);
- Sharing experiences through **presentations** of S&T international (strategy, policy, activities) cooperation initiatives during plenary sessions;
- Elaborating **workshop reports of SFIC seminars and events**, which are accessible online to the wider public when appropriate.

2) **Outlook for 2013**

The Competitiveness Council, at its meeting on 30 May 2013, adopted Council conclusions on “Enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in research and innovation: A strategic approach”<sup>2</sup>, in which it:

1. Encourages SFIC to continue its advisory work with its initiatives such as with India, China, the USA, Brazil and others;
2. Invites SFIC to contribute to the design and development of the [Horizon 2020] multi-annual roadmaps in collaboration and open discussion with the relevant stakeholders, while developing joint research and innovation agendas between the Union, Member States and strategic partners in third countries;

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<sup>2</sup> Doc. 10318/13

3. Invites SFIC to contribute to the development of the common principles for the conduct of international cooperation in research and innovation, notably through the provision of relevant advice and the sharing of information on international cooperation policies and activities and best practice developed at national level;
4. Invites SFIC, in pursuit of creating synergies between national and European initiatives, to continue its efforts towards sharing of information on Member States' and the Union's international R&D&I cooperation policies and activities.

In particular, and in the context of the aforesaid points, SFIC will continue implementing its work programme for 2013 and 2014, still pursuing the overall objective of developing the external dimension of the ERA, through the following activities:

5. Providing strategic advice on EU/MS common priorities for international R&I cooperation, in particular by:
  - Following the implementation of the India SFIC initiative through the Indo-European partnership on research and innovation and, in this context, contribute to let the relevant SRIA be taken into consideration in the multi-annual roadmaps for international cooperation in Horizon 2020 and in national strategies;
  - Encouraging EU and Members States to launch a dialogue with China to define common STI priorities and contribute to let the relevant SRIA be taken into consideration in the multi-annual roadmaps for international cooperation in Horizon 2020 and in national strategies;
  - Advancing on the development of the SFIC Initiatives on USA and Brazil aiming at a more coherent European S&T approach with these countries;
  - Exploring in 2013 the possibility of a SFIC initiative on Russia to accompany the EU-Russia Year of Science in 2014;
  - Proposing coordinated or joint initiatives with country-specific or thematic focus when a clear European added-value can be identified.

6. Facilitating prior coordination when STI issues are items of summits, bi-regional/ bilateral dialogues and international fora. In this respect, the aim is to develop SFIC, advisory body to the Council and the Commission, as a platform that can contribute to the preparation of a European position ahead of EU summits, SOMs and GSO meetings in relation to STI issues;
7. Improving information sharing and consultation between SFIC Members and Observers, including the EU/MS/AC science counsellors and a wide range of stakeholders;
8. Increasing interaction with other ERA groups (i.e. meetings with the Chairs of the other ERA Groups, organising joint workshops, etc.) and relevant stakeholders, as well as building on existing EU level thematic initiatives;
9. Enhancing the visibility of the international dimension of ERA.

### 3) *Recommendations*

In the light of the progress made and the findings in this report, SFIC recommends that the Council and the Commission:

1. Take note of the progress made by the Forum so far, including its advice on coordinated initiatives as well as the priority areas put forward by the SFIC Work Programme for 2013-2014<sup>3</sup>;
2. Encourage further implementation of the EU/MS joint initiatives towards India, China, US and Brazil, with the appropriate support to complement and reinforce the already existing bilateral activities with these countries;

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<sup>3</sup> SFIC will take into account the Council conclusions on "Enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in Research and Innovation: A strategic approach" when updating its Work Programme 2013-2014.

3. Support the involvement of SFIC in the further development of the international dimension of the ERA Framework, the Innovation Union Flagship Initiative and in the monitoring of the EU international STI dimension in Horizon 2020 - The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation as one of the key instruments for the ERA;
4. Welcome the offer of SFIC to be used as a platform that can contribute and provide advice and input to the preparation of a European position ahead of EU summits, SOMs and GSO meetings when STI issues are part of the agenda;
5. Encourage further information sharing amongst SFIC Members and Observers and invite the respective Ministries, Commission Directorates-General, European External Action Service (EEAS) and science counsellors to share information and knowledge with their counterparts systematically, as far as possible;
6. Encourage SFIC to support, upon request, ERAC and the other ERA groups in their work on the new ERA activities and ERA monitoring for any aspects related to the international dimension.

## II. Detailed progress report

### 1) *Development of the external dimension of the European Research Area*

International cooperation in research and innovation plays a vital role in strengthening the Union's excellence and attractiveness as well as its economic, industrial and technological competitiveness and contributes to tackle global societal challenges and thereby improve the well-being of European citizens.

As the STI potential in a number of world regions is rapidly increasing, joint action between Member States and the EU towards third countries becomes an important factor in enabling the full exploitation of Europe's STI potential. In this respect, the work of SFIC has been substantial in mutual learning and in promoting coordination of international cooperation priorities of Member States and priorities of national and regional funding organisations within the different SFIC initiatives.

In a context of increased global competition, the Commission adopted its Communication on "Enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in Research and Innovation: A strategic approach" on 14 September 2012. The Commission's rationale for a new strategic approach to international cooperation is that Europe needs to engage more strategically in research and innovation cooperation with its main partners in order to: strengthen the Union's excellence and attractiveness in research and innovation and its economic and industrial competitiveness; address global societal challenges; and support external policies.

While SFIC will function following the principle of variable geometry and will provide advice to the roll-out of this strategy, the necessary resources and funding for the implementation of the strategy in the ERA context will be provided by Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, as well as the relevant national programmes.

The Competitiveness Council of 11 December 2012, in its conclusions on "A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth", recalled that the external dimension of the European Research Area is "a vital, cross-cutting and integral part of the ERA and that deepening and strengthening the partnership between the Commission and the Member States will therefore be an important element of the strategic approach towards enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in research and innovation"<sup>4</sup>.

The following sections present the different milestones accomplished by SFIC during the reporting period directed towards the development of the external dimension of ERA and an enhanced EU/MS partnership for cooperation in international research and innovation:

a. *Strategic advice and commitment to common priorities and European added-value*

***SFIC Strategic seminar (Helsinki, 10-11 May 2012):*** SFIC has agreed to organise at least one informal strategic seminar every two years under the guidance of the SFIC Chair. Following the first seminar in 2010, the second SFIC strategic seminar was organised in Helsinki on 10-11 May 2012 with the objective of setting priorities for SFIC activities and give input to the formulation of the European strategy for international STI cooperation. The objectives of the strategic seminar were therefore threefold:

- 1) Agree on the joint Vision 2020/2025 for SFIC
- 2) Define *Strategic Goals* until 2015 and
- 3) Identify *Means* to achieve the *Goals*.

The SFIC vision is summarised in the Chair's conclusions from the workshop represented in the working document "Strategy and vision for SFIC work implementing the European STI Strategy".

In the 11 June 2012 plenary, the Task Force was mandated to continue the work on the vision, goals, activities and means in the context of the work for the preparation of the Work Programme 2013-14 taking into account the discussions in the Strategic Workshop.

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<sup>4</sup> Doc. 17649/12

- ***SFIC Chair's input to Council conclusions on International Cooperation:*** The Council of the EU adopted conclusions on "Enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in research and innovation: A strategic approach" at the Competitiveness Council on 30 May 2013. The SFIC Chair, with recommendations from SFIC Members, provided input to the discussion in the form of "key messages" that contributed to the discussions within the Council decision-making bodies. The discussion on these key messages took place in the SFIC plenary on 18 December 2012. The key messages transmitted to the Irish presidency were:
  - The vital role of international STI-cooperation in strengthening the Union's excellence and attractiveness;
  - The external dimension is an essential, cross-cutting and integral part of the European Research Area;
  - Promotion of a more systemic interaction with the main public and private research and innovation stakeholders is needed in Europe, and this can be done in SFIC;
  - The SFIC India initiative has shown the added value of joint action and shed light on the successful paths for enhanced cooperation towards third countries where such actions are appropriate;
  - Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020), is the main Union's tool to promote and support cooperation with third countries and SFIC's contribution to the design and development of the foreseen Commission's multi-annual roadmaps is to be envisaged;
  - Coordination between STI policies and the Union's external and development policy objectives should be encouraged and reflected in a closer interaction and mutual support. STI synergies with other Union policies should also be sought.
  
- ***Strategic input from FP7-INCO projects into SFIC activities:*** Within the 2012 and 2013 INCO Work Programme, it is stated that INCO activities (particularly the new BILAT projects) shall support SFIC initiatives. This builds for the first time a programmatic and institutionalised link between MS-driven activities of SFIC and FP7 projects.

- ***Contribution to European added-value:*** SFIC has increased the interaction between EU and Member States/Associated Countries in a growing number of initiatives, contributing to joint EU-MS/AC actions as well as to the establishment of new governance structures following commitment by national governments (e.g. implementation of the Indo-European Partnership and its related governance structure).

b. *Networking and cooperation*

During 2012 and early 2013, SFIC has been looking to articulate more clearly the synergies between SFIC activities and international aspects of the activities of other ERA groups, Commission DGs or EU bodies (e.g. EEAS), other intergovernmental R&I mechanisms (i.e. COST) as well as with the FP7 BILAT projects and other relevant FP7 projects.

- ***Interacting with other ERA groups:*** International cooperation is a natural part of all ERA activities and SFIC's role is to ensure coherence by, on demand, supporting and providing advice to other ERA groups such as ERAC, GPC, SGHRM, KTG and ESFRI on how to integrate an international dimension in their respective activities. The SFIC Chair presented the SFIC activities at the GPC meeting on 24 May 2012. The presentations focused on: enhanced communication between both groups (e.g. sharing of minutes and participation in each other's meetings), sharing of relevant guiding documents, developing together the international dimension of JPIs (SFIC's support to GPC's international work) and brainstorming about potential common cooperation schemes in the future.

SFIC also co-organised a joint SFIC-SGHRM workshop which took place on 12 June 2012 hosted by the French Permanent Representation in Brussels on "Improving the mobility of researchers between Europe and BRIC countries". The workshop's objective was to contribute to the exchange of best practices between stakeholders and bring new inputs to develop concrete measures to increase the mobility between Europe and the BRIC countries. The final workshop report has been published.

The SFIC Chair also attended the 44th meeting of the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) on 12 March 2013, exploring synergies with ESFRI and providing input on the international dimension of research infrastructures while informing ESFRI about SFIC activities.

- ***Interacting with other Commission DGs:*** During the 9 March 2012 plenary meeting, SFIC invited a representative from DG Enterprise and Industry to present the Commission Communication "Small Business, Big World". The Communication draws attention to the fact that the Commission's instruments and national instruments are well placed to improve SMEs access in third countries. The Forum welcomed the possibility to join forces when opportunities arise during the development of the SFIC initiatives and will continue to explore synergies between research and industry.
  
- ***Interacting with the European External Action Service (EEAS):*** Following a decision of the SFIC plenary and recurrent requests from delegations, the Chair decided to invite, when appropriate, the European External Action Service (EEAS) to meetings for them to introduce or explain specific R&I points related to their field of expertise in line with SFIC's plenary agendas. Mr. Andrea MOGNI (EEAS, Global Issues Division) was invited to the SFIC plenary on 18 December 2012, and presented to the Forum the working principles and policy priorities of the EEAS and its strategic interests in research, technology, science and innovation.
  
- ***Interacting with COST:*** Concerning intergovernmental R&I mechanisms, Ms. Ángeles RODRÍGUEZ PEÑA (COST President, ES) attended the SFIC plenary on 11 June 2012 and made a presentation recalling the importance of COST and its mission as a cornerstone of ERA in enabling break-through scientific developments leading to new concepts and products and thereby contributing to strengthen Europe's research and innovation capacities. Ms. RODRÍGUEZ PEÑA also pointed out the need for COST and SFIC to complement and be aware of each other's strategies and the importance of information sharing, with COST actions being potential information points and essential sources for new SFIC initiatives towards third countries.

- ***Engaging with FP7 projects:*** During 2012 the Task Force has started to more actively engage with FP7 projects such as BILAT projects relevant for the SFIC initiatives, taking advantage of the renewal of many of them. The objective of the BILAT projects is to support the EU-third country bilateral STI policy dialogues. The new BILAT projects however also include as part of their tasks the support of SFIC activities when possible. The BILAT-USA and DRAGON-STAR project have been invited to SFIC Task Force meetings and a joint workshop was organised with the BILAT USA in April 2012.
  
- ***Engaging with relevant stakeholders:*** The involvement of stakeholders in SFIC activities especially through upfront consultations at national level as well as in dedicated workshops in the implementation phase of SFIC activities remains a major point where SFIC is well aware that continuous efforts must be made. This concern has been taken seriously in the planned activities contained in the SFIC Work Programme 2013-2014, both in terms of mutual learning about how best to consult at national level as well as ensuring more openness of SFIC workshops.
  
- ***Engaging with science counsellors:*** The work of science counsellors is also a key element in developing the European Partnership and joint or coordinated activities of the Member States and the EU take place through science counsellor's networks in Delhi, Beijing and Washington, amongst others. To strengthen the involvement of science counsellors SFIC has intensified the involvement of science counsellors in the discussions about each particular initiative, distributed relevant SFIC documents to science counsellors as a matter of course, and invited science counsellors to SFIC-related events. The science counsellors in the US have been very active in supporting the Destination Europe initiatives and have also supported the JPI JPND in its contacts with USA counterparts. The science counsellor's network in Beijing has been very actively engaged in driving forward a set of activities as described later under the China initiative reporting.

SFIC has welcomed the important work that science counsellors already pursue in partner countries and has encouraged them to continue and intensify their activities. SFIC has pointed out that SFIC Members and Observers should take responsibility for conveying information on SFIC activities to their science counsellors (or equivalents) and encourage them to work with their peers overseas and other national representatives.

c. *Strengthening the role of STI in summits and bi-regional policy dialogues*

In its Work Programme 2011-2012, SFIC acknowledged that when STI issues are items of summits, bi-regional dialogues and international fora, SFIC will contribute to the identification of STI cooperation activities *vis-à-vis* and with third countries "*when appropriate*". The aim was to identify the potential to raise the STI profile in summits and bi-regional policy dialogues.

During 2012, SFIC has been developing a joint set of guidelines for enhancing the Forum's contribution to STI part of summits and bi-regional dialogues. The aim was for SFIC to engage more actively in the process of identifying and preparing key elements/input to be considered when elaborating EU positions on research and innovation issues ahead of EU summits and R&I-related Senior Official Meetings (SOMs) with a particular third country or region. SFIC is able to act as a platform for upfront discussions (prior to the formal decision process).

At the SFIC plenary on 1 October 2012, a proposal from the SFIC Task Force to the plenary was presented on "SFIC's role in the preparation of EU-Third country summits and SOM meetings as regards Research and Innovation". The Forum decided to use the note as a reference document. When agreed by the Forum, SFIC will provide a 1-page input for the relevant Council instances and/or the Commission ahead of a summit or high-level meeting. The document includes the different steps to follow should the Forum decide to do so. Discussions in this context proved that planning and timing are essential to be able to contribute to the policy preparation of summits and SOMs. It was also acknowledged that content preparation should be more detailed and timely and communication and synergies at national level (e.g. between research and foreign affairs ministries) shall be sought.

Following the official channels and always considering its advisory role, SFIC can therefore play a key role in these developments when there are R&I items in the agenda of summits or SOMs.

d. Visibility

Visibility of SFIC and its work is essential for the success of the European Partnership on S&T cooperation. During the reporting period, the following visibility milestones were achieved:

- ***Presenting the SFIC Third Annual Report to the COMPET Council:*** The SFIC Chair presented the Third SFIC Annual Report<sup>5</sup> to the Competitiveness Council on 31 May 2012, with clear and tangible results while showing that SFIC remains an important asset for the realisation of the external dimension of the European Research Area. The Chair recalled SFIC's capacity to develop advice on joint European initiatives towards third countries with significant impact on the international scene.
  
- ***Contributing to workshops and conferences:*** SFIC has organised and/or contributed to different workshops and conferences related to the SFIC initiatives, providing human and financial resources from Member States and the Commission for such purpose. Examples of workshops and conferences with relevant contribution from SFIC are: two workshops under the USA initiative on "Ways of successful science, technology and innovation cooperation between Europe and the USA" (23-24 April 2012, Vienna, co-organised with the BILAT USA) and on "From common challenges to joint responses: Adding a new dimension to EU/ Member States cooperation with the USA in science, technology and innovation" (18-19 October 2012, Brussels), as well one cross-cutting workshop on "Improving the mobility of researchers between Europe and BRIC countries" (12 June 2012, Brussels). Such events have contributed to enhance the profile of SFIC, to make some progress on policy coordination at horizontal level and have counted with the participation of major stakeholders. Results of the events are made publicly available on the Internet, when agreed by the Forum.

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<sup>5</sup> Doc. ERAC-SFIC 1353/12

- ***Representing SFIC at major events:*** SFIC has been systematically represented at major events and conferences addressing issues that are in the remit of SFIC's activities. The SFIC Chair, jointly with the European Commission and the EU Presidency (when appropriate), have participated in high-level events such as the "Destination Europe Conference". The SFIC Chair also participated in the high-level panel discussion during the 3rd INCO Conference in Bonn on 19 June 2012 which was attended by 150 international experts from politics, research and business spanning five continents and 60 different nations. Delegates of the Member States were also present. The SFIC Vice-Chair also attended the big stakeholder event in Brussels on 31 May-1 June in the context of the India initiative and the 2013 Joint Programming Conference in which she chaired the session on "The place of JPIs in a global context".
  
- ***Disseminating a SFIC leaflet:*** The DE delegation has taken the lead on the preparation and dissemination of a SFIC leaflet, containing information on the Forum and the state of play of the relevant initiatives and to be used by SFIC Members and Observers, when appropriate, as a dissemination tool of SFIC's work. In total, 5000 have been printed and distributed to various Member States, the Commission as well as those present during plenary meetings.

## 2) *Development of joint EU/MS (AC) - SFIC initiatives*

### a. India

During 2012 the SFIC India initiative has developed into a political partnership between Europe and India. At the EU-India summit on 10 February 2012 a Joint Declaration on Research and Innovation was signed. This declaration promotes the foundation for the Indo-European partnership on research and innovation and has its roots in the activities carried out under the SFIC India initiative.

On 31 May-1 June 2012 a big stakeholder event took place in Brussels to enlarge the consultation process for the strategic research and innovation agenda (SRIA) and to actively involve stakeholders in India and Europe. The conference sessions reflected the themes of the SRIA and the different chapters were used as background documents for the sessions.

In conjunction with the stakeholder event a ministerial meeting took place hosted by the Danish Presidency. The Indian Minister for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, as well as the Ministers from DK, PL and CY representing the Presidency Trio participated to this meeting. The meeting resulted in the *Brussels Communiqué*, which (without being an official Council declaration) is a statement from those Ministers and authorities present during the meeting on the importance of close cooperation. The *communiqué* takes note and considers the various important steps for developing the Indo-European partnership.

During 2012 the SFIC India technical group worked together with Indian representatives, including regular video conferencing between both sides. The summit declaration called for the establishment of a Group of Senior Officials (GSO) to drive forward the implementation of the partnership. The India technical group has therefore during 2012 been developing the governance structure for the partnership.

The governance structure proposed at the end of 2012 is articulated on three levels: top management, a working group and thematic experts groups. The GSO should be operating at Director General level, leaving it up to each country to nominate the most adequate person, and will be supported by a GSO working group which will ensure the coordination of thematic teams. Terms of reference are being developed for the thematic groups and their composition should be finalised during 2013.

The Indian side has flagged environment-water, energy and health as their primary interest. Thematic groups for the two other areas bio-economy and ICT were agreed to be set up at a later stage. The GSO is meant to adopt the SRIA at its first meeting which is planned back-to-back with the EU-India Joint Committee in October or November 2013.

b. China

During 2012 the China initiative moved from developing a roadmap to the implementation of the listed activities with focus on the development of a strategic research and innovation agenda. In the first half of 2012 a discussion paper on themes for a strategic research and innovation agenda was developed and adopted by the SFIC plenary on 9 March 2012.

During the development of the SRIA emphasis was put on better involving relevant stakeholders at national level. This has been done through national consultations.

A long working document and a shorter version with key messages have been prepared by the SFIC Task Force and presented to the SFIC plenary. Both documents represent a European view on where there is added value to increase coordination in Europe for cooperation with China.

The Commission and the Member States have kept SFIC delegates regularly informed about the different initiatives with and vis-à-vis China.

During 2012 two EU-China summits took place. During the first summit on 14-15 February 2012 the High People to People Dialogue (HPPD) and the EU-China partnership for sustainable urbanisation were launched. The HPPD will cover also mobility of researchers whilst the urbanisation partnership has a research and innovation component. At the September summit the EU-China Joint Declaration on Innovation Cooperation Dialogue was signed.

In line with the new innovation dialogue, the Commission organised a seminar on innovation in November 2012 in Beijing. The EU delegation and the local network of MS science counsellors supported the organisation of this seminar. The thematic areas covered were inspired by the themes identified in the SFIC China SRIA.

Under the political umbrella of the Sustainable Urbanisation partnership, a workshop on R&I for urbanisation has been shaping up during the reporting period and it was planned to take place in China in May 2013, being organised by the Commission and the EU-delegation in collaboration with the network of MS/AC science counsellors. The SFIC Chair will attend the workshop.

A 2012 update of overview of EU/MS/AC research and innovation activities with China was produced by the EU delegation in China with the contribution of SFIC delegates and the local network of science counsellors.

The EU-delegation in cooperation with the MS delegations also organised an awareness raising tour in China in autumn 2012. The tour did manage to promote FP7 as well as other parts of the European R&I landscape and showed a successful collaboration between delegations in China. SFIC played a role in ensuring a smooth information flow between the various European actors involved.

It is also worth noting that the coordinator of the BILAT DRAGON-STAR attended the Task Force meeting in January 2013. As each BILAT, this project has a dedicated work package to support policy dialogues which can include actions to support SFIC activities.

c. USA

Work on the SFIC USA initiative has resulted in the roadmap entitled "Approaching US" which includes 5 objectives with specific action points for SFIC to proceed on: (1) Enhancing the scale of European-US S&T cooperation; (2) Developing the innovation dimension; (3) Developing a level playing field and improving framework conditions; (4) "Destination Europe" initiative; and (5) Information sharing.

The roadmap development has also been fed by several events, including: the workshop of the Joint Programming Initiative on Neurodegenerative Diseases (JPND) organised with the network of science counsellors in Washington in November 2012; the Destination Europe event in San Francisco in December 2012 and in Boston on 22 February 2013.

Concerning the latter, two preparatory workshops (in Brussels on 7 May 2012 with Member States and funding agencies representatives; and in Washington on 6 June 2012 with science counsellors and officers from the European liaison offices) served as groundwork to the Destination Europe event that took place on the West Coast on 6-7 December 2012. The event had two short plenary sessions and focused on 16 different 90-minute interactive break-out sessions so that participating Member States/Associated Countries had the opportunity to inform about the research and innovation opportunities Europe has to offer. The 16 sessions were organised by Member States, Associated Countries, the European Research Council (ERC) and Commission services and were combined with an exhibition space for pop-up stands.

In the context of the SFIC USA initiative substantial cooperation with the BILAT project took place:

- In April 2012 the BILAT USA supported the joint organisation of a workshop with SFIC on the framework conditions for cooperation between Europe and the USA. The meeting was considered very successful and interesting with about 70-80 participants. The workshop report is published on the web;

- The new BILAT-USA 2.0 attended the Task Force meeting in November 2012. This project will address also innovation aspects in addition to research and has well established connections to US actors through its numerous partners. As for its predecessor this project could support the organisation of joint workshops.

d. Brazil

In November 2011, the SFIC Chair received a letter from the Brazil Science Counsellors asking SFIC to enhance cooperation with Brazil and to consider Brazil as the next country initiative.

At the 11 June 2012 plenary, the SFIC Chair informed delegations that the Task Force would work on a concept paper for Brazil during the summer, which would then be presented to the next plenary on 1 October 2012. On the basis of this paper, SFIC was in a position to evaluate whether and how a Brazil initiative should be taken forward and, thus, reply to the Brazil Science Counsellors letter. The SFIC plenary agreed to launch a new Brazil initiative with a step-by-step approach focusing on the following issues:

- Collecting information on EU/MS/AC S&T activities towards and with Brazil, including mobility schemes;
- Organising an EU/MS/AC-Brazil Workshop on STI to showcase good practices of cooperation models;
- Analysing the variety of on-going successful cooperation activities and identifying where overlaps exist and recommend areas where there is potential for a more coordinated European approach vis-à-vis Brazil which would add value to existing successful cooperation activities.

Following the above-mentioned approach, the SFIC Chair replied to the Brazil Science Counsellors by e-mail and letter sent on 31 October 2012 and announced the launch of a SFIC initiative on Brazil.

At the 18 December 2012 plenary, the Vice-Chair informed delegates about the actions taken by the SFIC Task Force: the template to establish an overview of R&I activities with Brazil was sent to all SFIC delegates, and the Task Force has started the preparations for a workshop on challenges and best practices for cooperation with Brazil in June 2013, that will take place back-to-back with the SFIC plenary meeting on 18 June 2013.

e. Russia

During 2012 and early 2013, the Task Force has had discussions on a potential initiative with Russia. In this context, the organisation of a multilateral event between and the EU, Russia and the countries of the Eastern Partnership and Central Asia took place in Bonn in October 2012, building on the work of Era.Net RUS (Russia), the BS-ERA.NET (Black Sea Region) as well as the BILAT-RUS. The conference encouraged the development of a SFIC Russia initiative. The SFIC Chair was invited and spoke about “Enhancement of political dialogue/process from the SFIC experience”.

f. Other

In the context of the closing event of the ASEAN-EU Year of Science, Technology and Innovation which took place on 12 December 2012 and the launch of the SEA-EU NET II project, an ASEAN COST delegation visited Brussels. A closed session allowed for a fruitful exchange of views on enhancing cooperation between the ASEAN-COST delegation and representatives of the Commission and large EU/MS initiatives as well as a delegation of SFIC members.

### 3) *Information sharing*

The SFIC plenary on 9 March 2012 discussed **Information Sharing Guidelines**, as prepared by the Task Force. The guidelines contain actions to develop a strategic approach towards SFIC target countries. Such actions are within the domains of public information sharing and internal SFIC information sharing and represent recommendations for information tasks to be undertaken by SFIC Members and Observers and/or science counsellors. Information sharing has so far focused above all on China, India and the United States' relevant policies, strategies and EU/MS funding mechanisms in S&T cooperation with these countries. Information sharing for Brazil started in January 2013 after the launch of the SFIC Brazil initiative.

In its plenary meeting of 1 October 2012, SFIC decided to exchange best practices on the link between **SFIC and the national administrations and the role of SFIC at national level** via a peer learning activity (PLA). A PLA workshop was organized in Brussels at the Finnish Permanent Representation on 5 March 2013. The workshop gathered nine MS and AC to strengthen the impact and visibility of SFIC at national and regional level. The report of the seminar is published on the SFIC Secretariat (Consilium) web page.

Concerning the use of the **SharePoint system** as a tool for internal SFIC information sharing, and following a trial period, SFIC has decided not to use it systematically for the time being.

SFIC Members and Observers are also invited to share their experiences through **presentations** of S&T international (strategy, policy, activities) cooperation initiatives during plenary sessions. At the 11 June 2012 plenary meeting, DE presented a German study on indicators on the international STI dimension, including the different steps to be considered for setting up and indicator system. Technopolis presented, at the 18 December 2012 plenary, the "Overview of STI cooperation between Member States and countries outside the EU and the development of a future monitoring mechanism" study to delegations.

Furthermore, SFIC has elaborated **workshop reports** of its seminars and events, which are accessible to the wider public when appropriate. In this respect, the following reports have been added to the SFIC Secretariat (Consilium) website as well as to the relevant Commission website<sup>6</sup>:

- "Towards A More Coherent EU/Member States and Associated Countries STI China Strategy", 3-4 May 2011, Brussels;
- "Ways of successful science, technology and innovation cooperation between Europe and the USA", 23-24 April 2012, Vienna;
- "Workshop on improving the mobility of researchers between Europe and BRIC countries", 12 June 2012, Brussels;
- "From common challenges to joint responses: Adding a new dimension to EU/Member States cooperation with the USA in science, technology and innovation", 18-19 October 2012, Brussels;
- Peer Learning Activity Report: "SFIC and the national administrations and the role of SFIC at national level", 5 March 2013, Brussels.

The Commission web site dedicated to SFIC has moved location during 2012 to better show the link between SFIC activities and the new EU strategy for international R&I cooperation.

The new address is: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/index.cfm?lg=en&pg=sfic-general>

The web site of the SFIC secretariat remains the same and can be found under:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/policies/era/sfic>.

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<sup>6</sup>

All reports are available at:

- Consilium website: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/policies/era/sfic/sfic-advice-\(opinions,-reports\)?lang=en](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/policies/era/sfic/sfic-advice-(opinions,-reports)?lang=en)
- Commission website: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/index.cfm?lg=en&pg=sfic-general>

#### 4) *Internal organisation*

On 9 March 2012, following discussions on SFIC working methods and structures during 2011, the SFIC plenary agreed on the **update of the SFIC Rules of Procedure**. The new SFIC Rules of Procedure include the establishment of the SFIC Vice-Chair and the institutionalisation of the SFIC Task Force as main working group of the Forum as well as establishing clear and communicative links with other groups.

Following the update on the SFIC Rules of Procedure, Ms. Ana Cristina NEVES (PT) was elected as **SFIC Vice-Chair** during the SFIC plenary on 11 June 2012. As SFIC Vice-Chair, Ms. NEVES also continues her tasks as chair of the SFIC Task Force.

The current reporting period has also seen the discussions and work towards the adoption of the **SFIC Work Programme 2013-2014**. The new Work Programme was adopted via written procedure on 4 March 2013, following several discussions at Task Force and plenary level. The document has its focus on four different priorities and areas of action, each one with specific objectives and goals:

- Added value and visibility;
- Common priorities and joint initiatives and actions;
- Analysis, collection and sharing of information;
- Networking and coordination.

This structure translates the SFIC strategic discussions and objectives into a concrete work plan to be pursued during the next two years. The priority areas reflect SFIC's strategic mission and carefully balance ongoing SFIC initiatives with new activities deriving from global challenges – of which the most relevant ones will also be part of Horizon 2020 –, recent policy and economic developments, etc.

## *Annexes to the Fourth SFIC Annual Report*

- Annex I: SFIC and its mandate
- Annex II: Summary of SFIC events (1 March 2012 - 28 February 2013) and Activity Map for 2013
- Annex III: SFIC Work Programme 2013-2014 (doc. ERAC-SFIC 1352/13)
- Annex IV: SFIC Chair's conclusions of Strategic Workshop (Helsinki, May 2012)
- Annex V: SFIC Chair's input to IE Presidency on Council conclusions on International Cooperation

*SFIC and its mandate*

SFIC is a strategic forum and an advisory body to the Council and the Commission with a view to implementing a European Partnership in the field of international scientific and technological cooperation (S&T cooperation). Member States and the Commission are Members of the Forum while countries associated to the 7th Framework Programme have an observership status. SFIC's objective is to facilitate the further development, implementation and monitoring of the international dimension of ERA by the sharing of information and consultation between the partners with a view to identifying common priorities which could lead to coordinated or joint initiatives.

The rationale for such framework is provided by the Council conclusions of 2 December 2008<sup>7</sup>, in which the Council invited Member States and the Commission “*to form a European Partnership in the field of international scientific and technological cooperation with a view to implementing a European strategy and to collaborate within a dedicated configuration of CREST to drive forward the European Partnership for S&T cooperation*”. The mandate annexed to the conclusions includes the main tasks of SFIC:

- Systematically sharing and structuring information on the S&T cooperation activities and objectives (whether ongoing or planned) of the various partners;
- Pooling relevant knowledge concerning third countries, in particular analyses of their S&T resources and capabilities;
- Ensuring regular consultation between the partners in order to identify their respective objectives and common priorities in terms of S&T cooperation with third countries;
- Where appropriate, coordinating activities of a similar nature implemented by Member States and the Community (in 'variable geometry');
- If necessary, proposing initiatives to be implemented with appropriate ways and means;
- Networking of Member States' and the Commission's scientific advisors in key third countries.

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<sup>7</sup> Official Journal of the European Union, C 18, 24.1.2009, p. 11-13.

**Summary of SFIC events**  
(1 March 2012 - 28 February 2013)

| <i>Event</i>   | <i>Number of meetings</i> | <i>Dates</i>  |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| <b>SFIC Plenary</b>  | 4                         | 9 March 2012<br>11 June 2012<br>1 October 2012<br>18 December 2012                                      |
| <b>SFIC Task Force</b>   | 5                         | 26-27 April 2012<br>4-5 July 2012<br>13-14 September 2012<br>15-16 November 2012<br>31 Jan - 1 Feb 2013 |
| <b>India Group</b>   | 4                         | 22 March 2012<br>26 April 2012<br>12-13 September 2012<br>30 January 2013                               |
| <b>Workshops/seminars</b>  | 4 (total)                 |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "Ways of successful science, technology and innovation cooperation between Europe and the USA"</li> </ul> | 1                         | 23-24 April 2012,<br>Vienna   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SFIC Strategic Workshop</li> </ul>  | 1                         | 10-11 May 2012,<br>Helsinki (hosted by FI)  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "Workshop on improving the mobility of researchers between Europe and BRIC countries"</li> </ul>          | 1                         | 12 June 2012, Brussels<br>(hosted by FR)  |
| "From common challenges to joint responses: Adding a new dimension to EU/ Member States cooperation with the USA in STI"                           | 1                         | 18-19 October 2012,<br>Brussels (hosted by DE)  |

### *Activity Map 2013*

Activity Map for SFIC during 2013, where SFIC delegations or the SFIC Chair may be present:

| <b>Date</b>       | <b>Event</b>  | <b>Where</b>     |
|-------------------|---|------------------|
| 5 March 2013      | PLA-SFIC Workshop   | Brussels         |
| 15-19 April 2013  | Latin America Week  | Brussels         |
| 16-17 April 2013  | EU-CELAC SOM  | Brussels         |
| 30-31 May 2013    | China Urbanisation<br>Workshop  | Beijing          |
| 23-24 May 2013    | 'The Atlantic – a shared<br>resource' event by the Irish<br>Presidency with DG MARE<br>and DG RTD | Galway, Ireland  |
| May 2013          | EU-ASEAN SOM  | Philippines      |
| May 2013          | Competitiveness Council   | Brussels         |
| 17 June 2013      | Brazil SFIC Workshop  | Brussels         |
| 17-19 June 2013   | INCO Conference   | Marseille        |
| 7-11 October 2013 | India Week  | Brussels / Paris |
| 8-9 October 2013  | Indo-European Partnership -<br>1 <sup>st</sup> GSO meeting  | Brussels         |
| 25 November 2013  | EU-Russia Year of Science -<br>Kick-off   | tbc              |

|                                    |
|------------------------------------|
| <b>SFIC WORK PROGRAMME 2013-14</b> |
|------------------------------------|

This document sets out the Work Programme of the Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC) for the years 2013-2014.

## **1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE**

SFIC is a strategic forum and an advisory body to the Council and the Commission with a view to implementing a European Partnership in the field of international scientific and technological cooperation (S&T cooperation). Member States and the Commission are members of the Forum while countries associated to the 7th Framework Programme have an observership status. SFIC's objective is to facilitate the further development, implementation and monitoring of the international dimension of the European Research Area (ERA) by the sharing of information and consultation between the partners with a view to identifying common priorities which could lead to coordinated or joint initiatives, and coordinating activities and positions vis-à-vis third countries and within international fora.

The rationale for such framework is provided by the Council conclusions concerning a European partnership for international scientific and technological cooperation of 2 December 2008<sup>8</sup>.

In the past years, SFIC has played an essential role in driving forward the EU-MS partnership in international S&T cooperation as well as in contributing to the external dimension of the ERA, as shown in the Third SFIC Annual Report (March 2011-February 2012)<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, substantial progress has been made in particular SFIC activities and initiatives, as it is the case with India, China and the USA, and a new initiative on Brazil has also been launched. This Work Programme aims at building on such initiatives, foster new ones and driving forward the EU/MS partnership.

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<sup>8</sup> Doc. 16763/08

<sup>9</sup> Doc. ERAC-SFIC 1353/12

On 14 September 2012, the Commission published its Communication on "Enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in Research and Innovation: A strategic approach". The Commission's rationale for a new strategic approach to international cooperation is that Europe needs to engage more strategically in science, technology and innovation cooperation with its main partners in order to: strengthen the Union's excellence and attractiveness in research and innovation and its economic and industrial competitiveness; address global societal challenges; and support external policies. While SFIC will provide input to the roll-out of this strategy, the necessary resources and funding for the implementation of the strategy in the ERA context will be provided by Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, as well as the relevant national programmes. Contributions will follow the principle of variable geometry.

Moreover, the Competitiveness Council of 11 December 2012, in its conclusions on "A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth", recalled that the external dimension of the European Research Area is "a vital, cross-cutting and integral part of the ERA and that deepening and strengthening the partnership between the Commission and the Member States will therefore be an important element of the strategic approach towards enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in research and innovation"<sup>10</sup>.

## **1.1 Operational principles for the implementation of the Work Programme**

SFIC will take into account the afore-mentioned past, current and future context in its activities and actions. SFIC activities will be implemented on a voluntary basis following the principle of variable geometry. SFIC will match the level of ambition with the resources available when implementing its Work Programme for 2013-2014. SFIC will reinforce links to other ERA groups to support the development of the international perspective of the ERA initiatives and new ERA activities. SFIC will take an active role in contributing to the realization of ERA and its international dimension, especially by contributing to the development of common principles/guidelines for international R&I cooperation, building up synergies with Horizon 2020 and relevant national programmes, and supporting the overall assessment of the impact of the EU's actions in international S&T cooperation.

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<sup>10</sup> Doc. 17649/12

The added value of SFIC will be created by optimizing the use of national, European and global resources and avoiding duplication of activities and efforts.

## 2. STRUCTURE OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

The SFIC Work Programme 2013-2014 is based on the previous and current SFIC work and it has been developed with the input from delegations, mainly emerging from the strategic discussions that took place at the second SFIC Strategic Workshop in Helsinki on 10-11 May 2012. The discussions at the Helsinki seminar were followed up by deliberations at Task Force and plenary level. During the SFIC plenary on 11 June 2012, the SFIC Chair presented a conclusion paper of the Helsinki discussions as well as a draft SFIC Vision 2020-2025, with its goals, activities and means. With this background, the SFIC Work Programme 2013-2014 has its focus on **four different priorities and areas of action**, each one with specific objectives and goals:

- Added value and visibility;
- Common priorities and joint initiatives and actions;
- Analysis, collection and sharing of information;
- Networking and coordination.

This structure translates the strategic discussions and the objectives into a concrete work plan to be pursued during the next two years. The priority areas reflect SFIC's strategic mission and carefully balance ongoing SFIC initiatives with new activities deriving from global challenges – of which the most relevant ones will also be part of Horizon 2020 –, recent policy and economic developments, etc.

### 3. PRIORITIES AND AREAS OF ACTION

#### 3.1 Added value and visibility

*SFIC's objectives for the **Added value and visibility** priority:*

- To be proactive with early strategic advice and evidence for policy formulation, development of joint strategies and European initiatives to be proposed to the Council and the Commission for international outreach*
- To intensify its reporting to the Council and ERAC*
- To search for synergies with other ERA groups*
- To enhance visibility of the external dimension of ERA*

SFIC will aim at being proactive with early strategic advice and evidence for policy formulation and at developing joint strategies and European initiatives for international outreach. To enhance this role, SFIC will, where appropriate, submit opinions/advice to the Council and the Commission while fostering uptake of this advice also nationally. It will develop a rolling plan (every year/6 months) to identify upfront relevant events and encourage timely intervention. In 2013-14, SFIC will have the objective to put in place (and develop in 2014) a process to allow SFIC to be a platform that contributes to the preparation of a European position ahead of EU summits, Senior Official Meetings (SOMs) and Group of Senior Officials (GSO) meetings when R&I issues are on the agenda. Moreover, coordination on mid-term objectives to be pursued in EU/MS-third country dialogues will be sought while monitoring the aforesaid dialogues.

SFIC will intensify its reporting to the Council and ERAC and will continuously search for synergies with other ERA groups. This means liaising with Irish, Lithuanian, Greek and Italian Presidencies, yearly reporting to the Council and yearly information to ERAC and other ERA groups about SFIC initiatives while encouraging reciprocity. In 2013-14, SFIC will propose to organise yearly joint meetings or SFIC-led seminars with other ERA groups, when appropriate.

Enhancing the visibility of the external dimension of ERA is more and more important. For this purpose SFIC will:

- publish regularly reports and results of SFIC events on the Council and Commission specific webpages;
- disseminate a SFIC leaflet as an information tool.

### 3.2 Common priorities and joint initiatives and actions

*SFIC's objectives for the **Common priorities and joint initiatives and actions***

*priority:*

- *To contribute to the development of common principles and guidelines for the conduct of international R&I activities*
- *To develop roadmaps for the SFIC initiatives and Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas (SRIAs) for priority countries and connecting them with the Horizon 2020 multi-annual roadmaps for international R&I cooperation and the relevant national roadmaps*
- *To contribute to the ERA Framework and the international dimension of Horizon 2020*

SFIC will contribute to the development of common principles and guidelines for international R&I cooperation, in order to provide guidance to ERA actors and stakeholders in their cooperation with third countries.

These common principles and guidelines will contribute to enhance the relationships between SFIC and other ERA actors and stakeholders while, at the same time, complementing the Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas (SRIAs) developed by SFIC.

Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas (SRIAs) are tools for bringing together European countries into joint activities and developing common understanding of visions and needs of collaboration between Europe and a third country or region.

Developing roadmaps and SRIAs with priority countries is considered a comprehensive way of working together at European level *vis à vis* third countries. For continuing the process of choosing common priorities and joint initiatives and actions, SFIC will in 2013:

- Continue its work on **China** by developing the China SRIA as well as by developing a joint understanding on how to dialogue with the Chinese side and promote the involvement of stakeholders (e.g. urbanisation workshop);
- Continue its work on **USA** by advancing on the implementation of the SFIC-USA roadmap and the realisation of the 5 action points; and by developing well-defined activities with specific thematic focus to identify possible short-, medium- and long-term measures for a more consistent STI cooperation and involvement of relevant stakeholders;
- Continue its work on **India** by following-up the implementation of the India SRIA and the work of the GSO and contribute to awareness-raising at national level;
- Compile an overview of R&I activities in Brazil with support from science counsellors based in Brazil and develop a SFIC roadmap for the **Brazil** initiative;
- Explore the possibility of launching an initiative with **Russia**;
- Contribute to let the SRIAs be taken into consideration in the multi-annual roadmaps for international cooperation in Horizon 2020.

In 2014, activities will focus on implementing and following up the activities related to the **China**, **USA** and **India** initiatives while paying attention to the implementation and the work of the **India** GSO and contributing to raising its awareness at national level. On **Brazil**, the focus will be on the development and implementation of the SFIC roadmap. In case a **Russia** initiative is launched, 2014 will also see the development of a SFIC roadmap for **Russia**.

Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation as well as national programmes are the tools to promote and support cooperation with third countries. Therefore, the roadmaps and strategic research agendas developed within SFIC initiatives will, where possible, go hand in hand with the Horizon 2020 multi-annual roadmaps and with national strategies. SFIC will also analyse on a case-by-case basis the need and added value for SFIC initiatives focused on other countries/regions.

### 3.3 Analysis, collection and sharing of information

*SFIC's objectives for the **Analysis, collection and sharing of information** priority:*

- To manage and share information*
- To contribute to monitoring and mapping activities*

For managing and sharing information effectively, SFIC members and observers will, in 2013-14, establish close collaboration and exchange of information with the FP7-funded INCO projects (ERA- and INCO-Net, BILAT projects, etc.) targeting India, USA, China, Brazil and Russia, other relevant FP7 and Horizon 2020 projects as well as relevant national activities and projects with a strong international focus. SFIC will also promote presentations at plenary level on EU/national STI strategies as well as R&I cooperation activities and projects. SFIC will also emphasise the need for its members and observers to identify opportunities for the development of Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas.

SFIC will further explore and elaborate the innovation dimension of its activities in the context of its mandate, in line with the innovation dimension being an integral part of Horizon 2020 activities. SFIC will also explore the possibilities of using the EU R&I Observatory with shared information sources. SFIC will play an active role in providing input to the development of the EU R&I Observatory (e.g. formulation of needs) and, where appropriate, in contributing to the definition of indicators for international R&I cooperation.

Monitoring and mapping of international policies and activities at national and regional level is one of the core elements of SFIC's work. SFIC will also reflect on and contribute to the monitoring of the external dimension of the ERA and the overall assessment of the international dimension of Horizon 2020 as of 2014. SFIC will aim at organising seminars on indicators on international cooperation in 2013 in line with the Council, ERAC and Commission activities in this area (e.g. indicators for Horizon 2020 and indicators for the EU R&I Observatory or other monitoring initiatives).

### 3.4 Networking and coordination

*SFIC's objectives for the **Networking and coordination** priority:*

- To invite/involve the EEAS and other stakeholders to SFIC-organised events or SFIC meetings*
- To make science counsellors/attachés networks in third countries more inclusive*

To assure the visibility and the effectiveness of SFIC's work, SFIC will invite and/or involve the European External Action Service (EEAS) and other stakeholders to SFIC-organised events or SFIC meetings. This may be done, for instance, by inviting EEAS to any 2013-14 SFIC plenary, when agreed, or by promoting links with networks of main stakeholders at EU and national level while involving them through consultations and workshops. SFIC will also reflect on and propose optimized ways of cooperation within national and European administration structures to further improve coordination between the different actors.

The contents of the seminars and workshops will support the objectives of SFIC's work. During 2013, seminars and workshops on priority areas, countries and themes should include topics such as strategy analysis, state of play of research and innovation in priority areas/countries, state of play of STI cooperation and science diplomacy (with EEAS and Foreign Affairs ministries, if required) and scientific excellence and quality of activities. Topics such as links to higher education, IP management in international cooperation between European and Non-European partners<sup>11</sup>, taking into account the related ERA Guidelines on IP will receive priority during 2014.

One of the findings emerging from discussions at the last SFIC Strategic Workshop was the need to make networks in third countries more inclusive. This includes, for example, liaising more closely with EU and MS/AC science counsellors in priority countries.

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<sup>11</sup> Appropriate emphasis will be given to Intellectual Property management, taking into account the “ERA Guidelines on IP Management in international research collaboration agreements between European and Non-European Partners” (source: [http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/international\\_cooperation\\_guidelines\\_erac\\_kt\\_group.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/international_cooperation_guidelines_erac_kt_group.pdf))

#### 4. MONITORING AND DISSEMINATION

The Annual Reports of SFIC to the Council and the Commission in spring 2014 and 2015 will take stock of the state-of-implementation of this Work Programme and the progress made in the different priority areas and themes. Previously, the Council and the Commission, in spring 2013, will be informed about the work carried out during 2012 and the implementation of the previous Work Programme 2011-2012.

SFIC will also inform the European Research Area Committee (ERAC) about its activities.

The Annex attached to this Work Programme gives a snapshot overview of the different activities and their timing for 2013 and 2014.

## ANNEX TO ANNEX III: SFIC PRIORITIES AND AREAS OF ACTION 2013-2014

|                                   | <i>Objective</i>  | <i>2013 Activity</i>  | <i>2014 Activity</i>   |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>ADDED VALUE AND VISIBILITY</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SFIC to be proactive with early strategic advice and evidence for policy formulation, development of joint strategies and European initiatives for international outreach</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submit SFIC opinions/advice when relevant to the Council and the Commission and foster uptake of this advice also nationally</li> <li>▪ Develop a rolling plan (every year/6 months) to identify upfront relevant events and encourage timely intervention</li> <li>▪ Put in place a process to allow SFIC to be a platform that contributes to the preparation of a European position ahead of EU summits, SOMs and GSO meetings as well as for agreeing on mid-term objectives to be pursued in EU/MS-third country dialogues, while monitoring these dialogues</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submit SFIC opinions/advice when relevant to the Council and the Commission and foster uptake of this advice also nationally</li> <li>▪ Update a rolling plan (every year/6 months) to identify upfront relevant events and foster timely intervention</li> <li>▪ Develop SFIC as a platform that contributes to the preparation of a European position ahead of EU summits, SOMs and GSO meetings as well as for agreeing on mid-term objectives to be pursued in EU/MS-third country dialogues, while monitoring these dialogues</li> </ul> |
|                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SFIC to intensify its reporting to Council and ERAC</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Liaise with Irish and Lithuanian Presidencies</li> <li>▪ Yearly reporting to Council and Commission</li> <li>▪ Yearly information to ERAC</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Liaise with Greek and Italian Presidencies</li> <li>▪ Yearly reporting to Council and Commission</li> <li>▪ Yearly information to ERAC</li> </ul>   |
|                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SFIC to search for synergies with other ERA groups</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yearly information to ERA groups about SFIC initiatives and encouragement of reciprocity</li> <li>▪ Joint meeting or SFIC-led seminar with other ERA groups when appropriate</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yearly information to ERA groups about SFIC initiatives and encouragement of reciprocity</li> <li>▪ Joint meeting or SFIC-led seminar with other ERA groups when appropriate</li> </ul>   |
|                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhance visibility of the external dimension of ERA</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Publish regularly reports and results of SFIC events on the Council and Commission specific webpages</li> <li>▪ Disseminate a SFIC leaflet as information tool</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Publish regularly reports and results of SFIC events on the Council and Commission specific webpages</li> <li>▪ Update and disseminate a SFIC leaflet as information tool</li> </ul>  |

|  | <i>Objective</i>  | <i>2013 Activity</i>   | <i>2014 Activity</i>   |
|--|---|--|--|
| <b>COMMON PRIORITIES AND<br/>JOINT INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contribute to the development of common principles and guidelines for the conduct of international R&amp;I activities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contribute to the development of common principles and guidelines for the conduct of international research and innovation activities and actions</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contribute to the development and update of common principles and guidelines for the conduct of international research and innovation activities and actions</li> </ul>   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop roadmaps and Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas (SRIAs) with priority countries</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work on <b>China</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Development of the China SRIA</li> <li>○ Develop a joint understanding on how to dialogue with the Chinese side and promote the involvement of stakeholders (e.g. urbanisation workshop)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Work on <b>USA</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Continue the implementation of the SFIC-USA roadmap and realisation of the 5 action points</li> <li>○ Launch of well-defined activities with specific thematic focus to identify possible short-, medium- and long-term measures for more consistent STI cooperation and involvement of relevant stakeholders</li> <li>○ Contribute to the Destination Europe initiative</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work on <b>China</b>: Follow-up and implementation of the China SRIA and related activities</li> <li>▪ Work on <b>USA</b>: Follow-up and implementation of the SFIC-USA roadmap and related activities</li> </ul> |

|  | <i>Objective</i>  | <i>2013 Activity</i>   | <i>2014 Activity</i>   |
|--|---|--|--|
| <b>COMMON PRIORITIES AND JOINT INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS</b> |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work on <b>India</b>: Follow-up the implementation of the India SRIA and the work of the GSO and contribute to its awareness-rising at national level</li> <li>▪ Work on <b>Brazil</b>: Compile an overview of R&amp;I activities and develop a SFIC-Brazil roadmap for the Brazil initiative</li> <li>▪ Work on <b>Russia</b>: Explore the possibility of launching an initiative</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work on <b>India</b>: Follow-up the implementation of the India SRIA and the work of the GSO and contribute to its awareness-rising at national level</li> <li>▪ Work on <b>Brazil</b>: Development and implementation of the SFIC-Brazil roadmap</li> <li>▪ Work on <b>Russia</b>: If initiative is launched, development of a SFIC-Russia roadmap for Russia</li> <li>▪ Analyse the need and added value for SFIC initiatives on other countries/regions</li> </ul> |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contribute to the ERA Framework and the international dimension of Horizon 2020</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide guidance to ERA actors and stakeholders in their cooperation with third countries (e.g. by providing common principles and guidelines in the conduct of international R&amp;I activities)</li> <li>▪ Contribute to let the SRIAs be taken into consideration in the multi-annual roadmaps for international cooperation in Horizon 2020</li> </ul>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide guidance to ERA actors and stakeholders in their cooperation with third countries (e.g. by providing common principles and guidelines in the conduct of international R&amp;I activities)</li> <li>▪ Contribute to let the SRIAs be taken into consideration in the multi-annual roadmaps for international cooperation in Horizon 2020</li> </ul>  |

|  | <i>Objective</i>   | <i>2013 Activity</i>  | <i>2014 Activity</i>  |
|--|--|---|---|
| <b>ANALYSIS, COLLECTION AND SHARING OF INFORMATION</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Manage and share information</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SFIC Members to establish close collaboration and exchange information with the FP7 funded INCO projects (ERA- and INCO-Net, BILAT projects, etc.) targeting USA, China, Brazil and Russia and other FP7 projects or national activities with a strong international focus</li> <li>▪ Presentations at Plenary level on EU/national STI strategies as well as R&amp;I cooperation activities and projects</li> <li>▪ Continued update of web-based tool or contribution to the EU R&amp;I Observatory with shared information sources</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SFIC Members to continue close collaboration and exchange information with the FP7 funded INCO projects (ERA- and INCO-Net, BILAT projects, etc.) targeting USA, China, Brazil and Russia and other Horizon 2020 projects or national activities with a strong international focus</li> <li>▪ Presentations at Plenary level on EU/national STI strategies as well as R&amp;I cooperation activities and projects</li> <li>▪ Contribute to the update of the EU R&amp;I Observatory with shared information sources</li> </ul> |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitoring and mapping</li> </ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contribute to the monitoring of the external dimension of the ERA</li> <li>▪ Contribute to the development of the EU R&amp;I Observatory and the definition of indicators in the international R&amp;I cooperation field</li> <li>▪ Organise seminars on indicators on international cooperation connecting with the Council, ERAC and Commission activities in this area</li> <li>▪ SFIC Members to take a more active role in identifying opportunities for the development of Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contribute to the monitoring of the external dimension of the ERA and the overall assessment of the international dimension of Horizon 2020</li> <li>▪ Contribute to the development of the EU R&amp;I Observatory and the definition of indicators in the international R&amp;I cooperation field</li> <li>▪ SFIC Members to take a more active role in identifying opportunities for the development of Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas</li> </ul>   |

|                                    | <i>Objective</i>   | <i>2013 Activity</i>  | <i>2014 Activity</i>  |
|------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>NETWORKING AND COORDINATION</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invite/involve the EEAS and other stakeholders to SFIC-organised events or SFIC meetings</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invite EEAS to any 2013 SFIC plenary, when agreed</li> <li>▪ Promote links at national and European level to networks of main stakeholders and involve them through consultations and workshops: workshop(s) in 2013</li> <li>▪ Organise seminars and workshops on priority areas and countries</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invite EEAS to any 2014 SFIC plenary, when agreed</li> <li>▪ Promote links at national and European level to networks of main stakeholders and involve them through consultations and workshops: workshop(s) in 2014</li> <li>▪ Organise seminars and workshops on priority areas and countries</li> </ul> |
|                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make science counsellors/attachés networks in third countries more inclusive</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Liaise with EU and MS/AC science counsellors in priority countries</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Liaise with EU and MS/AC science counsellors in priority countries</li> </ul>  |

Strategic Workshop II in Helsinki, Finland on 10-11 May 2012  
Towards the External Dimension of the European Research Area "EDERA"

SFIC Chair Summary Conclusions

**Background to the workshop**

SFIC has agreed to organise at least one informal strategic seminar every two years under the guidance of the SFIC Chair. The first strategic seminar was organised in Villa Vigoni, Lovenio di Menaggio in September 2010 by Germany. The outcome of the seminar was an important input to the annual planning and the working methods of SFIC.

The second strategic seminar of SFIC was organised in Helsinki on 10-11 May 2012 with the purpose of priority setting for SFIC activities and giving input to the formulation of the European Strategy for international STI cooperation.

The objectives of the strategic seminar were threefold:

- 1) Agree on the joint Vision 2020/2025 for SFIC
- 2) Define Strategic Goals until 2015 and
- 3) Identify Means to achieve the Goals.

The SFIC Chair produced a working document on "Strategy and vision for SFIC work implementing the European STI Strategy" for the basis for discussion in the seminar.

**General discussion and debate**

The seminar was opened by State Secretary Tapio Kosunen who presented an outlook on topical science and higher education issues in Finland and emphasized the importance of internationalization of science and innovation. This was followed by a key note speech from Professor *Raimo Väyrynen* who highlighted technological development and innovation activities as a key to European economic success of the past two centuries. Väyrynen also described the emergence of new economic powers leading to a new global rivalry in science and innovation. The members were provided with food for thought by President Barroso's Chief Scientific Advisor *Anne Glover* whose key note speech outlined the actions Europe needs to take to improve its competitiveness in science and technology.

The SFIC Chair *Riitta Mustonen* presented the objectives of the seminar work including agreement on the joint Vision 2020/2025 for SFIC, defining Strategic Goals until 2015 and identifying Means to achieve the Goals. Participants had a general discussion about the role and vision of SFIC and the draft strategy document.

International dimension of ERA neither of national activities is not a goal in itself, but it brings Europe new possibilities and opportunities in STI and enhances the wellbeing of European citizens. It is more and more important to bring national internationalisation processes and SFIC closer together. It is also necessary to create communalities between MS/AC/COM in the way policy actions are realised.

The role of SFIC was discussed. SFIC is first and foremost an advisory body for the Council and the Commission. Its work is based on networking aiming at decreasing the “disconnection” at different levels in international cooperation. SFIC could act as a “game changer” e.g. to meet global challenges at European level.

SFIC has also challenges. These vary from credibility of SFIC to its legitimacy, the balance of pilot activities and strategic approach, from the variety of different national structures of international cooperation to its visibility and maximising the added value of partnerships possibilities.

Some themes and questions recurred throughout the seminar from the opening discussion to the discussions following. The questions involved gathering of all the necessary and relevant information on international cooperation structures, priorities and strategies of partner countries etc for the best use of SFIC. The linkages between SFIC and national level policy-making, other ERA-groups and Horizon 2020 were discussed. It was seen that it is difficult to separate international aspect from that of any other ERA or STI activity. On the other hand, ERA ideas and activities are not easily transformed to international cooperation activities.

Several working methods were used in the workshop to draft the SFIC vision and goals. SFIC members worked in rotating small groups in different phases of the process. All the outcomes from the small groups were discussed among all the participants. The work was facilitated by an outside consultant.

These views and key questions also steered the formulation of SFIC vision, goals and means.

## SFIC Vision 2020/2025

The SFIC vision was formulated on the basis of discussions on a working document on "Strategy and vision for SFIC work implementing the European STI Strategy". In 2020/2025

- SFIC is **recognized** for providing **added value** in international STI cooperation.
- SFIC has **facilitated** the improved **coherence** of international cooperation in STI **policy making** in Member States, Associated Countries, and EU.
- (A third contextual statement may be included in regards to the European Research Area or a hypothetical Global Research area).

## Goals and Means for SFIC

To achieve the vision, SFIC has set four goals along with more specific means and actions to reach the goals.

***Goal 1: All European initiatives and policies to consider the added-value of incorporating an international dimension***

Reaching the goal should be supported by the following means/activities:

- Identify challenges to international cooperation and provide analyses by using ERA and INCO Nets more strategically. The aim is to identify challenges to international cooperation and the potential and added-value of multi-lateral cooperation within particular areas;
- Be proactive with early strategic advice and evidence for policy formulation and the development of European initiatives and international outreach;
- Better activate SFIC delegates who are members of other ERA groups to advocate for SFIC;
- Organize a SFIC-led strategic seminar for all ERA groups and JPIs.

***Goal 2: Identify common principles and criteria in STI activities with third countries and apply them in joint activities and actions***

Embed principles that should guide STI activities with third countries in SFIC actions:

- Opening of the European Research Area;
- Scientific excellence; feeding to higher education, applications and decision making;
- Enhance compatibility of national IPR systems and encouraging IPR utilization in common projects;
- Mutual interest and benefit as well as mutual commitment;
- Respect of values (e.g. ethics, transparency, no bypassing of national regulations through international cooperation); and
- Voluntary basis.

Embed criteria that should guide STI activities with third countries in SFIC actions:

- Scientific excellence;
- **Consideration of the scientific (research field, facilities), political (science diplomacy) and economical (market access) environment;**
- Added-value of the cooperation; and
- Evidence-base (strategy analysis, state-of-play of STI cooperation with third-countries).

***Goal 3: Systematically collecting and sharing information***

The information flow about the international STI activities of a certain country, region, theme or challenge can at the same time be overwhelming, scattered, unstructured and sporadic. **SFIC has a role in defining what kind of information is needed** to coordinate activities and enhance joint endeavors with third countries. The workshop participants identified JRC (IPITS institute) as a potential collector of information and also saw that ERAWATCH –website should better incorporate international dimension of STI. SFIC can also serve as a platform where information can be shared (e.g. national STI international strategies, concerns ahead)

- EU and JRC to take a more active role in mapping exercises for identifying opportunities for the development of Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas;
- Exchange of information between Members and Observers and those existing instruments in a particular country (BILAT projects, INCO-Nets, etc.); and
- SFIC to facilitate information sharing on national STI strategies as well as on those relevant activities under JPIs, Horizon 2020, etc.

***Goal 4: Enhanced networking and coordination***

**SFIC has to intensify its reporting to the Council** and contribute to ERAC’s monitoring efforts of ERA developments.

**SFIC also needs to consult and share information with identified stakeholders.** MS/AC networks in third countries should be made more inclusive. Joint meetings with other ERA groups are needed

- Contribute to ERAC's monitoring of the European Research Area;
- Organise joint meetings with other ERA Groups;
- Involve stakeholders through consultations and workshops (for specific purposes);
- Invite the EEAS to meetings;
- Make networks in Third countries more inclusive (the more Member States and Associated Countries and their science counsellors involved, the better); and
- Reporting to Council as much as possible.

**Next steps**

After the June Plenary, the Task Force will work more closely with the concrete proposals made in the strategic seminar. The SFIC Plenary in October will have a more detailed discussion on the matter. The Plenary will also have to prioritize activities for the next SFIC work programme.

**SFIC CHAIR'S ADVICE TO THE IRISH PRESIDENCY ON COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS  
ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Version 13/3/13 (final)

*The Irish Presidency of the Council of the EU is considering the adoption of Council conclusions on international cooperation at the Competitiveness Council in May 2013. Therefore, the SFIC Chair has decided to provide input to the discussion in the form of "key messages" that should be a valuable input to contribute to the discussions without overlapping with the Council decision-making bodies. The SFIC Chair will forward such "key messages" to the Council Research Working Party Chair. The IE Presidency has requested the reception of the input after the 18-19 February Competitiveness Council, as the RECH WP may then start its deliberations.*

KEY MESSAGES PROPOSED BY THE SFIC CHAIR:

- International cooperation in research and innovation plays a vital role in strengthening the Union's excellence and attractiveness in research and innovation as well as its economic, industrial and technological competitiveness in the context of the research-innovation-education knowledge triangle, as an essential contribution to improve the well-being of European citizens and to tackle grand and societal challenges.
- The external dimension is an essential, cross-cutting and integral part of the European Research Area and deepening and strengthening the partnership between the Commission and the Member States via the Strategic Forum for international S&T Cooperation (SFIC) is an important element of the strategic approach towards enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in research and innovation. This approach should be developed in close cooperation with Associated Countries.

- The work of SFIC has been substantial in mutual learning and in promoting coordination of international cooperation priorities of Member States with the different SFIC initiatives and priorities of national and regional funding organisations. Building on this, the promotion of a more systemic interaction with the main public and private research and innovation stakeholders is needed.
- The SFIC India initiative and the building up of the Indo-European Research and Innovation Partnership has shown the added value of joint action and shed light on the successful paths for enhanced cooperation towards third countries where such actions are appropriate. Similar impact should be sought for with the initiatives vis-à-vis with China, the USA and Brazil.
- Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020), is the main Union's tool to promote and support cooperation with third countries. In the pursuit of creating synergies between the national and the Union's initiatives on international R&I cooperation, SFIC's contribution to the design and development of the foreseen Commission's multi-annual roadmaps is to be envisaged.
- Coordination between STI policies and the Union's external and development policy objectives should be encouraged and reflected in a closer interaction and mutual support. STI synergies with other Union policies should also be sought.

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