



## NMP TEAM Report Summary

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### Final Report Summary - NMP TEAM (Improving the services of the NMP NCP Network through Trans-national Activities)

The NMP TEAM project (CSA-CA 233160) is the official project of the national contact point (NCP) network of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) Thematic Priority 4, Nanosciences, nanotechnologies, materials and new production technologies (NMP) with 15 main partners and the entire NMP NCP network worldwide associated. The project covered a period of 2.5 years, running from April 2009 till September 2011. The project aims at improving the services provided by the NMP NCP network across Europe through the closer collaboration between the NMP NCPs themselves and the normalisation of the differences in knowledge and quality of provided services across the NCP network in Europe and beyond. Furthermore, utilisation of networking opportunities for the networks clients through events and collaboration with other thematic (and horizontal) FP7 NCP networks, the NMP relevant European Technology Platforms and the Enterprise Europe network has played a major role. During the 30 months of project NMP TEAM the objectives set have been achieved and surpassed.

The NMP TEAM adopted and modified to the networks needs the already existing partner search (PS) system designed by Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH, hence saving on time and resources. Since autumn 2009, the system covered 3 annual NMP calls with more than 800 registered users from 50 countries with 313 partner offers and 42 partner searches, validated by 52 NCPs located in 39 countries.

The NMP TEAM website created has become the main 'e- tool' for the NMP NCP network with the PS system embedded in it offering valuable information on calls and events to the networks' clients. The website features also a continuously updated calendar of events organised or supported by the NMP NCP network, news on calls and other relevant information. Since its launch in autumn 2009, the NMP TEAM website run continuously and boasted over 30 000 visits from over 17 000 unique visitors from 115 different countries. The project further enriched its range of e-tools by purchasing in December 2010 an online conferencing tool which allows remote participation of NCPs and their clients in the network activities.

During the lifetime of the project, three NMP NCP training workshops took place attracting 50 colleagues from EU Member States, Associated and Candidate Countries and third countries and eight staff exchanges took place. Twinning of four NCPs with two more experienced ones also took place. NMP TEAM also created a 'charter of services' of the NMP NCP network available on the NMP TEAM website and an operational manual for the NMP NCP network. An NMP TEAM customer satisfaction questionnaire followed by a SWOT analysis provided ideas for further improvement of their services.

NMP TEAM organised together with the Enterprise Europe network, European Technology Platforms and other key players five brokerage events for partnership building and had presence with a stand in 11 events (some of the stands jointly with the Enterprise Europe network and other thematic networks such as ICT (Ideal-ist), transport and aeronautics (ETNA), Energy (C+)...). The project organised five joint awareness campaigns in four countries, including joint visits to potential proposers together with NCPs from various countries. Contact with 30 networks for signposting of clients, reciprocal invitation to events, reciprocal links to websites was established in the period of the project.

Through project NMP TEAM, NMP NCP network created its own identity with a distinct logo designed by the NCPs themselves, a brochure, posters and presentation templates as well as an impressive pop up system for use in stands and luggage tags as give outs in stands.

For more information, please visit the NMP TEAM website at <http://www.nmpteam.com> or contact the project coordinator, Dr Anastasia Constantinou, PRAXI/HELP-FORWARD, Athens, Greece, [nats@help-forward.gr](mailto:nats@help-forward.gr), <http://www.help-forward.gr>, +30-210-3607690.

## Project context and objectives:

The NCP network, in operation since the beginning of the Fifth Framework Programme (FP5), in 1998, is a valuable resource available to the scientific and industrial community of Europe interested in utilising the expertise to the nationally appointed experts (NCPs) in order to produce high quality research and technological developments. The NCPs:

- act as ambassadors for the commission in raising awareness of the wider public and the potential proposers in the importance of the Framework Programmes (FPs) and relaying not only the information but also important messages and views from the European Commission (EC);
- act as a multiplier for raising awareness of the forthcoming calls;
- act as technical consultants to the proposers in the proposal writing procedures as well as in the completion of the administrative forms and the submission procedure.

However, the structure and the 'modus operandi' of the national NCP network is quite different from country to country and this often reflects on the manner, the speed and the quality of the services that are provided. Furthermore, the NCP job is often a part time one, being done as just one of many tasks, and so the limitation of time reflects the services provided. These two factors, coupled with the fact that NCPs can often change can create turmoil in the NCP system and hence lower the impact of the NCP network as a whole.

It is therefore of the utmost importance to design transnational collaborative activities (including joint development of methodologies and tools, coordinated awareness campaigns, joint workshops, training, twinning schemes, partner-search and brokerage events) for the NMP NCP network in order to standardise the way in which services are provided and improve the networks visibility and 'identity'. In addition, it is important to reach and serve a larger target audience, and ensure that the NMP related 'clientele' (including research, academia and industrial players), experienced and new, can be a part of the NMP FP7 programme. A specific focus needs to be on helping less experienced NCPs (including appointed FP7 contacts in third countries) to rapidly acquire the know-how accumulated in other countries.

The EC, in recognition of the importance of the NCP network launched a specific call under the Coordinated Support Action (CSA) funding scheme to promote NCP transnational activities aiming at improving their provided services and reaching a wider audience. It was subsequently highlighted by the fact that the new EU 12 countries of the European Union (EU) were not successful in playing a major role in the first NMP FP7 call in which they had only 8-9 % of the total participation and a budget of no more than 5.5 %! To this effect, DG Industrial Technologies advised the NMP NCPs that they should intensify their efforts to improve new EU 12 activity. Consequently, a strong emphasis of this project is on the new EU 12 countries.

This project builds on the previous experience of the NMP NCP network project 'Coordination by best practice exchange and knowledge building by NMP - NCPs in an enlarged European research society' (COOREERS) which has provided the NMP NCP network with some valuable insights, tools and methodologies on which the NMP TEAM project will build upon as well as background work to the tools and methodologies to be adopted in this project and important training activities and training material. Also the partner search facility is a real need identified by the COOREERS project WP3 'Building - best practice exchange in partner search', as FP projects still rely on a partner search to complete their consortia, as existing personal contacts and the current CORDIS partner search facility are often not seen as sufficient (interview of 100 project participants).

This project aims to improve the NMP NCP service across Europe to the benefit of the scientific and industrial community engaged in European research and technological development and hence simplify access to FP7 calls, lower the entry barriers for newcomers and raise the average quality of submitted proposals. The concept of this project is to utilise the opportunity given by this call for the official NMP NCPs in order:

- to optimise the tools at hand to the benefit of the networks clients, such as the adoption of a partner search system and the improvement of the communication tools such as the network website (with the partner search system embedded into it) and other communication material;
- to maximise awareness about the NMP NCP network and reach the interested audience through the presence at national and European events with joint NMP NCP stands, brokerage (partnership building) events, joint awareness campaigns including visits to industrial and research players and specialised workshops and taking advantage of large European technology platforms events through establishing links with them;
- to standardise the network skills and the provided services through the creation of a charter of services for the clients and an operational manual for the NMP NCP network and through the provision of targeted training to both new NCPs and established NCPs, twinning schemes and staff exchanges.

## Project results:

The work has been organised in six work packages (WPs), each of which are briefly described below, together with the main

results achieved during the entire project duration:

- WP 1:

Tools and methodologies can be divided into two distinct sub-WPs, the adoption of a partner search facility and the development of the official NMP NCP network website.

The adoption of a partner search facility:

The adoption and modification of the system designed especially for the needs of the German NMP NCP network by Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH (sub-WP leader of WP1), the materials NCP for Germany and the main German partner in this project has been successfully implemented and integrated into the project website. The system has run since autumn 2009 covering three annual NMP calls to date boasting more than 800 registered users from 50 countries. During this reporting period, 313 partner offers and 42 partner searches were submitted, validated and published. 52 NCPs located in 39 different countries have verified the entries. The partner search tool was expanded to include other relevant calls for NMP ERANET calls such as Matera and MNT. A review of the PSF was carried out amongst the system users and the results will be used to improve the system in the sequel project NMP TEAM 2.

The creation of a professional website for the NMP NCPs has become the main 'e- tool' for the NMP NCP network, offering apart from valuable information on calls and events to the networks' clients, a forum for easy communication between the NMP NCP network members. The partner search system has been successfully embedded within the website and makes it easily accessible to all interested parties. The website features also a continuously updated calendar of events organised or supported by the NMP NCP network that interested clients can attend, news on calls and other relevant information, a clear 'charter of services' showing the services available by the NMP NCP network to their clients and a (continuously) updated FAQ section organised according to the lifetime of a project. Daily maintaining and updating of the website ensured it was a useful and also widely used tool by the NMP community. Since its launch in autumn 2009, the website has continuously run with no shut-down time!

The acquisition and implementation of the online conferencing tool iLinc:

Continuously thinking of improvements of the services towards the NMP clients and easing communication and working conditions within the consortium and the NMP NCP network world wide, NMP TEAM purchased in December 2010 the online conferencing tool iLinc. This decision came after seven months of testing of the tool, during NMP NCP training sessions, NMP NCP meetings, consortium meetings etc facilitating in this way remote participation of colleagues unable to travel to the venue. The tool will also be used in the sequel project NMP TEAM 2 in order to organise several virtual events like workshops, info days, webinars and brokerage events.

- WP 2:

Training activities, consists not only of traditional training workshops but combines a range of different possibilities aimed at catering for more general NMP NCP needs. This includes new staff requiring training, training sessions for more experienced NCPs, and information for NMP NCP staff requiring continuous advice in the form of twinning, staff exchanges with a specific target. Since the beginning of the project three training workshops took place, one for newcomer NCPs in Rome in October 2009 and two for all NMP NCPs in Bulgaria in April 2010 and in Portugal in November 2011, attracting 50 colleagues from EU Member States, Associated and Candidate Countries and third countries. All training material has been uploaded into the 'private section of the NMP TEAM website, only accessible to all official NMP NCPs worldwide. Eight staff exchanges took place, half of them involving associated partners from EU and third countries with all the associated administrative material (application form, reporting form, selection criteria) and approval methodology created in the first year of the project. The twinning scheme of four NCPs with two more experienced ones has been completed. A good number of FAQs related to the NMP Theme have been generated and put on the projects' website widely accessible by anyone interested.

- WP 3:

Standardisation of the network services and exchange of best practices has documented the services and the way of operation of the NMP NCP network via the creation of a 'charter of services' of the NMP NCP network which can be downloaded from the project website by the networks clients. The operational manual for the NMP NCP network has been created in order to provide the newcomer NMP NCPs with a reference to help them get into the job more quickly as well as to remind the 'old' NMP NCPs of things they might have forgotten. The operational manual presents an overview of the tasks of the NMP NCP network and the methodologies that are employed to complete these tasks. The information it contains is based upon the experiences of the members of the NCP network. Furthermore, in this WP the customer satisfaction questionnaire created in the first year was sent to the clients of the NMP NCP network and a SWOT analysis was done on the results. The intention is to utilise the information for the improvement of the networks services in the future through the sequel project NMP TEAM 2.

- WP 4:

Joint brokerage events, awareness campaigns and stands at NMP related events. Within this WP, a variety of joint activities were planned in this project, which aimed at strengthening collaboration between the NMP NCPs, creating awareness for the NMP programme and its calls as well as the services provided by the NMP NCP network and provide assistance to potential proposers on the spot. Since the beginning of the project, five brokerage events for partnership building took place, one in Prague in June 2009 in the framework of the EuroNanoForum conference, two in Warsaw, one in September 2009 coorganised with the IncoNet EECA FP7 project and in collaboration with the European Technology Platform EuMaT and one during FUMAT 2011 in September 2011 again in cooperation with the EuMaT platform, one in Bucharest on PPP in July 2010 and the largest one during Industrial Technologies 2010 in Brussels coorganised with the Enterprise Europe network in September 2010. Five joint awareness campaigns, including joint visits to potential proposers together with two to three NMP NCP colleagues from other countries were organized in Estonia, Poland and Hungary, Romania and the Czech Republic. Associated NMP NCP partners took part in these activities and their participation paid for by the NMP TEAM project. Within this WP, a guideline for 'How to prepare and organise an NMP joint brokerage event' was prepared in order to assist any NMP NCPs in the world interested in organising such events in their respective countries.

- WP5:

Relationships with NMP-relevant networks and technology platforms: During this reporting period contact with 30 networks for signposting of clients, reciprocal invitation to events, reciprocal links to websites was established including European Technology Platforms which are an important and growing part of the European sectoral landscape, other networks which cover project activities with strong complementarities to NMP projects and work programmes, Eranets in NMP sectors and technologies that provide strong links and complementarities to activities on a regional level as well as sector groups of the Enterprise Europe network. Web links with the 'signed up' networks have been established on the NMP TEAM website. NMP TEAM project was present in 11 events during the entire project duration with stands (Varna, September 2009, Warsaw, September 2009, Nanofutures, Gijon-Spain June 2010, Public Private Partnership Information Day Brussels, July 2010), joint stand with transport and aeronautics NCP network project ETNA, industrial technologies, Brussels - European Industrial Technologies conference Brussels September 2010, joint stand with the Enterprise Europe network, Nanotech Italy 2010 in Venice in October 2010, EuroNanoForum, Budapest (30 May - 1 June 2011), transnational brokerage event, Strasbourg in June 2011, PPP Info Day 2011 in Brussels in July, 2011, Joint stand in the Charlemagne building (NMP TEAM coordinating) with Transport (ETNA), Energy (C+) and ICT Ideal-ist, Nanotechnology 2011 in Thessaloniki in July 2011, joint stand with the Directorate Industrial Technologies, FUMAT in Warsaw in September 2011). Currently, an updated version of what each national NMP NCP offers containing information on most NMP NCPs has been uploaded on the NMP TEAM website. It is worth mentioning that our NMP NCP stand won the 'most inspiring exhibit' award in a secret voting amongst the participants in EuronanoForum 2011.

- WP 6:

Coordination of the consortium and communication organised, oversaw and coordinated the broader communication / dissemination of the project operations to the entire NMP NCP network and to other relevant stakeholders, including the EC, and established efficient communication among all project partners (beneficiaries and other non beneficiaries). Part of this WP was also to create and deliver of communication material to all NMP NCP network partners for use in their respective countries, such as the design and creation of the logo, the poster, the brochure, the .ppt template, the network presentation etc, all of which successfully contributed to making the identity of the network recognisable to the networks clients. Activities performed under the WP6 objectives are in their nature continuous and kept running until the end of the project (internal and external communication, dissemination of results, etc.).

- WP 7:

Project management organised, coordinated and managed all the technical, legal, financial, contractual and administrative issues surrounding the project. Focus was given to ensuring the proper implementation of the project's activities and consistent delivery of the project's deliverables as well as to the establishment of efficient communication among all project partners (beneficiaries and other non beneficiaries). Under this WP, the assessment and monitoring committee was created composed of five members who, using the quarterly WP leader reports to the coordinator, monitored the quality and efficiency of the project and reported to the steering committee if remedial actions were to be taken.

Potential impact:

The strategic impacts of this project are an improved NCP service across Europe, therefore helping simplify access to FP7 calls, lowering the entry barriers for newcomers, and raising the average quality of submitted proposals and an increased number of good quality proposals as well as of newcomers in FP7. The variety of the tasks undertaken in this project have been designed in order to help the NCP NMP network offer to its target audience improved services, more structured and whenever possible in a consistent and standardised way. The adoption of a partner search system and the creation of a professional well structured website of the NMP NCP network, the variety of training activities, the charter of the NMP NCP services as well as its operational manual are important steps made towards the 'professionalisation' of the NMP NCP network.

The variety of events for the clients, utilising when possible other available networks related to programme NMP, some of them even funded by the NMP programme (e.g. Networks of Excellence), European Technology Platforms as well as other initiatives of the EC, such as the Enterprise Europe network (under the CIP programme) utilising International conferences, adding value to national information days by combining joint awareness campaigns are designed to reach a widest possible target audience, have made an impact to the clients of the NMP NCP network.

The emphasis of this project was clearly focused on the new Member States NMP NCP colleagues, although during the course of the work emphasis was also given to new comer NCPs irrespective of their country of origin, as they need to quickly acquire the knowledge and the skills in order to assist and not obstruct the process of FP7 participation of their country organisations as their role in the building of consortia and creation of quality proposal is crucial.

The variety of joint activities which took place within this project aimed at strengthening collaboration between the NMP NCPs, creating awareness for the NMP programme and its calls as well as for the services provided by the NMP NCP network as well as provided assistance to potential proposers on the spot. Brokerage events for partnership building coincided with the launch of the annual calls and with the consent of the Industrial Technologies unit for the first time the topics came out three months prior to the official launch of the call facilitating in this way consortia being in place in time for the calls to be launched. The events were in parallel with major conferences or in collaboration with other key players such as European Technology platforms, the EC, presidencies and the Enterprise Europe network, as well as stand alone.

The 'external relationships' of the NMP NCP network were amplified towards European Technology Platforms which are an important and growing part of the European sectoral landscape, other thematic NCP networks especially those with which NMP has joint calls, e.g. ICT, environment, energy and transport as well as horizontal NCP networks, e.g. infrastructures and of course the international collaboration programme. Special attention has been given in the collaboration with the Enterprise Europe network which proved useful for the networks clients and synergies have been established with the network as a whole and specifically with the sector groups of relevance.

The activities of project NMP TEAM have short term and long term impacts, stemming from the Improvement of the NMP NCP network provided services to their clients. The short term impact is the better awareness of the FP7 NMP programme and calls to the research community and more and better quality proposals being submitted from also new comers. The long term impact is through the creation of high quality proposals by putting together high quality ideas and high quality partners from throughout Europe is assisting the EC in the achievement of the flagship initiative Europe 2020 in which great emphasis is based on research and innovation.

NMP TEAM project is a coordination action and it primarily concerns networking and awareness activities. One of its prime objectives is to create awareness about the NMP NCP network and its services to the NMP community and reach a wider possible target audience. For this reason, the project has utilised all available means in order to achieve reaching all relevant stakeholders and key players in the NMP programme.

It has created links with the European Technology Platforms and other EU funded research networks and projects (such as networks of excellence and ERANets), other relevant EU initiatives and programmes such as the Enterprise Europe network (a business support network under the CIP programme) therefore utilising all possible channels to reach the key players in the NMP programme as well as create awareness and stimulate participation of newcomers to the programme. Links to the other thematic programme NCP networks have been enforced, specifically with the themes of relevance to the NMP programme and with which the NMP programme has joint calls (such as energy, environment, ICT and transport (including aeronautics)) and joint actions such as joint stands and a joint publication in a conference (!) ensured that the information for joint calls (and related events) reached all possible interested parties, both established players in the programmes and newcomers.

National and international events such as conferences, NMP call information days have been utilised in order to promote the participation of research and industrial partners into the FP7 NMP programme and to create partnerships for research consortia. Through the NMP TEAM partner search system, which is embedded in the NMP NCP networks website, it links partner expertise offers with consortia searching for the expertise thus easing the access of newcomers into already existing consortia.

Raising awareness among relevant state authorities of the importance of NMP NCPs to the wider public relevant to the NMP theme has been aided by the fact that the partners in project NMP TEAM both beneficiaries and other non beneficiaries are mostly public organisations or wider public organisations, which have access to wide relevant audiences. Press releases and presentations have been made by all partners in national and international audiences and have been circulated to all NMP NCPs for dissemination within their countries.

It is also worth mentioning that the excellent collaboration of the NMP TEAM project and all the NMP NCPs with the DG Research and Innovation, DG Industrial Technologies has ensured the most important highlights of the project as well as any news or announcements targeting the wider public have been uploaded also on the official website of the industrial

technologies unit.

Project website: <http://www.nmpteam.com>

## Related information

### Documents and Publications

- [Final Report - NMP TEAM \(Improving the services of the NMP NCP Network through Trans-national Activities\)](#)

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## Subjects

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[Coordination, Cooperation](#)

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