

Promoting EU and South Asian bi-regional coordination of Science & Technology cooperation

CASCADE Project

CASCADE (Collaborative Action towards Societal Challenges through Awareness, Development, and Education) aims to provide the foundation for a future International Cooperation Network programme targeting South Asian Countries, which will promote bi-regional coordination of Science & Technology cooperation.

CASCADE is an opportunity for raising awareness of the potential for EU-Southern Asia cooperation and stimulating regional and international participation. With the active contribution of South Asian countries, the endeavour will be to pave the way for more advanced, inclusive and innovative societies.

The project coincides with the launch of Horizon 2020, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness. Running from 2014 to 2020 with a budget of just over €70 billion, the EU's new programme for research and innovation is part of the drive to tackle global societal challenges, and create new growth and jobs. International cooperation in research and innovation is an essential element for meeting the objectives of Europe 2020. Recognising the global nature of producing and using knowledge, Horizon 2020 builds on the success of international cooperation in previous framework programmes and is fully open to participation from third countries.

The eighteen month CASCADE project is being undertaken by a consortium of eighteen organisations from five European countries and seven South Asian countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

During the project, the team will:

1. compile a regional position paper that identifies global challenges and research priorities
2. map and develop an inventory of national and regional stakeholders related to global challenges
3. raise awareness on research & innovation priorities for fostering cooperation and towards building mutual understanding on how to address common global societal challenges



Photograph: CASCADE partner, Dr Champika Liyanage, University of Central Lancashire, UK

Latest News

CASCADE Findings Presented in Brussels

The major findings from the CASCADE project were presented at an open briefing event at the UK Research Office in Brussels. The event, held on 9th March, was attended by over 25 representatives from EU and South Asian government officers and partners working in the region.

The event was held to raise awareness about the project and the opportunities for research and innovation collaboration between the EU and South Asia. The agenda focused on messages for the region – our specific experiences and feedback. These included:

- Regional priorities for EU-South Asia cooperation to address societal challenges
- South Asian national and regional stakeholders related to societal challenges
- Engaging South Asian partners in Horizon 2020 - Policy relevant results

The session was facilitated by the Lead Investigator, Professor Dilanthi Amarantunga from the University of Huddersfield in UK, her colleague, Professor Richard Haigh, also from the University of Huddersfield who led the development of the regional paper, and Dr Champika Liyanage, from the University of Central Lancashire in the UK, who was responsible for coordinating preparation of the seven national position papers in South Asia.

A copy of the presentation materials made available on the day are available from the CASCADE media centre at www.cascade-inconet.eu.



Regional position paper published

The CASCADE regional position has been published and is now available for download from the project's media centre at www.cascade-inconet.eu. The regional paper draws together the findings from the seven national position papers developed by the South Asian partners, and identifies regional position paper that identifies global challenges and research priorities of mutual interest to the EU and South Asia. The paper directly addresses the seven societal challenges addressed by Horizon 2020:

1. [Health, demographic change and well-being](#)
2. [Food security, sustainable agricultures, marine and maritime research and the bio-based economy](#)
3. [Secure, clean and efficient energy](#)
4. [Smart, green and integrated transport](#)
5. [Climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials](#)
6. [A changing world, inclusive innovative and reflective societies](#)
7. [Secure societies](#)

The paper considers the current status of the South Asian region in respect of these issues, the priorities for action, and finally, those areas that offer the most potential for EU-South Asia cooperation. The identified opportunities include:

- Detection and prevention of NCDs / infectious diseases
- Demographic changes – (ageing population, youth), increase support, demography and innovation, design, environmental changes
- Exploit ocean - promote bio-economy, economically viable ecosystems and services, and community based entrepreneurship
- Harness hydro, wind, solar, biomass and other renewables (knowledge exchange of renewable technologies)
- Disaster risk reduction, including related information systems – big data
- Integration of climate change adaptation within national policies and planning
- Early warning, monitoring of chronic climate change, preparedness and mitigation towards increased resilience
- Greater inclusivity (including participation of women & youth and consideration of the vulnerable, internationalisation, employment)
- Improve social harmonisation among diverse populations
- Low cost, carbon neutral green transport
- Tackling border security (trafficking, crime, surveillance) and cyber crime

Photograph: The CASCADE regional position papers and stakeholder inventory were the outcomes from intensive data collection in-country, as well as a series of collaborative workshops between EU and South Asian partners. A major workshop was held in July 2014, hosted by ECO CARE, Maldives.

Inventory of national and regional stakeholders developed

A second objective of the CASCADE project was to identify and develop an inventory of the national and regional stakeholders that can influence the societal challenges and research priorities relevant to the South Asian region.

Hemanthi Goonasekara from the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities in Sri Lanka led this activity.

The development of the inventory and mapping were a collaborative process of research, debate, and discussion that drew from multiple perspectives to determine a key list of stakeholders at the national and regional level and their extent of stake in the seven societal challenges in terms of power and interest.

Identification of stakeholders was conducted simultaneously with the Phase 1 (Policy and trend analysis of societal challenges in South Asia partner countries) and Phase 2 (Interviews and Focus groups with experts who have the knowledge and experiences in one/ several areas of social challenges in South Asia partner countries) of WP2 of the project. Guidance on identifying key stakeholders was provided for the South Asia partners during the second partner meeting held in Sri Lanka in January 2014.

The identified stakeholders were those that offer a broad range of STI input linking to the Horizon 2020 societal challenges and that can influence the global challenges and research priorities relevant to the South Asian region.

Thereafter, stakeholder identification and mapping protocols were discussed in detail with the South Asia partners during a workshop conducted in conjunction with the third partner meeting held in Maldives in July 2014. At the end of the workshop, a template was introduced to present the stakeholder inventory and conduct the mapping exercise. A power vs interest analysis was conducted in relation to each identified stakeholder in mapping their stake in societal challenges.

A copy of the work package report and the inventory can be downloaded from the project's media centre at www.cascade-inconet.eu

HORIZON 2020

Recent events

The University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka (UGC) invited Professors Dilanthi Amaratunga and Richard Haigh from the CASCADE project to lead a session on Horizon 2020, the largest EU Research and Innovation programme ever with nearly €80 billion of funding available over 7 years (2014 to 2020).

On the 2nd December 2014, the University of Huddersfield with the support from CASCADE project and also along with the EU office in Colombo, organised an event at the UGC under the direction of its Professor Ranjith Senaratne, Vice Chairman of the UGC.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) is the apex body of the University System in Sri Lanka which. The functions of the UGC are; planning and coordination of university education, allocation of funds to Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), maintenance of academic standards, regulation of the administration of HEIs and regulation of admission of students to HEIs. Its vision is to be an excellent regulatory body which guide, develop and sustain a network of 'Centers of Excellence' in higher education meeting the national needs and aspirations in keeping with global trends.

All 15 Sri Lankan universities are under its umbrella: University of Colombo, University of Peradeniya, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, University of Kelaniya, University of Moratuwa, University of Jaffna, University of Ruhuna, The Open University of Sri Lanka, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, Uva Wellassa University, University of the Visual & Performing Arts.

Vice Chancellors of all these universities along with other scientists attended the event.



The event commenced with a welcome address by Professor Ranjith Senaratne, Vice Chair, UGC (Photograph, above). Opening remarks were provided by Professor Kshanika Hirimburegama, Chairperson, UGC. These were followed by Mr Simone Brotini, Development Cooperation Section of EU, Colombo, who spoke about Collaborating with the EU.

Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga from the Global Disaster Resilience Centre at the University of Huddersfield in the UK went on to provide a detailed overview of the EU's Horizon 2020 scheme, including the different programmes.

Professor Richard Haigh, also from the Global Disaster Resilience Centre at Huddersfield spoke about the practical steps involved in developing linkages with EU institutions. This was followed by a series of presentations on the sharing of experience and lessons learned by an EU Grantee: Professor Samantha Hettiarchchi, University of Moratuwa; Shayani Weeresinghe, University of Moratuwa; Professor A. R. Wickramasinghe, Department of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya; and, Professor Ranil De Silva, Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

CASCADE Partnership

Europe

University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom
University of Salford, United Kingdom
University of Central Lancashire, United Kingdom
Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia
Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Lithuania
Bologna University, Italy
Foundation for Strategic Research, France

South Asia

Nangarhar Islamic University Jalalabad, Afghanistan
Patuakhali Science and Technology University, Bangladesh
Royal Institute of Management, Bhutan
Institute of Engineering, Nepal
Volunteers for Development, Nepal
University of Engineering & Technology, Peshawar, Pakistan

Local Councils Association of the Punjab, Pakistan
University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka
Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities, Sri Lanka
Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
ECO CARE, Maldives

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