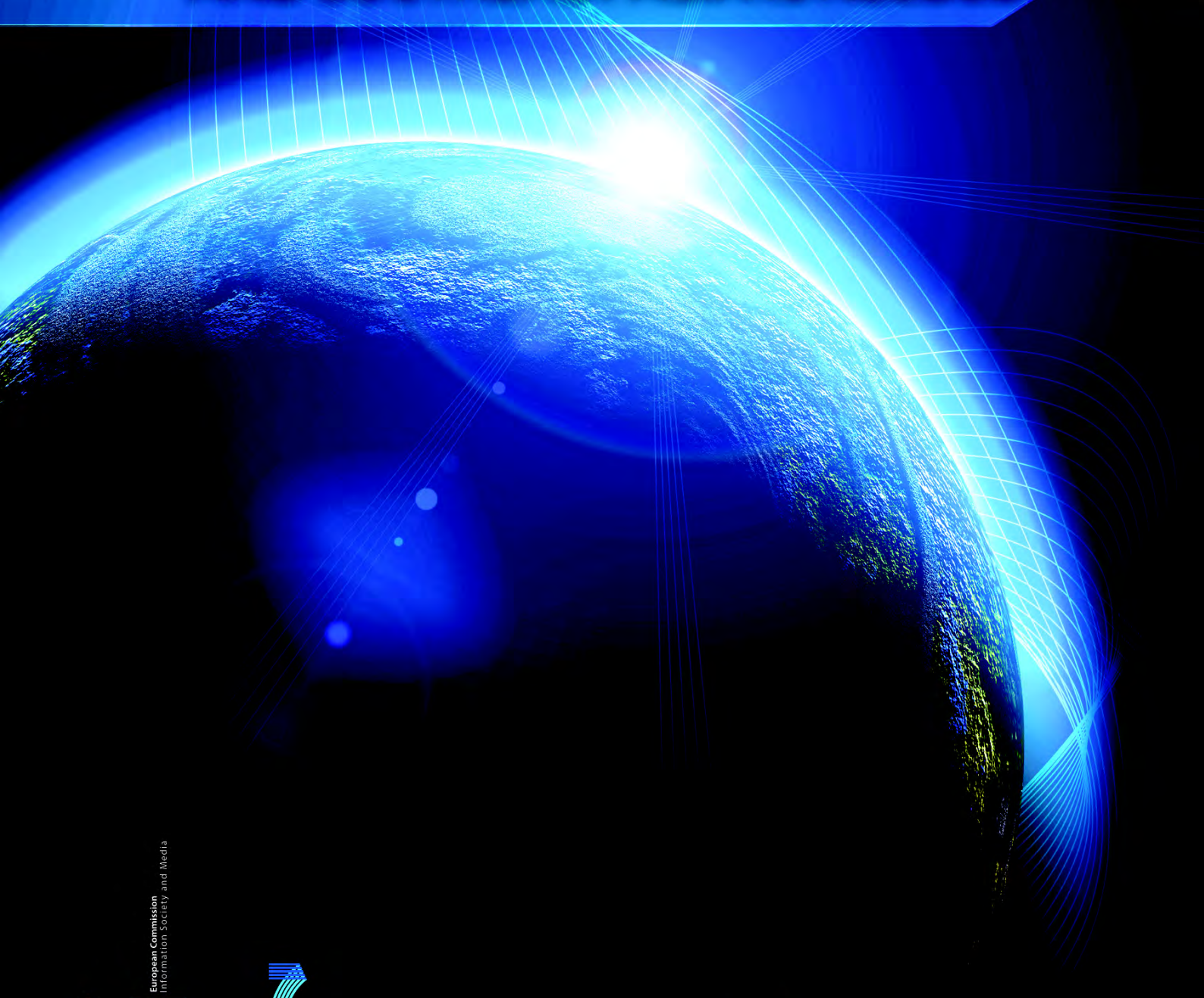




**SEACOOOP**  
www.eurosoutheastasia-ict.org

LESSONS LEARNED

# A MORE GLOBAL APPROACH OF S&T COOPERATION IN ICT BETWEEN EUROPE AND SOUTHEAST ASIA IS NEEDED



European Commission  
Information Society and Media



DECEMBER 2011

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## ABOUT SEACOOP



SEACOOP is an open initiative aiming at supporting the development of cooperation in ICT research and of policy dialogues between Europe and Southeast Asia. It has been launched in 2004, and benefits from the support of the European Commission (through its DG Information Society and Media), and of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), through its Secretariat.

The initiative is coordinated by the European Sigma Orionis and involves, on the Southeast Asian side, a key partner in charge of ICT policy and research in each of the 10 Southeast Asian Countries: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

On the European side, the project involves, through a Project Advisory Committee, over 20 leading constituencies, companies, research institutes and academia, including the main European Technology Platforms in the ICT area, and key European initiatives in Southeast Asia.

Over the period 2011-2011, SEACOOP has:

- Organized 6 thematic cooperation forums in Europe and in Southeast Asia,
- Prepared a detailed mapping of cooperation priorities in ICT research between the two regions,
- Developed close synergies with other initiatives, programmes and projects,
- Supported the establishment of FP7 ICT National Contact Points (NCPs) in Southeast Asia,
- Created a project and research incubator in Singapore,
- Implemented a web-based cooperation portal and an online community of researchers from both regions,
- Provided information and guidance to European and Southeast Asian organizations interested in FP7 opportunities



8<sup>th</sup> SEACOOP Consortium Meeting - Oct. 24, 2011  
Yangon, Myanmar

SEACOOP website



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## OBJECTIVE OF THE DOCUMENT

The present document is an output of the “6<sup>th</sup> SEACOOOP cooperation forum” organized in Yangon, Myanmar, on October 25, 2011, with the support of the University of Computer Sciences, Yangon (UCSY), the SEACOOOP partner in Myanmar, and under the aegis of the European Commission and of the ASEAN Secretariat.

The objective of this workshop was to address one of the recommendations expressed in the draft final version of the SEACOOOP reference document: *“Considering the diversity of Southeast Asia as far as economic development levels are concerned, it is recommended that a more global (not limited to FP7) European approach of cooperation with Southeast Asia in ICT research can develop”*.

This document was prepared after this workshop and aims at presenting a summary of the information exchanged during the workshop in a way that can be used by any organization interested in the development of cooperation in ICT research between Europe and Southeast Asia.



6<sup>th</sup> SEACOOOP Cooperation Forum on “ICT research and ICT for development” - Oct. 25, 2011 - Yangon, Myanmar

6<sup>th</sup> SEACOOOP Cooperation Forum  
Event Webpage



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## **FP7: A REINFORCED AND MORE FOCUSED SUPPORT TO INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

The European research-funding programme, FP7, is open to international cooperation for logical reasons:

- It is necessary, at a time when not only market but also R&D globalization has been extending, to team up with appropriate partners wherever they are located,
- It is an opportunity to address global challenges and agree on standards,
- It provides knowledge of and access to outside markets,
- It facilitates technology and process transfer,
- It can support external policy.

This is true for the whole FP7 programme and particularly for research projects in the ICT domain, considering the global dimension of this domain and the key role that ICT (including the Internet) today play in the economic and social development of all countries around the world. In the past years, this international dimension of FP7 has been reinforced and logically focused, to be more efficient, on cooperation with certain countries or regions with which the potential of strategic cooperation of mutual interest appeared as the highest.

It is the case of cooperation with Southeast Asia seen as strategic because Europe and Southeast Asia are two key players in today's global economy who have been enjoying, for over 30 years, increasingly positive and fruitful political and trade relations, based on a clear rationale: their populations are nearly identical in terms of size, they have both moved towards regional economic integration, they share many of the same values and of strategic interests.

Europe and Southeast Asia should thus experience in the coming years a quicker pace in the strengthening of their cooperation in ICT research, following a roadmap typical when focused cooperation under FP7 is developed: signature of a S&T Agreement, set up of periodic dialogues, insertion of SICAs (targeted small-size research projects) and of specific mentions in the FP7 Work Programme, joint or coordinated calls (based on match-funding mechanisms), agreement on reciprocal access to research-funding programmes, etc.

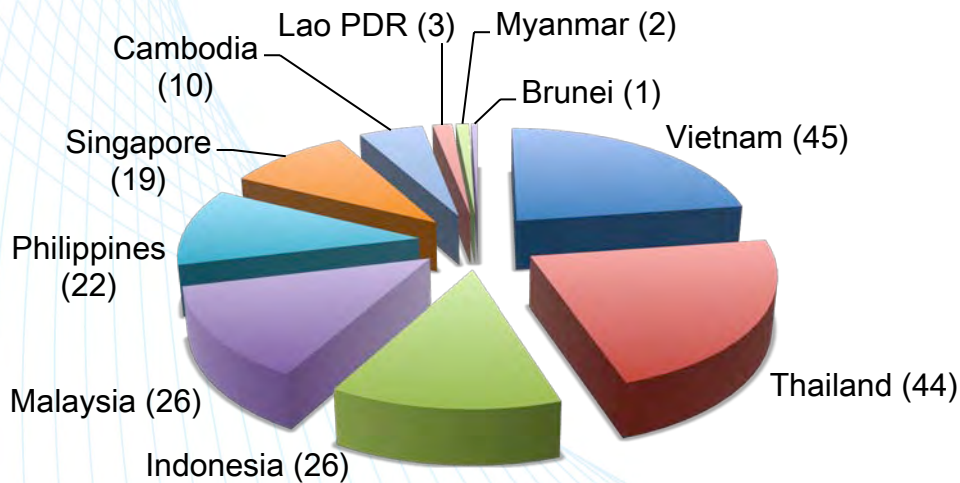


FP7 ICT programme



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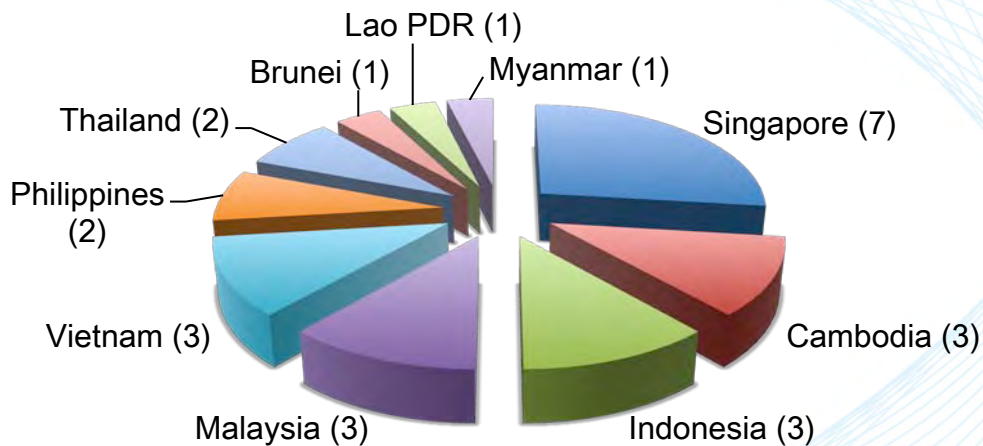
**Total of FP7 applications selected in ASEAN (all topics)**



**ASEAN FP7 applications selected**



**ICT topic: FP7 applications selected in ASEAN**



Source: European Commission - Nov. 16, 2011

## **GOING BEYOND THE “GET INVOLVED IN FP7 PROJECTS” OBJECTIVE**

In the present development period of cooperation in ICT research between Europe and Southeast Asia, i.e. in an early phase of the roadmap mentioned above, Southeast Asian research organizations can of course already be involved in FP7 research projects. Many examples exist of consortiums being formed, including one or several Southeast Asian organizations, submitting a proposal being selected following FP7 open calls and thus taking advantage of FP7 funds in the development of their collaborative research projects.

In parallel, initiatives such as SEACOOOP are funded under FP7, as “support actions”, to support the overall momentum, and develop in particular awareness activities, inviting Southeast Asian organizations to “get involved in FP7 projects”, the number of FP7 proposals involving Southeast Asian organizations and submitted in response to FP7 calls being often considered as one of the main success criteria of such support actions.

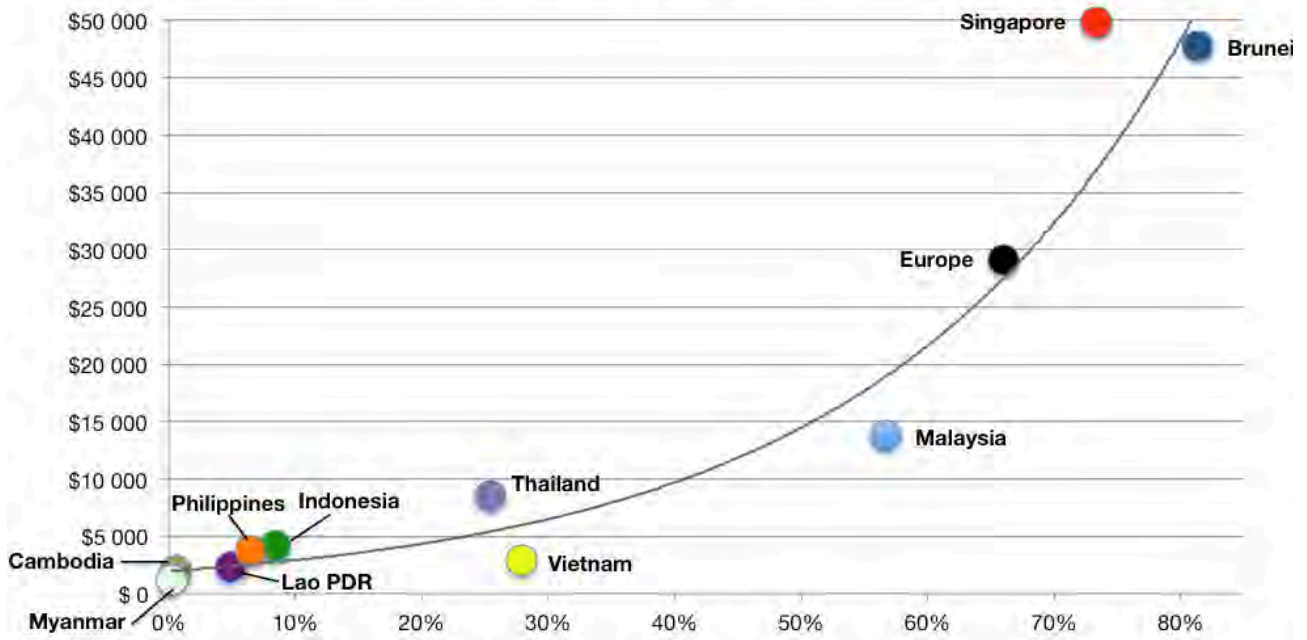
However this invitation, this core message, has to be handled very carefully for two main reasons:

- Participation of non European organizations in the FP7 programme should not be over-promoted: even if the FP7 programme is truly open to international cooperation, it is a programme primarily targeting European research organizations, and the relative percentage of non European organizations in FP7 is logically low,
- FP7 is about leading-edge research and not all research organizations of a given country or region have the right capacity to be involved in FP7 projects: pushing them too early towards FP7 can only lead to potential disappointment and disengagement.

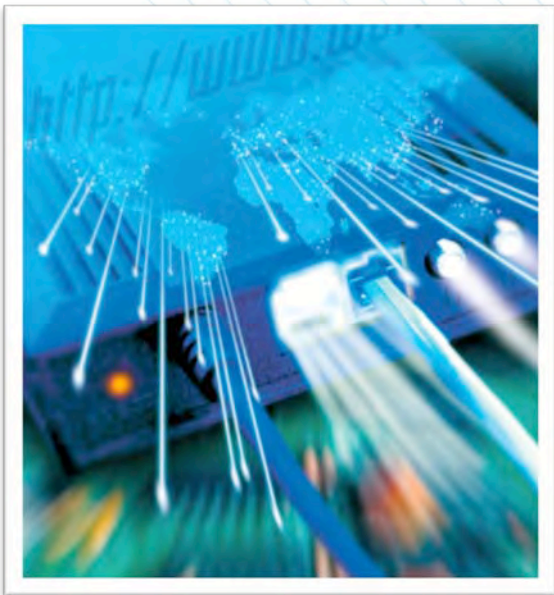
This last issue is particularly relevant in regions such as Southeast Asia (but also Africa or Latin America for instance) characterized by countries of diverse development levels. In such regions, some research organizations do have the capacity to be involved in FP7 projects while others should not be invited to do so, but supported in their efforts to quickly progress towards “excellence research centers”. What they need is to get supported in the training and mobility of their researchers, in the equipment and infrastructures of their laboratories, in their involvement in less competitive R&D projects.

This situation is however not critical since Southeast Asian research organizations can, beyond the perspective of being involved in FP7 projects, also take advantage of several funding mechanisms suited to their diverse needs, introduced in the next paragraph.

## Europe and Southeast Asia GDP per capita ppp and Internet users in 2009



Source: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator>; <http://www.imf.org/external/data.htm>



## **A WIDE RANGE OF SUITED MECHANISMS**

Beyond the objective of getting involved in FP7 research projects, Southeast Asian organizations can/should consider the opportunities listed below.

### FP7 ICT-BASED PROJECTS BEYOND THE ICT THEME

The European programme for research, development and innovation, FP7 (to be renamed Horizon 2020 after 2013) addresses many sectors. One of them, being granted the largest budget for the funding of collaborative research projects, focuses on ICT, Information and Communication Technologies.

But there are many other FP7 “themes”, i.e. target sectors: Energy, Environment (including climate change), Transport (including aeronautics), Food, Agriculture, Fisheries, and Biotechnology, Health, Nanosciences, Nanotechnologies, Materials and new Production technologies, Socio-economic sciences and Humanities, Space, Security, etc.

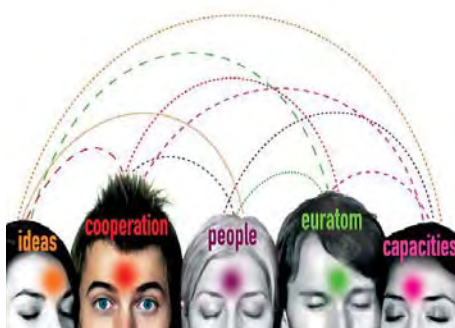
Many research projects in these non-ICT target sectors are indeed ICT-based and therefore require partners, including from non-EU countries, offering ICT skills. This does represent important opportunities for Southeast Asian ICT research laboratories, even for those not yet at the forefront of international developments in ICT research.

A project funded by the European Commission, SEA-EU-NET, addresses all these “other themes” (while SEACOOP has been focusing on ICT) and can support this wider involvement of Southeast Asian ICT research organizations in FP7.

**The different FP7 themes**



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**The SEA-EU-NET project**



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## FP7 BEYOND RESEARCH PROJECTS

The opportunities offered by the FP7 programme are not restricted to the funding of collaborative research projects, known as the “Cooperation” sub-programme of FP7. There are two other sub-programmes of FP7 that offer support and funding opportunities and are open to international cooperation: “People” and “Capacities”.

The FP7 “People” sub-programme focuses on researchers and supports in particular their mobility. Its international dimension includes three funding schemes, which can be usefully considered by Southeast Asian organizations:

- Marie Curie International Outgoing Fellowships for Career Development (targeting EU experienced researchers)
- Marie Curie International Incoming Fellowships (targeting non-EU experienced researchers)
- Marie Curie International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (involving EU and non-EU experienced researchers)

The FP7 “Capacities” sub-programme focuses on research and innovation capacities and includes an International cooperation part, mainly consisting in the funding of institutional initiatives to strengthen cooperation with non-EU countries and regions. But this sub-programme also includes other activities, such as the ones related to research infrastructures, and more particularly ICT-based e-Infrastructures, offering many cooperation opportunities between research organizations from Europe and non-EU countries.

### Marie Curie funding schemes



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### Capacities funding opportunities



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## LOOKING BEYOND FP7

FP7 is a research-funding programme developing under the aegis of two European Commission's Directorate-Generals or DGs (equivalent to Ministries at the EU level): DG Information Society and Media and DG Research and Innovation.

Other DGs can also fund the development of cooperation initiatives between Europe and Southeast Asia in the ICT sector. They can represent shortcuts for Southeast Asian organizations willing to be involved in FP7 projects since such initiatives typically lead to the reinforcement of cooperation links between organizations from both regions, which, by the end of the day, facilitates the involvement of Southeast Asian organizations in FP7 projects.

One of these DGs is DG Education and culture offering, through its Erasmus Mundus programme, financial support for institutions and scholarships for individuals from non-EU countries. An example of initiative developing under the Erasmus Mundus programme and of interest to Southeast Asian institutions or researchers is the Lotus project.

Another relevant DG in this context is DG Development and Cooperation, also known as EuropeAid, responsible for designing EU development policies and delivering aid through programmes and projects across the world and addressing in particular the ASEAN region (all countries but Brunei and Singapore). This programme can fund ICT-based development projects (or ICT for development projects) and should thus be usefully considered by Southeast Asian ICT research organizations.

**The Erasmus Mundus**



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**The Lotus project**



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**EuropeAid**



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BEYOND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION: THE EU MEMBER STATES

Even if the European Member States have been devoting increasing efforts to jointly invest in European projects, a number of European national funding mechanisms logically still exist, targeting in particular international cooperation and thus representing an opportunity for Southeast Asian research organizations specializing in ICT.

It is not possible in the present document to propose an exhaustive list of such national mechanisms, and we will invite interested Southeast Asian organizations to browse the web sites of the European Embassies in their countries.

We will however illustrate these opportunities through two examples:

- The STIC-Asia programme, a French cooperation initiative aiming to generate and strengthen R&D collaborative work and networking operations in Asia in the field of information and communication sciences and technologies,
- The Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions (Spider), a resource center for ICT for Development (ICT4D) and a funding agency in this area.



**The STIC-Asia programme**



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**The SPIDER programme**



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## BEYOND EUROPE: ASEAN SECRETARIAT AND MEMBER STATES

On the occasion of a recent SEACOOOP meeting, the SEACOOOP Southeast Asian partners have underlined that the support for cooperation between Europe and Southeast Asia could and should not only be seen as a one-way mechanism, the European Commission or European Member States funding projects and initiatives addressing such cooperation.

In the perspective of a “partnership of equals”, an increasing number of opportunities will exist at the Southeast Asian level to provide - at least to Southeast Asian organizations - support for their involvement in international cooperation projects.

This is true for ASEAN Members States in the short term, and also in the longer term for the ASEAN Secretariat, that may one day offer a programme similar to the ones existing in Europe (FP7 for instance), which will boost the emergence and funding of cooperation projects at a bi-regional level.

A logical entry point for such opportunities are the Southeast Asian SEACOOOP partners.



19th ASEAN Summit - Nov. 17, 2011 - Indonesia

**SEACOOOP contact points  
in the ASEAN countries**



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### BEYOND BILATERAL COOPERATION...

Beyond the funding opportunities offered by the European Commission, EU and ASEAN Member States, there are also several opportunities proposed by non-EU and non-ASEAN institutions, international ones in particular. They can allow supporting projects and initiatives, particularly in the ICT for development domain, and may even lead to interesting tri-lateral or multilateral cooperation (involving EU, ASEAN and organizations from other countries or regions).

Among existing opportunities, the following ones can be mentioned:

- The Information Society Innovation Fund (ISIF) of APNIC: a small grants program, focused on advancing local and regional projects that introduce, improve, and apply Internet technology for the benefit of Asia Pacific users and communities,
- The Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT): a regional institute of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), aiming at strengthening the efforts of ESCAP member countries to use ICT in their socio-economic development through human and institutional capacity building.

**APNIC / ISIF**



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**APCICT**



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## **CONCLUSIONS**

A more holistic approach of cooperation in ICT research between Europe and Southeast Asia (and other regions such as Latin America or Africa) is needed, possible, and should benefit all involved stakeholders.

In regions such as Southeast Asia characterized by countries of diverse development levels, it is necessary, in order to avoid disappointment and disengagement:

- Not to over-promote the invitation to “Get involved in FP7 projects”: there are relatively few non-EU organizations participating in FP7 which primarily targets European organizations,
- To be aware that many Southeast Asian research organizations have not the capacity yet to be involved in leading-edge research but can and should be supported, in their efforts to progress, through mechanisms proposed by the European Commission, EU Member States, international institutions, etc. allowing them to implement the training and mobility of their researchers, improve their equipment and infrastructures, undertake less leading-edge research projects, etc.

The complete information of research laboratories in these regions, about this set of opportunities, is necessary: the present document aims at contributing to this information.

The development of synergies between all stakeholders involved in S&T cooperation (as a whole and in the ICT sector in particular) is necessary too: SEACOOP commits to reaching the widest synergies with any such stakeholders in its future activities.