

ERA-CAPS' Experiences of Including LPCs

Paul Wiley

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ERA-CAPS

ERA-NET for Coordinating
Action in Plant Sciences



When is an LPC not an LPC? Performance is very science-sector specific

FP7 phase

- WP leaders: EE
- Task leaders: EE, HU, LV, PT, RS
- Network partners: PL
- Observers: SI
- Call partners: HU, LV, PL, PT, RS
- Call funders: PL, PT, *(BG)*

Self-sustained phase

- WP leaders: PT
- Task leaders: PT
- Network partners: PL, RS
- Observers: EE, LV
- Call participants: PL, RS

Engagement is very positive, however, some LPCs have a budget that doesn't get spent

Getting LPCs involved

- Not an explicit strategy, focussed on plant science strengths
- Contacts formed early on – existing relationships and new contacts
- Developed a Work Package for the new partners
 - Included many LPCs, but also other new countries to the network
 - Information exchange
 - Strategic Workshop
- In two examples: coordinator visit to the country to meet key people and encourage participation in network and/or calls

Calls – challenges

- Securing a budget that will match those of other partners (in terms of demand)
- Low numbers of applicants in a very competitive call
- Some countries (many LPC) come away with no projects funded

Joint Call level: How to manage inclusiveness without bias

After the first call, Management Board discussed inclusivity

- Options discussed:
 - Making it a condition/recommendation of the call
 - *Would likely result in too many applications for countries with small budgets; not “true” collaborations*
 - After funding decisions, add partners using unspent budget
 - *Would not be peer-reviewed; difficult to administer*
 - Provide tools for partnering
- **2nd and 3rd Call: Partnering Tool at pre-proposal stage**
 - Low level of use, mix of LPC, HPC and non-European countries

Researcher level: Case study: ERA-CAPS applicant to 3rd Call

3rd Call closed: email from applicant perfect for this meeting

Rationale

- Science-driven
- Complementarity of skills
- Mutually beneficial for all partners
- Demonstration of added value

Challenges

- Understanding of ERA-Net concept
- Budgetary issues
- Communications – funder help
- Strategic concerns

Recommendations

Network level:

- Be strategic in choice of partners – there must be a relevant community who will apply to calls
- Use existing networks and contacts to gauge interest

Call level:

- Consider partnering tools, but avoid “false collaboration”
- If ERA-Nets are not an established instrument, work with Universities and researchers to explain (information days)

Researcher level:

- Be science-led, and seek complementary skills
- Be patient with communications, get the national funder involved
- Budgets can be a challenge – think creatively!