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| Full title of the proposed action | Form – it “Take Part in Research” |
| Acronym | Form - it |

1 SUMMARY

Form-it “Take part in Research” provides a Specific Support Action for networking experts who work with and on new didactic concepts for science teaching. One of these new concepts is to systematically establish closer links between research institutions and education organisations. Such cooperations are considered to be innovative didactic models for developing the basic skills young people nowadays need for effective, life long learning and for building scientific excellence. In many European countries initiatives have been launched to facilitate partnerships between universities and schools. In some rare Member States such institutional collaboration is already promoted systematically through national programs and additional funding, a strategy for improving science teaching which is already common standard in the United States.

Form-it assembles experienced partners from five universities and research institutions, practising Research Education Cooperations (REC) for many years, two ministries and foundations, supporting modern science teaching through promoting and funding institutional collaboration projects and five research partners specified on innovative didactic models and new learning arrangements, who have particular expertise in analysing impacts of REC (some of them working in both fields: collaboration with schools and research on RECs).

Objectives of the project are to develop a practical guideline for realising such cooperations, to assemble a joint policy paper, addressed to national and european decision makers within the educational system and to compile a concept for preparing joint research on the issue within FP7.

2 MOTIVATION

The future success of the European Research Area is mainly depending on young people developing skills and competencies to tackle the future challenges. The institutional structures of the educational sector in Europe are very inhomogeneous. The plurality of national school systems, didactic traditions and curricula produces a diversity of knowledge levels and skill profiles. Reformation and harmonisation programs are being pressed since it became obvious that one of the essential factors for the prosperity of the european economy will be, to equip the generations of tomorrow with adequate knowledge resources and learning skills.

The key competencies needed today however, are self motivated and self directed learning strategies, team-working and communication skills and above all the capacity to differentiate, select, apply and replace information from the enourmous and daily growing global knowledge base. Science excellence building has a very central function for successfully positioning Europe in international research activities and for assuring economic progress and wealth. In consequence, science teaching in schools is confronted with a high pressure to replace outdated teaching approaches by modern concepts. These modernisation efforts must take into account the findings from state-of-art educational research and must reflect the function of science education within society, university and school system.

One very promising model to test and improve such new learning designs are Research and Education Cooperations (REC). Quite a number of experimental projects and programs are currently being realised in Europe in this field and their experiences seem very relevant in this context of reforming science education. These programs improve teaching quality as well as the didactic and motivational impacts for schools and its pupils. Universities engage in such collaborations and programs because the close co-operation with schools will result in attracting talented and motivated students.



3 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of *Form-it* are to strengthen the collaboration between education research and science teaching in Europe and to promote young people’s interest in science to enhance a more critical and analytical way of thinking and learning. *Form-it* has been designed to establish recommendations for the different stakeholders in the field of teaching and training of young people, including policy-makers.

Furthermore, this initiative has been set up towards the creation of a perfect platform for the preparation for FP7 in order to provide best possible starting conditions for building up the knowledge-base in policy-related research, gender research, and research on innovative education systems.

To achieve this overall objectives the following sub-objectives have been set :

- Increasing the efficiency of national and european educational systems by identifying and promoting the success factors of several Research Education Cooperatives (REC) in Europe.
- Supporting the collaboration between institutions running such RECs by setting up a european network of experts in science teaching and education research.
- Building up a sustainable network of institutions.
- Increasing the engagement of policy-makers and other decision makers in educational matters by promoting policy recommendations and guidelines on the organisation of RECs.
- Supporting the development of joint EU research projects related to „Science and Society“ within FP7 through identifying relevant research topics in this field.

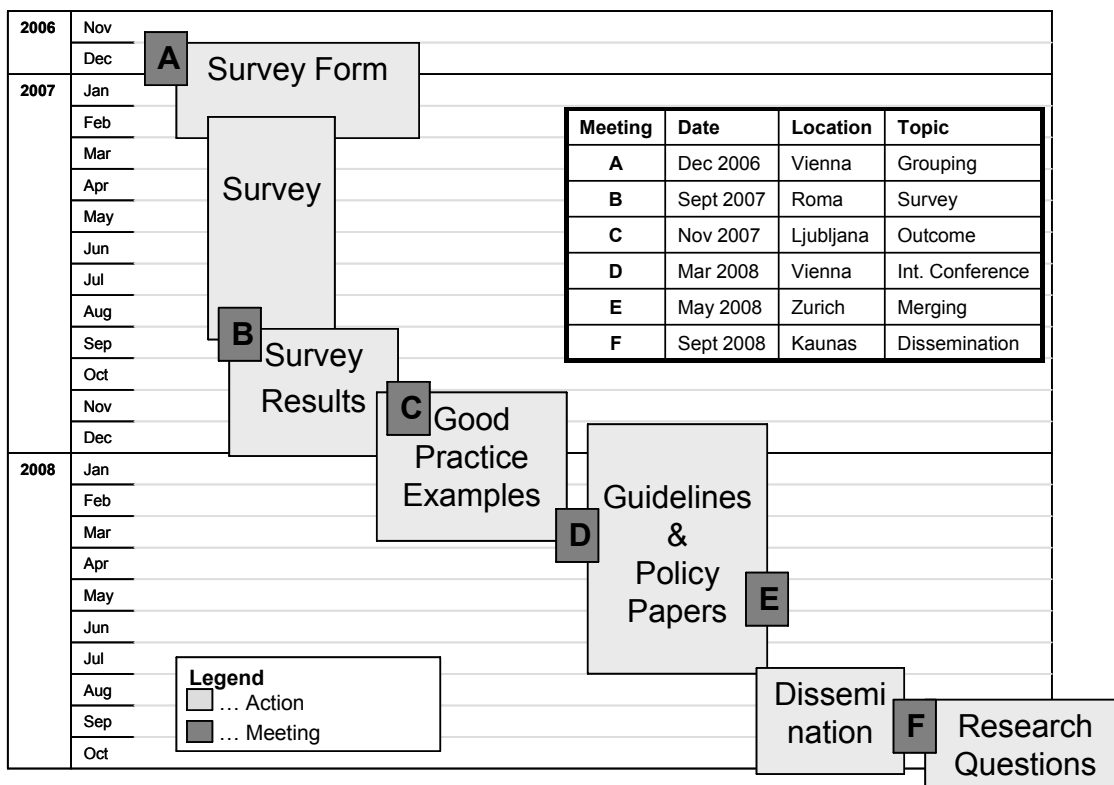
4 ACTIVITIES

Form-it links European actors who are involved in research-education activities. The networking-project started in November 2006 and will last till end 2008. (see also schedule below). Its activities will be:

- Establishment of a network of european and non-european partners, committing to REC
- Three workshops to organize a survey, and to develop recommendations and guidelines
- Three Expert Working groups to discuss in depth the realisation of REC-projects (1), promotion of REC (2) and research on REC (3)
- A survey on REC activities and on quality criteria for REC-Projects
- An international Conference to:
 - create awareness of the importance of REC programmes and initiate future activities
 - present and discuss the survey results: outstanding REC-projects and quality criteria for collaboration of research and education
 - present and discuss recommendations for policy makers and other decision makers
- Identification of joint research interests relevant to education research and science & society prioritises of FP7

Participation to the expert working groups, the workshops and the conference are not restricted. In case of interest please see the contact below.

figure 4-1: Schedule for *Form-it* „Take part in Research“



5 RESULTS

Activities of *Form-it* aim at developing a practical guideline for realising RECs, assembling a joint policy paper, addressed to national and european decision makers within the educational system and compiling a concept for preparing joint research on the issue within FP7.

A best practice catalogue will summarize and publish the relevant RECs in the consortium member countries. This catalogue will be suitable for use for researchers from other member and non-member states as well as for the European Commission. In this respect, it will also function as a promotion tool increasing visibility and accessibility of RECs. The knowledge assembled will be placed at the disposal of the consortium members and other potential stakeholders and multipliers.

Furthermore the consortium will formulate recommendations for promoting (policy paper) and realizing RECs (guidelines) and identify research questions on science teaching through research-education-cooperations.

| Results | Expected Delivery |
|---|-------------------|
| Communication material (website, flyer etc.) | From March 2007 |
| Survey Results: Report on REC activities in Europe | December 2007 |
| Good practice catalogue: Practical guidelines for teachers, | July 2008 |
| Joint policy paper: Recommendations for policy-makers | July 2008 |
| Paper on future challenging research issues and proposal outlines | November 2008 |

6 CONSORTIUM MEMBERS

| No. | Participant organisation name | Nation |
|-----|---|--------|
| 1 | Austrian Institute for Applied Ecology | AT |
| 2 | Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture | AT |
| 3 | Kaunas University of Technology | LT |
| 4 | University of Zurich | CH |
| 5 | Jozef Stefan Institut | SL |
| 6 | National Institute for Curriculum Development | NL |
| 7 | Università degli Studi Roma Tre - Scuola di Specializzazione all’Insegnamento | IT |
| 8 | London Southbank University | UK |
| 9 | Freie Universität Berlin | D |
| 10 | Robert Bosch Stiftung | D |
| 11 | Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel - Leibniz-Institute for Science education | D |

Associated School partners

| No. | Name of the school | Nation |
|-----|---|--------|
| 1 | Bundeslehr- und Forschungsanstalt für Landwirtschaft Raumberg Gumpenstein | AT |
| 2 | Bismarck-Gymnasium Karlsruhe | D |
| 3 | Gymnasium Haus Overbach | D |
| 4 | Dulwich Hamlet Junior School | UK |
| 5 | ITIS G.Armellini – Roma | IT |
| 6 | Drskininku „Atimimo“ vidurine mokykla | LT |
| 7 | Osnovna Šola pod goro slov. Konjice | LT |
| 8 | Šolski center Slovenske Konjice-Zrece | SL |
| 9 | Gimnazija vic, Ljubljana | SL |
| 10 | Osnovna šola Škofja Loka | SL |
| 11 | | |

7 CONTACT

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