

Scientific cooperation between Eastern Europe and Switzerland (SCOPEs)

Customer survey

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Overview and results by October 2014

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Summary

The recently conducted customer survey confirms previous findings that the scientific cooperation programme with Eastern Europe, SCOPES, is a win-win situation for all participants. There are clear benefits for both sides: Eastern Europe receives funds to carry out research of high quality as well as impulses to reform its science system and generate prospects for the future. Switzerland in turn benefits from the wealth of knowledge that exists in Eastern Europe. Swiss scientists have the option to expand their network of contacts and increase their international presence in an area of Europe where Switzerland has been underrepresented in the past.

Background

The scientific cooperation programme with Eastern Europe (SCOPES) started in 1990 on a small scale. It is organised in four-year phases and jointly funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). Though rather unusual, this cooperation between a research funding organisation and a development agency has proven fruitful in view of pursuing the dual goals scientific excellence and developmental support.

In the first programme phase, only a few countries were involved. Today, nearly all Eastern European countries and the new independent states of the former Soviet Union are participating in the programme. The main funding schemes are Joint Research Projects (JRPs) and Institutional Partnerships (IPs). JRPs are focused on research itself, IPs on the development and modernisation of institutional aspects of research and higher education in Eastern Europe. Research costs were covered only for the participating Eastern European teams, the Swiss research teams obtained a modest lump sum. No specific themes are prescribed.

Methodology

The aim of the survey was to collect information on outputs and outcomes of the SCOPES programme as this is not included in the final scientific reports of the individual projects. Two separate questionnaires were compiled, one for the Eastern European team leaders, another for the Swiss project coordinators. For the SCOPES programme phase 2009-2012, 59 JRPs and 40 IPs were funded, each with a Swiss main applicant and an average of 2.21 teams in Eastern European countries.

The survey was addressed to slightly more than 300 people in Eastern Europe and Switzerland, of whom roughly two-thirds responded. Two-thirds of the respondents were involved in a JRP, one-third in an IP.

Capacity building

During a JRP with a duration of 24-36 months, an average of nine persons per Eastern European team received financial support or benefited in some other way from the project (in IPs even more). Of the Eastern European researchers who worked on SCOPES projects, 75% stayed on in academia in their own country after the completion of the SCOPES project. Sixteen per cent changed to another sector within the same country, while 8.4% left the country to work abroad.

Main outputs

Most of the JRPs led to publications in peer-reviewed journals (on average four publications per JRP). The respondents reported considerable improvements within the research institutions in terms of research equipment, information and communication technologies and, to a lesser extent, basic infrastructure, services, libraries and teaching equipment. A large proportion of researchers from Eastern Europe say that their use of new methodologies and approaches in research improved

considerably or even to a great extent. Fifty per cent are of the opinion that higher education and research have strengthened ties between researchers and led to closer cooperation.

All in all, the Eastern European partners had the impression that the project management skills in their departments had clearly improved, especially communication skills, dissemination of research results, project coordination, reporting and building of networks. A large majority said that their research portfolio had become broader.

The researchers from Eastern Europe feel that their participation in the SCOPES project has had a very positive impact on the way their institution/department is perceived in their respective countries as well as in other Eastern European countries. (This view is slightly less pronounced in Western European countries.) They also consider that SCOPES has had a positive impact on their professional network, especially with researchers in their own countries and researchers in Western Europe.

Funding situation

The situation in terms of research funding has not improved significantly in the Eastern European countries. Relatively few teams were able to acquire additional funding besides the SCOPES project (only one-third). The most important funding sources for researchers in Eastern Europe are, on the one hand, competitive national research funding and, on the other hand, university/academy funding. Funding from international sources lags behind and bilateral programmes, in particular, are considered to bring limited funding only. A quarter of the respondents mention that they were able to acquire funding from European sources.

Difficulties during the project

Besides smaller problems with communication, visa application issues, and others, managing the projects – especially the financial reporting – was quite challenging for the Swiss project coordinators.

Challenges for the future

In the last 25 years, many aspects of the science sector in Eastern Europe have improved, but much still remains to be done. Research funds remain rather low, further reforms of the research system are needed to increase transparency and efficiency, and the general policy framework has to be improved. Salaries in academia cannot compete with industry and research careers are not supported adequately in Eastern European countries. In addition, research infrastructures require further investment.

Conclusion

SCOPES appears to provide valuable and efficient instruments and mechanisms for encouraging joint research on issues of common interest and for promoting institutional development. Eastern European and Swiss researchers taking part in SCOPES are partially motivated by the additional funding for research and networking, but the main motivation is the scientific competence of their partners. The joint research experience strengthens capacities on both sides and enhances networks. Although the funding level is relatively low per research project (especially on the Swiss side), the grants have proven to be sufficient to initiate and maintain a successful collaboration.

1. Background

The SCOPES programme that is jointly funded by the SNSF and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), promotes scientific cooperation between research groups and institutions in Eastern Europe and Switzerland. This cooperation between a research funding organization and an aid agency is quite unusual, but was fruitful in view of pursuing the dual goal of achieving scientific excellence as well as developmental aims at the same time.

The programming period 2009-2012 had a budget of 16 million Swiss francs, which was awarded in two calls. The main funding instruments were Joint Research Projects (JRP) and Institutional Partnerships (IP). The first instrument is focused on research itself, the second on the development and modernisation of institutional aspects of research and higher education in Eastern Europe. Thematically, no specifications were made. However, it was important that - besides scientific quality - the partnerships also had a potential for development and/or application for the Eastern European partners. Research costs were only paid for the participating Eastern European teams, the Swiss side obtained a kind of lump sum (mainly covering travel/living expenses, consumables and coordination costs).

1.1 Purpose of the survey

The survey aims at collecting information on outputs and impacts of the SCOPES projects, which are not included in the final scientific reports of the individual projects or in other available documents. The information is needed:

- for the final programme report to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
- for the SNSF's further planning of scientific cooperation with this region.

1.2 Methodology

Target groups of the survey were all Swiss main and co-applicants as well as the Eastern European co-applicants (= team leaders) of the SCOPES partnerships (JRP and IP) of the programme phase SCOPES 2009-2012. In this phase, 59 JRP and 40 IP were approved, each with a Swiss main applicant and an average of 2.21 co-applicants in Eastern European countries. Two separate questionnaires were established, a longer one for the Eastern European team leaders, a shorter one for the Swiss project coordinators. Some questions were the same for both sides. Overall, the questionnaire was sent to 344 people. 29 e-mails could not be delivered due to faulty or inexistent e-mail addresses.

1.3 Response rates

Effective numbers of sent surveys	Total	315
	Swiss Main and co-applicants	138
	EE partners	177
Number of responses (survey opened, some or all questions answered)	Total	202
	Swiss Main and co-applicants	82
	EE partners	120
Response rates	Total	64.1%
	Swiss Main and co-applicants	59.4%
	EE partners	67.8%

The response rates were higher than expected.

2. Responses from Eastern European and Swiss beneficiaries

2.1 General information

Out of 177 successfully contacted team leaders in Eastern Europe, 120 team leaders (= 67.8%) answered, out of 138 contacted Swiss contacted persons 82 (= 59.4%) responded.

Gender (EE¹: Q²31, Swiss: Q15):

- Eastern European respondents: 57% were male, 43% were female
- Swiss respondents: 80% were male, 20% were female

Age of respondents (EE: Q32, Swiss: Q16): Two-thirds of Eastern European and half of the Swiss respondents were **between 40 and 60 years old** when they started their collaboration (2009):

Year of birth	Eastern European	Swiss
In the 30ties	4 (4%)	0
In the 40ties	15 (15%)	7 (10%)
In the 50ties	34 (33%)	21 (30%)
In the 60ties	31 (30%)	29 (41%)
In the 70ties	16 (16%)	12 (17%)
In the 80ties	2 (2%)	1 (1%)

Working place of respondents (EE: Q33): Three quarters (72%) of all team leaders in Eastern Europe are based in the capital of their country. In Switzerland, the distribution is much larger: both ETH and all cantonal universities, as well as universities of applied sciences are represented in the JRP/IP.

Country (EE: Q34, Swiss: Q17): Many people misunderstood this question (16) and indicated in which countries they worked during the JRP/IP. The remaining responses (90) exhibit a distribution **in which more or less all countries which participated in the programme are represented among the respondents**: New Member States (Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovenia), West Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia), Southern Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia), Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Kyrgyz Republic. No country dominates.

Scientific fields (EE: Q35, Swiss: Q18): Two thirds of the respondents from Eastern Europe work in the field of natural and engineering sciences, one quarter in biology and medicine, and one fifth in humanities and social sciences. The majority of the Swiss respondents work in the field of natural and engineering sciences. The other two fields (SSH and life sciences) are comparable in size.

	EE	Swiss
Humanities and social sciences	18%	21%
Mathematics, natural and engineering sciences	61%	55%
Biology and medicine	22%	25%

¹ EE = Eastern European partner

² Q = Number of the question in the questionnaire

Funding instruments (EE: Q36, Swiss: Q19): Two-thirds of the respondents were involved in a joint research project, one third in an institutional partnership:

- Joint Research Project (JRP): 69% of Eastern European respondents, 60% of Swiss respondents
- Institutional Partnership (IP): 31% of Eastern European respondents, 40% of Swiss respondents

2.2 Logical framework

With the conception of the programme, a result framework was developed by SNSF and SDC in order to support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme. The framework was condensed in the form of a matrix stating the programme's objectives to be achieved. The results (outputs) of the programme are measured with indicators and must be reported on in the final programme report of the SNSF to SDC. Some questions of the customer survey were designed to obtain information on different indicators. Therefore, the order of the questions / answers is according to the outcomes and outputs of the logical framework.

Outcome 1: Research capacities of partner countries have improved towards to Western European or global standards.

Improvement of project management in the following areas (EE: Q5)

(116 answers, 4 skipped)

Overall the Eastern European partners had the impression that the project management skills in their departments clearly improved, especially:

- Communications among team and with partners: 88% to a certain or great extent
- Dissemination of research results: 79%
- Project coordination: 78%
- Reporting: 77%
- Building of networks: 75%

Increased cooperation with other research institutions due to SCOPES (EE: Q6)

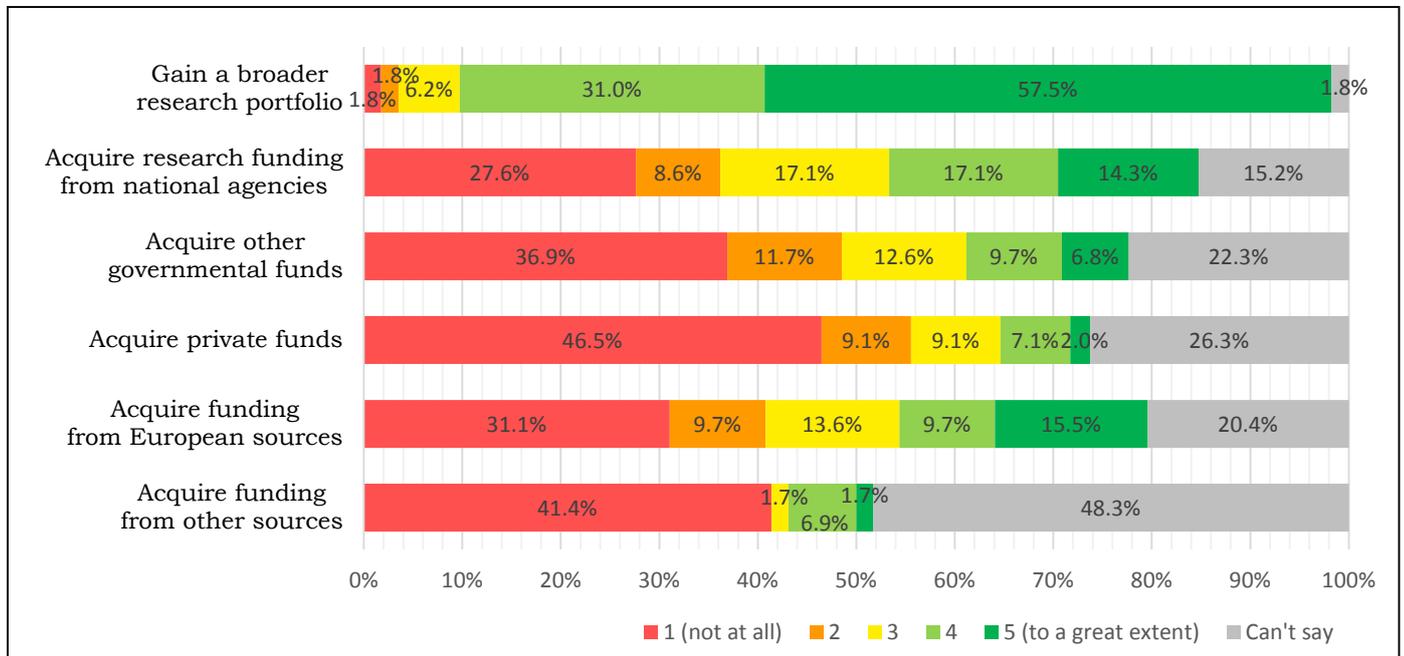
(117 answers, 3 skipped)

Especially cooperation with research institutions from Western European improved, and to a certain extent also research institutions from Eastern European and the same country (this question might have been misinterpreted by some, meaning that researchers thought we asked about cooperation within the SCOPES project):

- From Western European countries: 72%
- From Eastern European countries: 54%
- From the same country: 52%
- To a much lesser extent from non-European countries: 23%

Help of SCOPES to gain a broader research portfolio (e.g. applied research, interdisciplinary research, new research fields, privately mandated research) and to acquire additional funds (EE: Q8)

(115 answers, 5 skipped)



A large majority (88.5%) said that they gained a broader research portfolio, but relatively few were able to acquire additional funding on top of the SCOPES project.

The funding situation remains difficult; only funds from national funding agencies are somewhat available: 31% acquired funds from them, but 33% said hardly any or not at all.

Number of researchers who worked on the SCOPES project who continued their career (EE: Q17 & 18)

(108 answers, 12 skipped)

The majority of researchers (including team members other than the team leaders in Eastern Europe) who worked on SCOPES projects stayed in academia in the same country also after the SCOPES project was finished.

On average, researchers stayed:

- In academia in the same country: 75.9%
- In another sector in the same country: 15.6%
- In academia in another country: 6.7%
- In another sector in another country: 1.7%

Those who moved to another country mostly moved to Western European countries (Switzerland, France, United Kingdom, Germany) or, in a few cases, to the United States.

Strengthening of the human resources situation (EE: Q4)

More than 40% of the teams in Eastern Europe were able to create new research positions and maintain them even after the end of the JRP/IP.

- Creation of new positions during the SCOPES project: 41%
- Maintaining the created positions after the SCOPES project: 42%
- Creation of new positions after SCOPES project: 33%

Number of publications in international peer-reviewed journals that resulted from the SCOPES project (EE: Q19 & 20, Swiss: Q6 & 7)

(EE: 106 answers, 14 skipped, Swiss: 66 answers, 16 skipped)

The median value of publications is three publications per project.

When analyzing the publication numbers of the JRP and IP projects separately, another aspect of publication patterns emerge:

Number of publications (JRP&IP)	CH	EE
Range (min-max)	0-124	0-100
Median	3	3

Number of publications (JRP)	CH	EE
Range (min-max)	0-124	0-100
Median	4	4

Number of publications (IP)	CH	EE
Range (min-max)	0-11	0-14
Median	0	2

JRP's show higher numbers of publications (median) than IPs. This result could be expected and confirms the differences in design of the two instruments.

Relevance of funding sources of current research budget (EE Q22 & 23)

(108 answers, 12 skipped)

The most important research funding sources for researchers are competitive national research funding and university/academy funding, funding from international sources is further behind, and especially bilateral programmes are considered not to be so important

Most relevant for researchers (ranking):

- 1 Competitive national research funding
- 2 University/academy funding
- 3 EU funding
- 4 Funding from bilateral programmes
- 5 Other (only 5 respondents, e.g. SCOPES, UNESCO, USAID, US Embassy)

Increase of the share of competitive national and international funding during and after the SCOPES project in addition to SCOPES funding (EE: Q24)

(108 answers, 12 skipped)

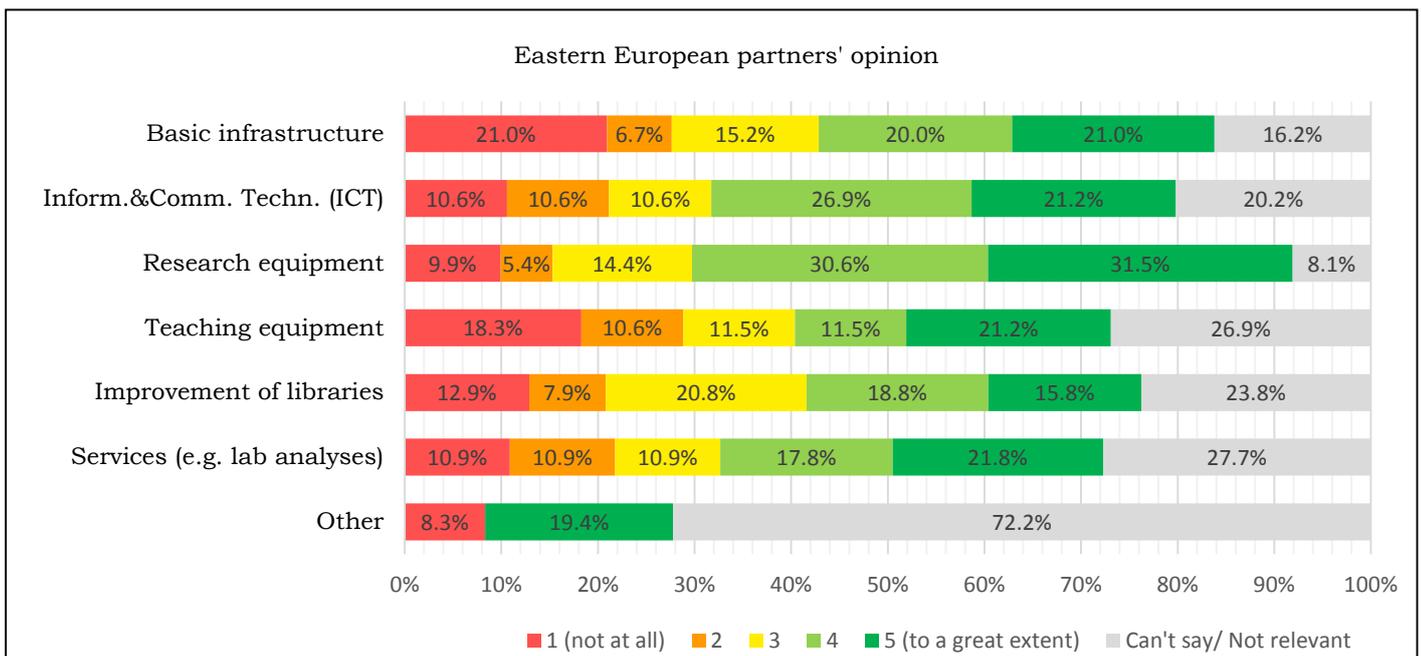
Only one third of the researchers have seen an increase of competitive funding during or after the SCOPES project; when looking at the comments, it is also not clear if the question was understood correctly (some understood: how much other funding was available in addition to SCOPES funding).

- No increase: 37%
- Can't say: 34%
- No increase and can't say combined: 71%
- Increase: 29%

Outcome 2: The institutional framework conditions of research in the partner countries have improved.

Improvement of infrastructure (EE: Q2; Swiss: Q2)

(EE: 118 answers, 2 skipped; Swiss: 79 answers, 3 skipped)

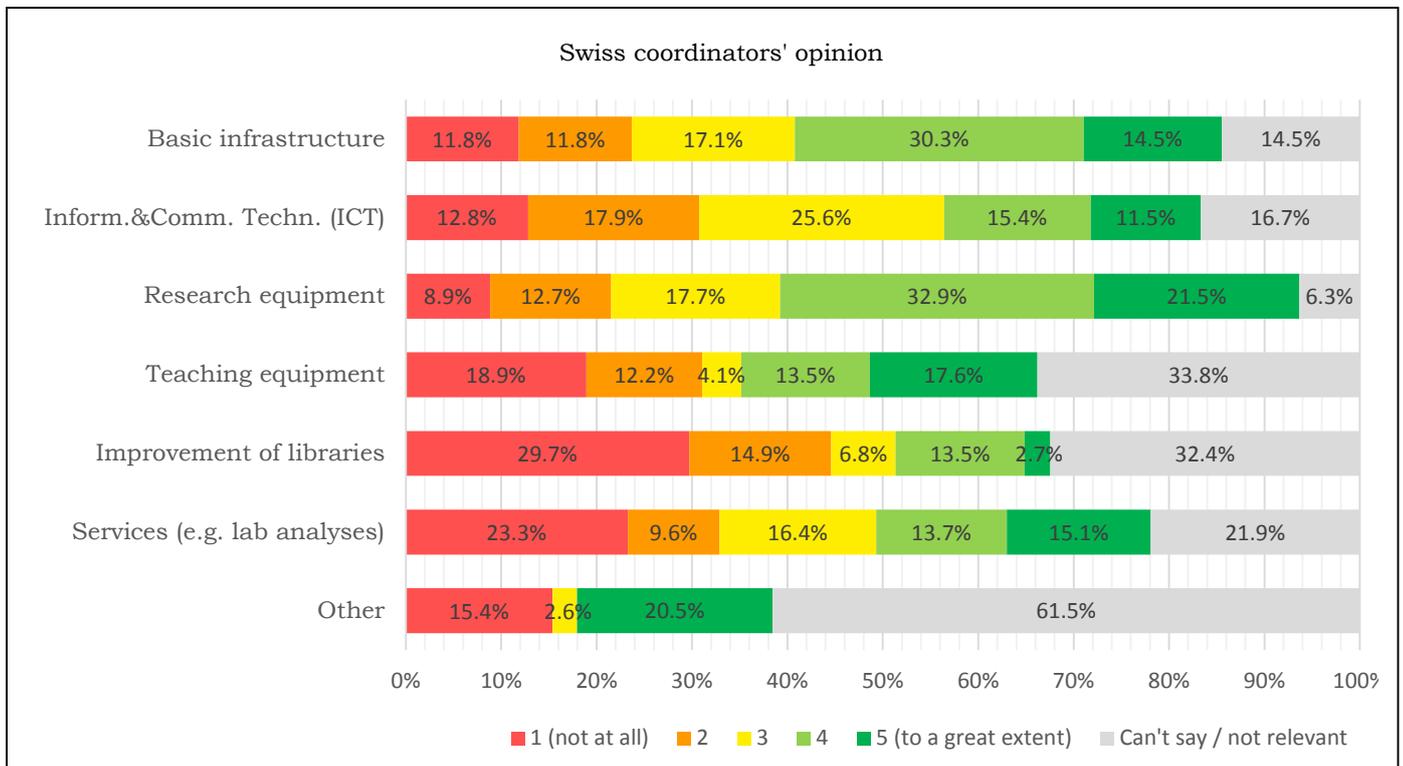


A considerable improvement can be seen in research equipment, ICT and to a lesser extent in basic infrastructure, services, improvement of libraries and teaching equipment. On the other hand, there is a considerable part of the researchers who say that they do not notice improvement at all or only to a very limited extent. Also, there is a large number of researchers who reply with “can't say”.

Remark: In both funding instruments, JRP and IP, it was possible to buy equipment, but only on a small scale (maximum around CHF 20'000).

Other improvements of infrastructure (the comments go in all directions) that were mentioned by the eastern European partners were: summer school, dissemination of results, access to great research infrastructure, buy consumables, networking, and training of young scientists. These answers indicate that the question might have been misunderstood or the respondents did not see that the next question covers the topics around education.

The same question led to the following answers by the Swiss respondents:



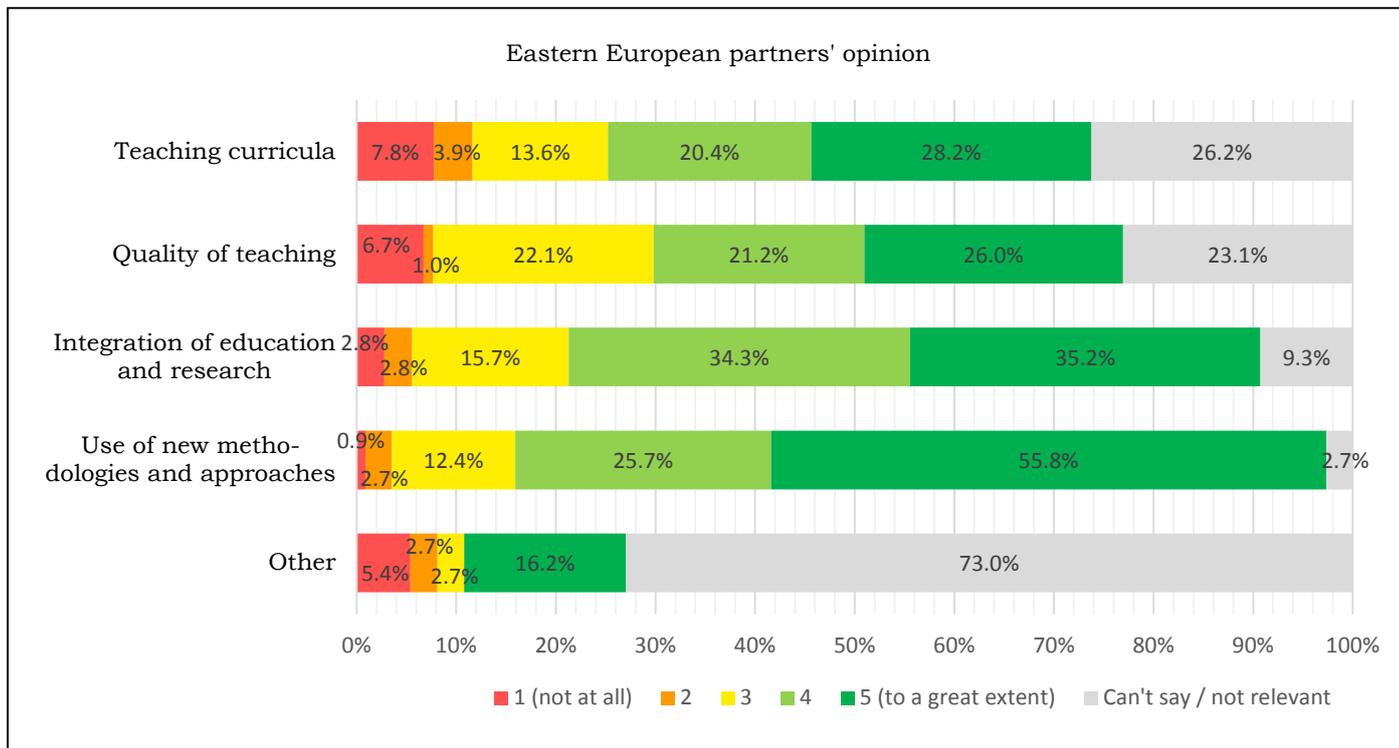
A total of 45% of respondents consider there to have been a positive impact on basic infrastructure. The positive impact on research equipment seems to have been even a little more pronounced: 54% see a positive effect. For the improvement of libraries 44.5% consider there to have been no impact at all, whereas the Eastern European partners rate this aspect much more positively.

Interesting comments (by the Swiss coordinators):

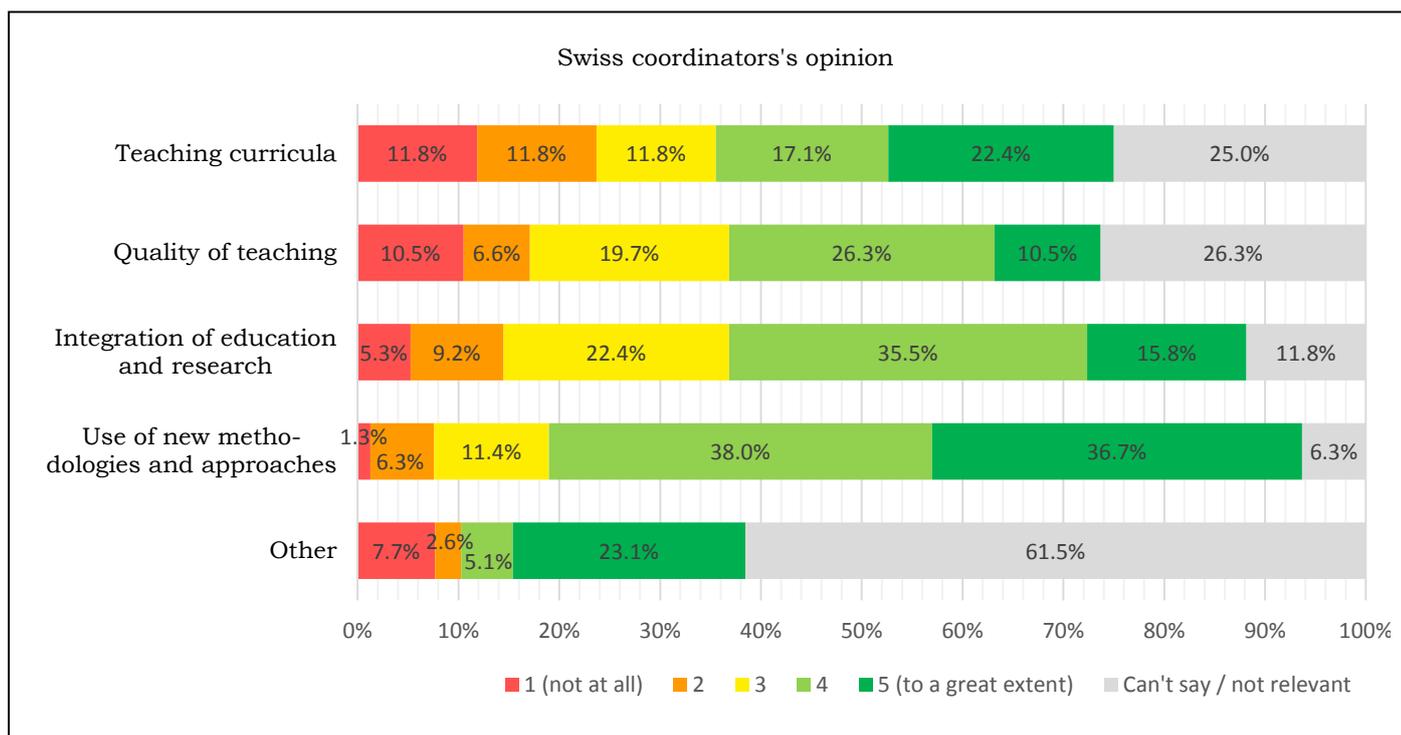
- Suggestion that EE partners could help other EE partners by giving access to their infrastructure.
- Improved status of the research partner at the university made other improvements much easier.
- Renovations were mentioned more than once, which points towards challenges for the Eastern European partners.

Improvement of research and teaching (EE: Q3; Swiss: Q3)

(EE: 116 answers, 4 skipped; Swiss: 80 answers, 2 skipped)



A large proportion of researchers from Eastern Europe say that their use of new methodologies and approaches in research have improved considerably or even to a great extent. The improvement of teaching-related indicators is less obvious; in these categories, there is also a high proportion of researchers who did not give an answer.



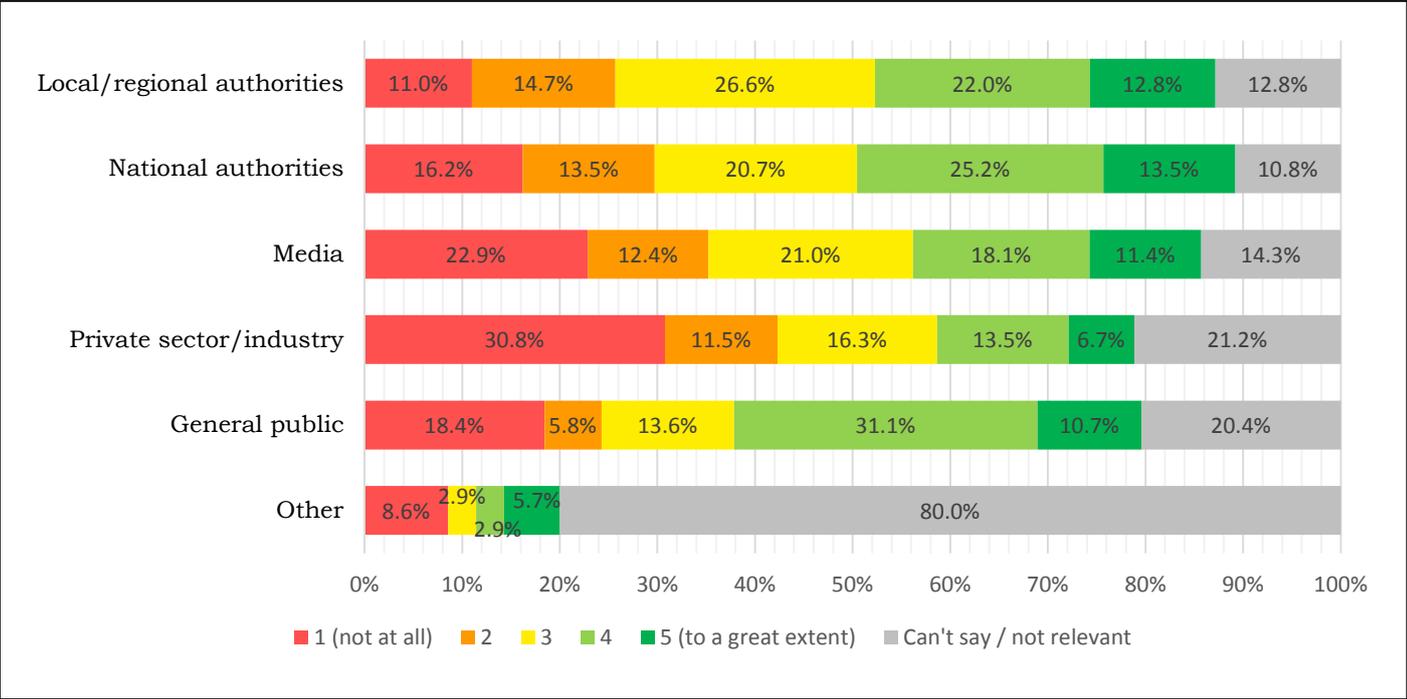
According to the Swiss respondents, the main impact seems to have been the use of new methodologies and approaches (74%). 50% consider the integration of education of research to have been improved. The answers do not show clear tendencies in teaching curricula and quality of teaching.

Other topics mentioned were: improvement of quality of PhD theses, skills in using modern equipment.

Remark: Improvements in teaching was mainly a goal of the IP projects.

Increase of interaction with stakeholders because of participation in SCOPES project (EE: Q9)

(115 answers, 5 skipped)



The interaction with the various stakeholder groups has not increased to a great extent. The highest increase can be seen with the interaction of the general public, followed by the national authorities. There was hardly an increase in interaction with the public sector. There are also quite a few can't say-answers. Referring to the comments, there are some misunderstandings what exactly interaction means in this context: e.g. tax refund, permissions, etc.

Specific results of these interactions (EE: Q10)

(114 answers, 6 skipped)

About half of the respondents answered that there were specific results of the interactions, mostly mentioning publications.

- Yes: 48%
- No: 19%
- No and can't say combined: 52%

A noticeable concrete example is the public awareness of the status of the Balkan lynx, a moratorium on hunting and corresponding policy regulations that were formulated. Apart from that, the outcomes seem to be mainly scientific and other publications.

Number of people involved divided by career stage and gender (EE: Q11-Q16)

JRP	Range (min-max)	Median	% of women	Total
Bachelor/Master students	0-335	3	60.9%	1168
PhD students contribution	0-20	2	45.3%	192
Postdocs/scientists contribution	0-7	2	40.4%	151
Other collaborators	0-11	2	45.5%	145
Doctorates awarded	0-3	1	59.2%	71

IP	Range (min-max)	Median	% of women	Total
Bachelor/Master students	0-3000	45	58.0%	5246
PhD students contribution	0-40	3	55.6%	142
Postdocs/scientists contribution	0-30	3	48.7%	152
Other collaborators	0-30	3	49.2%	118
Doctorates awarded	0-4	1	38.5%	39

Generally it can be said that the proportion of female scientists involved is about half of all staff members, or even a little more, at all levels.

When comparing the answers for the JRP and IP separately, it is very clear that many more students could benefit and were involved in the IP projects. Again, this was expected and confirms the design of the two instruments.

All the staff questions: although we only asked for answers for their country, it is unclear if the numbers of staff refer to the whole SCOPES project or only to the part in their country.

Comments with regards to the staff who worked on the project:

Mostly positive comments about collaboration and team members, some clarifications on PhD defenses and other younger researchers working on the SCOPES project, two negative comments regarding Swiss project leaders.

Participation of additional staff in the Swiss teams (EE: Q8 & Q9)

(Answered: 75, skipped: 7)

JRP	Range (min-max)	Average	Median	% of women	Total
Additional staff besides coordinator	0-12	3.1	2	36.7%	139

IP	Range (min-max)	Average	Median	% of women	Total
Additional staff besides coordinator	0-15	3.5	2.5	47.2%	106

On the Swiss side, much less people participated in the project than on the Eastern European side (in SCOPES, for the Swiss side research costs are not eligible). Nevertheless, on average 3.26 people from the Swiss institution collaborated in the supported JRP/IP (41.2% women) although there were more or less no funds for their support.

Outcome 3: The international integration and visibility of the partner countries in the research sector has improved

Impact of participation in SCOPES on the perception of institution/department (EE: Q7, Swiss: Q4)

(EE: 115 answers, 5 skipped; Swiss: 81 answers, 1 skipped)

The researchers from Eastern Europe think that the participation in the SCOPES project has had a very positive impact on the perception of their institution/department in their countries and also in other Eastern European countries. This is a little less so in Western European countries and especially overseas, where some researchers even saw a negative impact of the perception.

Impact on the perception of institution/department:

- In their country: positive or very positive 84%
- In Eastern European countries: 71%
- In Western European countries: 65%
- Overseas: 32% positive or very positive, 13% even negative or very negative, 46% can't say

The Swiss coordinators consider that the partners improved their perception especially in Eastern European countries (59% very positively and 28% positively) and positively in Switzerland (43%). The collaboration through SCOPES seems to have a perceived positive effect within the countries participating in the SCOPES Programme.

The perception of the partners did not seem to have experienced a significant effect in other Western European (with exception in Switzerland) or in non-European countries.

Impact on the perception of the Swiss team (EE: Q5)

(Answered: 81, skipped: 1)

- A large majority of the Swiss respondents see a positive impact in the perception of their institution mainly in Eastern European countries (55% very positively and 20% positively).
- To a more moderate degree they also see a positive influence in perception of their institution in Switzerland (23% very positively and 32% positively).

Impact of the participation in SCOPES on professional network (EE: Q21)

(112 answers, 8 skipped)

The researchers have the impression that the SCOPES project has had a positive impact on their professional network, especially with researchers in their countries and with researchers in Western European countries. It is interesting to note, however, that there is also a certain amount of researchers who think that the participation in SCOPES had a negative effect (not further commented) on their network, especially with researchers in Eastern European countries and overseas.

Impact of participation on network

- With researchers in same country: 79% positive or very positive
- In Western European countries: 75% positive or very positive
- In Eastern European countries: 63% positive or very positive, 11% negative or very negative
- In non-European countries: 35% positive or very positive, 12% negative or very negative, 38% can't say

Feedback to the programme

Three main factors of motivation to participate in SCOPES programme (EE: Q1, Swiss: Q1)

(EE: 119 answers, 1 skipped, Swiss: 81 answers, 1 skipped)

For the Eastern European partners, the main factors of motivation for a SCOPES participation are, by far, additional funds for research and networking and the scientific competence of the partners. Other important factors of motivation the work on new scientific topics, the possibility to learn from another science culture, working with unique experts in a certain field and the possibility of comparative studies. Country-specific advantages and access to unique sources, such as archives and special ecosystems do not seem to be so important.

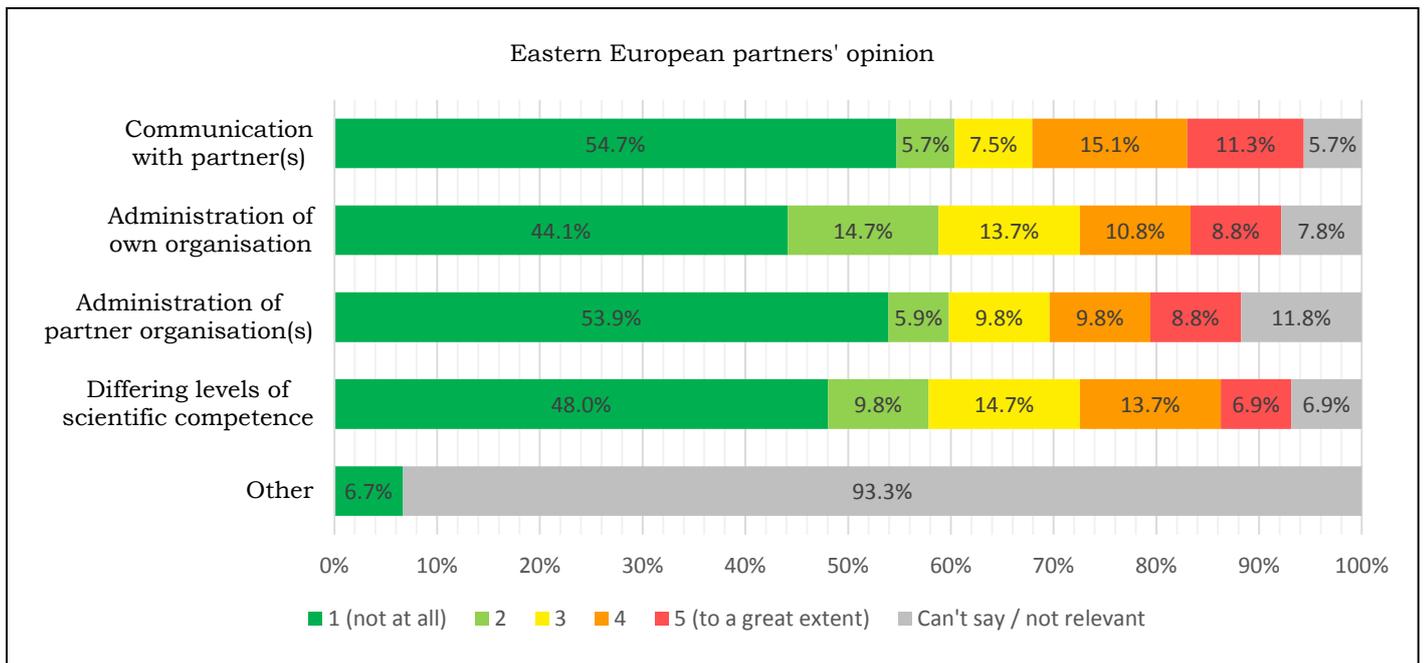
Under comments, the following additional reasons or specifications were given: Swiss institutions are leading in their fields and have world-class equipment, possibility of site visits in Swiss institutions, field is well-developed in Switzerland, strengthening of already existing collaboration, improvement of research infrastructure.

- Additional funds for research: 57%
- Additional funds for networking: 33%
- Additional funds combined: 90%
- Scientific competence of partners: 80%
- New scientific topics: 40%
- Possibility to learn from another science culture: 37%
- Unique experts in a certain field: 29%
- Country-specific advantages: 7%
- Access to unique sources (e.g. archives, archaeology, ecosystems): 5%

For the Swiss side, the scientific competence of partners (52%) and additional funds (research and networking = 69.1%) were the main motivating factors. Comments quite often mention “help” and “support” for Eastern European countries (was not an option given), which points to a more developmental motive for the Swiss coordinators’.

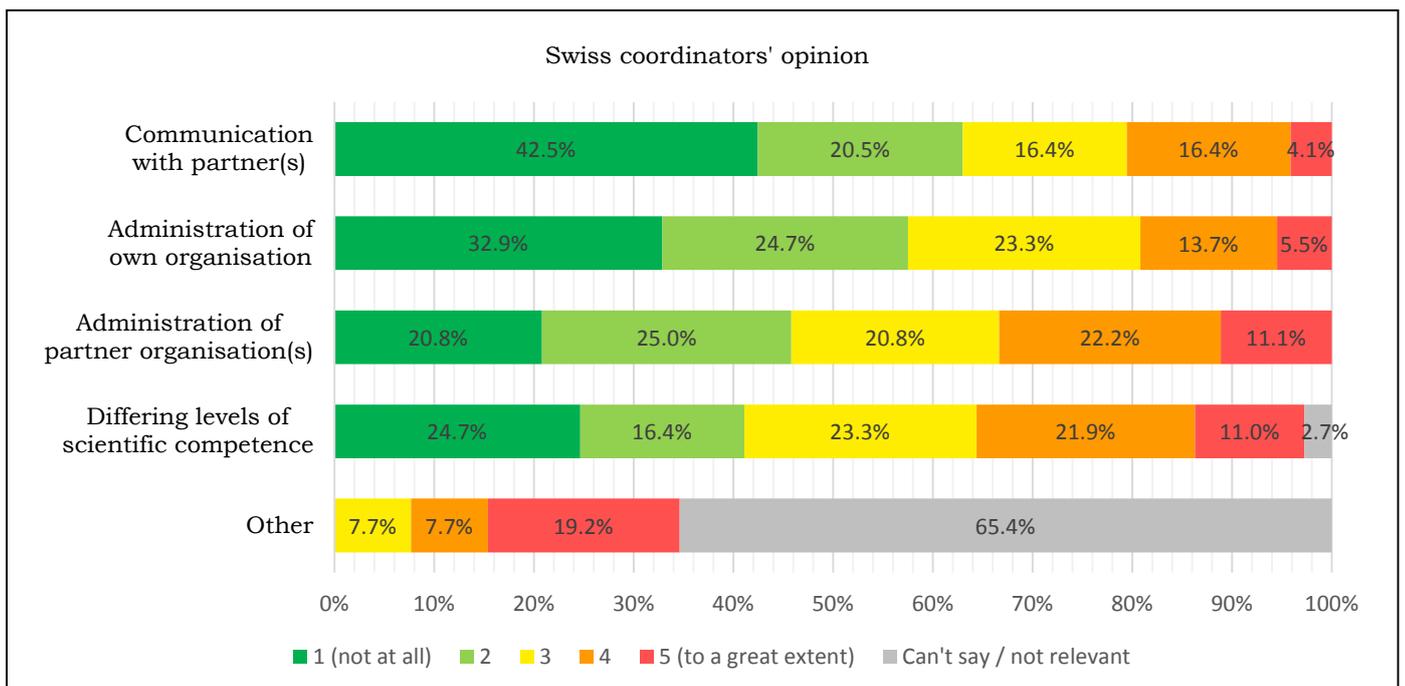
Challenges in projects (EE: Q26; Swiss: Q10)

(EE: 107 answers, 13 skipped; Swiss: 74 answers, 8 skipped)



On the Eastern European side, relatively few researchers identify obstacles in their projects; only about one quarter of researchers found that communication with project partners was an issue; about one-fifth thought that differing levels of scientific competence among partners were a problem, as well as the administration of the own and of the partner organization.

Other problems that were mentioned are: some project partners had limited experience in the field of study, problems related to the change of composition of partners, differences in accounting rules, new reporting rules.



Generally, the financial administration is considered too complicated by the Swiss respondents. In some cases it was difficult for the Swiss coordinators to obtain documents and information from the partner(s) for the project's financial reporting (incl. partner's expenses). Swiss project coordinators have no control over financial handling in the partner organization. Other comments by Swiss respondents:

- Trust is needed to work with a partner – risk of deception
- Knowledge gap: one directional knowledge transfer, assistance for basic things like methodology and approaches, results not useful because measuring method not exact
- Banking and tax issues, complicated procedures sometimes of Swiss universities
- Buying equipment is complicated (import taxes)
- Differences in currency are difficult to handle (loss due to inflation)
- Challenge for CH partner: administrative investment with no funding for it (visa applications, financial reporting, banking transfers) rather considerable and difficult to defend internally at the own university, teaching besides the project
- Partners are getting used to funding (dependency on foreign funding)
- Visa problems for Eastern European travelers
- Some had communication problems: differing language skills, publication of results without informing, different cultural mentalities, differing approaches (descriptive vs experimental). This points contradicts the overall image of the majority of answers.

Administrative work load: scientific and financial reporting (EE: Q27, Swiss: Q11)

(EE: 109 answers, 11 skipped; Swiss: 76 answers, 6 skipped)

A vast majority finds the administrative work load appropriate, around 10% find it heavy.

- Appropriate: 88% of EE, 56.6% of Swiss respondents
- Heavy/very heavy: 9% of EE, 40% of Swiss respondents
- Can't say: 3%

Under comments from the EE side, it was suggested to make the final scientific report more detailed and use this information in the evaluation of a potential future SCOPES proposal. Some researchers mentioned that they needed some time to adapt to the new administrative rules and forms as they are used completely different forms.

The same question was asked the Swiss PI and there is a distinct difference. Much more Swiss respondents find the administration heavy or very heavy. It is not surprising because they must collect all the information from the partners needed for the scientific and financial reporting and present it in a form complying with the SNSF rules.

Comments from Swiss:

- Different procedures and requirements between SNF and university, double formulation of same info, different procedures and understanding in partner countries
- Time consuming, translation of receipts time consuming, with number of partners workload increases
- Exchange rates nightmares, large effort, deficit, explanations required for course changes
- Private accounts had to be used (to avoid institution tax), money transfers are complicated
- Equipment purchase is complicated
- First run is complicated (the first-time participation in a co-operation programme with its specificities is always more difficult than follow-up projects)

Interesting points (comments):

- Heavy reporting, but needed by the poor accounting and corruption practices of the partner country
- Some comments expressed a wish for SNSF support on practical issues (buying equipment, transfer of funds, taxes...)

Main challenges with regard to research and development in EE countries (EE: Q29; Swiss: Q14)

(EE: 107 answers, 13 skipped; Swiss: 77 answers, 5 skipped)

According to the researchers in Eastern Europe, by far the main challenge is a lack of research funding, followed by insufficient support of research careers, institutional framework conditions and policy aspects.

Interestingly, more than 10% of researchers skipped this question. The following were indicated as main challenges:

- Research funding: 86%
- Support of research careers: 54%
- Institutional framework conditions: 36%
- Policy aspects: 31%

Other specific challenges that were mentioned are the lack of organizational support and lack of efficiency, heavy teaching loads connected with academic positions, policies lack long-term vision and are not well thought-through, level of education, linguistic skills, no strategies to change the bad situation, no clear career paths, scientific careers do not get a lot of attention (PR), high pressure on researchers to participate in as many projects as possible although very often the money is used to fund non-scientific staff, duplication of research work, weak infrastructure, no research policy due to lack of funding (all efforts stopped), widespread informal practices (and even corruption) makes organization of research difficult, bureaucracy, little support of research career, bad infrastructure, the evaluation procedures are not good for persons and projects requesting funding, emigration of best young researchers.

The same question was answered by the Swiss PI. For them, the most important challenges for EE are on the issues of research funding (68.8%) and institutional framework conditions (65%). Comments:

Salaries in academia cannot compete with industry which causes brain drain of the most competent researchers. The PhD funding in EE is a problem. Second jobs are needed in some cases in order to survive.

- No scientific reform since soviet times have taken place.
- Often elderly elder scientists determine directions. There is no age limit for retirement which blocks young scientists.
- There is not enough scientific freedom. The introduction of new methods is a challenge.
- In some countries, nepotism and/or corruption is a problem.
- At the universities, the focus lies on teaching and not on research.
- The funding situation, in some countries even the political situation is not stable.
- The continuity/sustainability is not secured. Ending funding can destroy the progress made in the past.

Future (wishful) funding (EE: Q30, Swiss: Q13)

(EE: 109 answers, 11 skipped; Swiss: 77 answers, 5 skipped)

A majority of the Eastern European and Swiss respondents have a preference for short-term stays and grants for young scientists in Eastern Europe:

- Grants for young scientists: 73% (EE) and 71.4% (Swiss)
- Short-term stays (up to three months): 72% (EE) and 63.6% (Swiss)
- Research equipment for EE partners: 61%
- Funds for workshop/conferences: 47%
- Funds for consumables/field trips for EE partners: 28%
- Travel grants for visits (up to one week): 28%

Other comments by Eastern European respondents:

- academic English language training is needed,
- collaborative PhD tutoring,
- suggestion that two organizations working together formally sign a bilateral agreement, with the support of the Swiss and EE country authority, so that Swiss institutions see more benefit for them and continue the cooperation.

Other comments by Swiss respondents

- None of the options will produce the impact of the SCOPES project
- Suggestion for a doctoral scholarship in EE
- Partners in Central Asia require a lot of capacity building – contrasts with the expectation of excellent research
- “Go home” grants to help young EE researchers returning home to find a job, grants for young scientists to make EE more attractive
- Support publications

General comments by Eastern European and Swiss respondents

General remarks about SCOPES programme (EE: Q37; Swiss: Q20)

(EE: 63 answers, 57 skipped; Swiss: 38 answers, 44 skipped)

More than 50% of the Eastern European respondents made general remarks:

- Many positive remarks: thankful for support, should be continued;
- Grants for doctoral students would be needed to stop the brain drain, to be integrated in SCOPES or other SNSF programmes;
- 3 years are not enough for some projects as there are immense differences in level of competence, language and administrative support, Swiss coordinator is too powerful;
- The flexibility and sensitivity for the local conditions was highly appreciated.

Nearly 50% of the Swiss respondents made general remarks which were quite dispersed:

- Critical: No salaries for partners is a problem, does not solve the systemic issues
- Critical: funding for Swiss partner is not sufficient and administrative load is too high, doubts on sustainable outcomes.
- Supportive (good programme, should continue – some proposals for re-shaping)
- Wish for continuity to keep the networks going (follow-up workshops and projects)
- Good and important opportunity for partners

Support provided by Swiss project coordinators (EE: Q28)

(Answered: 109 Skipped: 11)

A large majority of Eastern European team leaders received a very good (86%) to good (10%) support from the Swiss coordinator.

Support provided by the SNSF to the Swiss project coordinators (EE: Q12)

(Answered: 76, skipped: 6)

A majority (92.1%) rated this very good or good. The SCOPES kick-off meeting in Bern was seen as useful.

3. Caveats:

- Some outcomes are very difficult to assess and quantify. Also, some effects might result at a later stage.
- The answers only reflect the personal opinions of the researchers (e.g. regarding improvement of management skills, international reputation, etc.) and we do not have any means to verify the statements.
- The researchers are interested in receiving more funding via SCOPES or a similar programme.
- Some of the comments lead to the assumption that some researchers have misinterpreted some of the questions.
- Although the survey is anonymous, some researchers might have feared that the answers could be traced back to them.
- Although we asked to answer only for the parts being performed in their countries, we cannot be sure if the researchers remembered that when answering the questionnaire.

4. Assessment of outcomes (taking into account the result framework)

Outcome 1: Research capacities of partner countries have improved towards to Western European or global standards.			
1.1	Research results will be published in internationally reviewed journals.	Most teams published their results in international peer reviewed journals.	clearly positive
1.2	Demand- and mandate-oriented research is part of the research portfolio.	A majority (88.5%) said that they gained a broader research portfolio. However, funding from the private sector as well as from governmental agencies did not improve to a great extent.	partially positive
1.3	Proportion of external funding is increased.	Relatively few were able to acquire additional funding on top of the SCOPES project. Only one third of the researchers have seen an increase of competitive funding.	partially positive

1.4	Research projects are organized according to modern management criteria.	Overall the Eastern European partners had the impression that the project management skills in their departments were clearly improved.	clearly positive
1.5	Participation in European research activities is in place or has in terms of the frequency and the quality improved.	Cooperation with research institutions from Western Europe improved. EU funding seems to play a certain role.	partially positive

Outcome 2: The institutional framework conditions of research in the partner countries have improved			
2.1	Change processes have been defined - for example with regard to research management, training, infrastructure, etc. - and successfully completed.	A large proportion of researchers say that their use of new methodologies and approaches in research have improved considerable or even to a great extent. Still many challenges (especially funding, support for young scientists and infrastructure, but also institutional and systemic aspects!)	positive but still many challenges
2.2	Contacts with stakeholders (including local authorities), and national and international positioning have improved.	The interaction with the various stakeholder groups has not increased to a great extent. The highest increase can be seen with the interaction of the general public, followed by the national authorities.	partially positive
2.3	Data concerning support of young scientists (including number of courses and trained students, PhD students and postdocs).	Bachelors: 3 per JRP/45 per IP PhD students: 2 per JRP/3 per IP Postdocs: 2 per JRP/3 per IP Doctorates: 1 per JRP/IP	Clearly positive
2.4	Number and percentage of women at the research institutions and the qualifications	Co-applicants (team leaders): 43% are women Almost half of the staff involved were female	no comment
2.5	Number and quality of contacts with industry and the private sector.	Private sector/industry: 20% to a certain or great extent, 42% not so much	partially positive

Outcome 3: The international integration and visibility of the partner countries in the research sector has improved			
3.1	Personal relation networks in the region and with Western Europe	On average, two-thirds improved their network	clearly positive
3.2	Number of oral presentations of East European researcher supported in the framework of conference grants	Most participants have made a contribution to the conference	clearly positive

SNSF/10.09.2014

Annex - Questionnaires

SCOPES Customer Survey for Eastern European partners:

Introduction

The SCOPES programme, which is co-funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Swiss Agency for Development, supports scientific cooperation between researchers in Switzerland and Eastern European countries.

The aim of this study is to learn more about the impact of the programme phase SCOPES 2009-2012. The survey is anonymous; the SNSF does not see which answers belong to which projects or principal investigators.

Your experience with the SCOPES programme and your needs with regard to the future shape of collaborative research funding are of great importance to the SNSF. Thus, we kindly ask you to participate in this study. It takes about 25 minutes to complete this questionnaire.

The questionnaire is sent to project leaders in Switzerland and team leaders in Eastern European countries. There are two different questionnaires for the respective geographical groups.

Please answer the questions only for the project part that was conducted in YOUR OWN COUNTRY.

Motivation

- 1) Which main factors motivated you to participate in the SCOPES programme?

Please choose max. 3 answers

- Scientific competence of the partners
- Unique experts in a certain field
- New scientific topics
- Country-specific advantages (please specify under comments)
- Possibility to learn from another science culture
- Possibility for comparative studies (e.g. other framework conditions, different samples)
- Access to unique sources (e.g. archives, archaeology, ecosystems)
- Additional funds for networking
- Additional funds for research
- Other (please specify under comments)

Comments

Impact

2) (2) Has the SCOPES contribution had an impact on your team/department in the area:

Improvement of infrastructure?

- Basic infrastructure
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)
- Research equipment
- Teaching equipment
- Improvement of libraries
- Services (e.g. lab analyses)
- Other (please specify under comments)

Comments

3) (2) Improvement of research and teaching?

- Teaching curricula
- Quality of teaching
- Integration of education and research
- Use of new methodologies and approaches in research
- Other (please specify under comments)

Comments

All questions: 5 categories: 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent) + can't say / not relevant

- 1 (not at all)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (to a great extent)
- Can't say / not relevant

4.) (2) Strengthening the human resources situation?

- Creation of new positions during the SCOPES project
- Maintaining the created positions after the SCOPES project
- Creation of new positions after SCOPES project
- Other (please specify under comments)

Comments

All questions: 5 categories: 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent) + can't say / not relevant

- 1 (not at all)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (to a great extent)
- Can't say / not relevant

5) (1) Did the SCOPES funding contribute to an improvement of project management in your department in the following areas?

- Project preparation and set-up
- Partner search
- Project coordination
- Reporting
- Quality assurance
- Building of networks
- Communications among team and with partners
- Dissemination of research results
- Other (please specify under comments)

Comments

All questions: 5 categories: 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent) + can't say / not relevant

- 1 (not at all)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (to a great extent)
- Can't say / not relevant

6) (1) Did the participation in SCOPES lead to increased cooperation with other research institutions?

- From the same country
- From Eastern European countries
- From Western European countries
- From non-European Countries
- Other (please specify under comments)

Comments

All questions: 5 categories: 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent) + can't say / not relevant

1 (not at all)

2

3

4

5 (to a great extent)

Can't say / not relevant

7) (3)What kind of impact has the participation in SCOPES had on the perception of your institution/department?

In your country

In Eastern European countries

In Western European countries

In non-European countries

Other (please specify under comments)

Comments

Answers to all options:

1 (very negative)

2

3

4

5 (very positive)

Can't say / not relevant

8) (1)Has your participation in the SCOPES project helped you to:

Gain a broader research portfolio (e.g. applied research, interdisciplinary research, new research field, privately mandated research)

Acquire funds from your national research funding agency/agencies

Acquire other governmental funds

Acquire private funds

Acquire funding from European sources

Acquire funding from other sources (please specify under comments)

Comments

All questions: 5 categories: 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent) + can't say / not relevant

1 (not at all)

2

3

4

5 (to a great extent)

Can't say / not relevant

9) (2) Did your interaction with the following stakeholders increase because of the participation in the SCOPES project?

- Local/regional authorities
- National authorities
- Media
- Private sector/industry
- General public
- Other (please specify in the field below)

Please describe in what way the interaction changed:

All questions: 5 categories: 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent) + can't say / not relevant

- 1 (not at all)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (to a great extent)
- Can't say / not relevant

10) (2) Did the interaction with the stakeholders mentioned before lead to specific results (e.g. policy changes, publications, policy recommendations)?

- Yes
- No
- Can't say

Please comment

Capacity building

11) (2) Please indicate the number of Bachelor/Master students who benefited from the project activities (e.g. attending classes)

Total:
Thereof women:

12) (2) Please indicate the number of PhD students who have substantially contributed to the SCOPES project

PhD Students:
Thereof women:

13) (2) Please indicate the number of Postdocs/Scientists who have substantially contributed to the SCOPES project

Postdocs/Scientists:
Thereof women:

14) (2) Please indicate the number of doctorates awarded during the project or shortly thereafter

Doctorates awarded:

Thereof women:

15) (2) Please indicate the number of OTHER collaborators who have substantially contributed to the SCOPES project (e.g. technicians)

Others:

Thereof women:

16) Do you have comments with regards to the staff who worked on the project?

(Textbox)

17) (1) Please indicate how many researchers that worked on the SCOPES project in your country continued their career

In academia in your country

In another sector in your country

In academia in another country (please specify in which country under question 18)

In another sector in another country (please specify in which country under question 18)

18.) Comments with regards to question 17:

Visibility of research

19) (1) Please indicate the number of publications in international peer-reviewed journals that resulted from this project

Number of publications:

20) (1) Please name the publication you consider the most important:

(Single textline)

21) (3) What kind of impact has the participation in SCOPES had on your professional network?

With researchers in your country

With researchers in Eastern European countries

With researchers in Western European countries

With researchers in non-European countries

Others (please specify under comments)

Comments

All questions:

- 1 (very negative)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (very positive)
- Can't say / not relevant

Funding impact

22) (1) Please rank the relevance of the funding sources of your current research budget (the most important should be ranked as 1)

Please note that the list rearranges automatically according to the ranks you choose.

- University/academy funding
- Competitive national research funding
- EU funding
- Funding from bilateral programmes
- Other (please specify under comments)

23) Comments

24) (1) In addition to the SCOPES funding, has the share of competitive national and international funding of your research budget increased during and after the SCOPES project?

- Yes
- No
- Can't say

Please comments

(25) (2) Question logic: If answer yes) By which percentage did it change (approximately)?
(Textbox)

Feedback on the programme

26) Please indicate in which of the following areas you faced challenges in your project and specify these under comments

- Communication with your project partner(s)
- Administration of your own organisation (e.g. financial issues, accounting, human resources management)
- Administration of partner organisation (e.g. financial issues, accounting, human resources management)
- Differing levels of scientific competence among partner(s)
- Other

Comments

All questions: 5 categories: 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent) + can't say / not relevant

- 1 (not at all)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (to a great extent)
- Can't say / not relevant

27) How heavy was the administrative work load in your opinion (scientific and financial reporting to the SNSF)?

- Appropriate
- Heavy
- Very heavy
- Can't say

Please specify

28) How do you rate the support provided by the Swiss project coordinator?

- Very good
- Good
- Neutral
- Poor
- Very poor
- Can't say

Please specify

Challenges and funding needs

29) What are the main challenges with regard to research and development in your country (please specify below)?

- Support of research careers
- Institutional framework conditions
- Research funding
- Policy aspects
- Other

Please specify

30) If there were no specific Swiss-Eastern European research cooperation programmes, what kind of funding would be the most helpful to support scientific cooperation between researchers in Switzerland and Eastern European countries?

Please choose the three you consider the most important.

- Travel grants for visits (up to 1 week)
- Funds for short-term stays (up to 3 months)
- Funds for workshops/conferences
- Funds for research equipment for Eastern European partners
- Funds for consumables/field trips for Eastern European partners
- Grants for young scientists
- Other (please specify under comments)

Comments

General information about investigator

31) Gender: Female Male

32) What year were you born?

33) Are/were you active in the capital city of your country or elsewhere (during the SCOPES project)?

- Capital
- Elsewhere

34) Which country are/were you active in during the SCOPES Project?
(Text line)

35) Which area of disciplines was the SCOPES project on?

- Humanities and social sciences
- Mathematics, natural and engineering sciences
- Biology and medicine

Comments

36) Type of SCOPES project:

Joint Research Project (JRP)
Institutional Partnership (IP)

37) Do you have any other general remarks about the SCOPES programme?
(Comment/Essay Box)

We thank you for participating in this survey! (Descriptive text)

SCOPES Customer Survey for Swiss project coordinators:

Introduction

The SCOPES programme, which is co-funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Swiss Agency for Development, supports scientific cooperation between researchers in Switzerland and Eastern European countries.

The aim of this study is to learn more about the impact of the programme phase SCOPES 2009-2012. The survey is anonymous; the SNSF does not see which answers belong to which projects or principal investigators.

Your experience with the SCOPES programme and your needs with regard to the future shape of collaborative research funding are of great importance to the SNSF. Thus, we kindly ask you to participate in this study. It takes about 20 minutes to complete this questionnaire.

A small number of questions ask for information similar to the output data you provide in your scientific reports. However, as most of the scientific reports will not be handed in to us on time for the planning of the new phase of cooperation with Eastern European countries, we kindly ask you to provide us with this information.

The questionnaire is sent to project leaders in Switzerland and team leaders in Eastern European countries. There are two different questionnaires for the respective geographical groups.

Please note that some questions refer to the SWISS PART of the project and some ask for your opinion about the PARTNER(S).

Motivation

1.) Which main factors motivated you to participate in the SCOPES programme?

Please choose max. 3 answers

- Scientific competence of the partners
- Unique experts in a certain field
- New scientific topics
- Country-specific advantages (please specify under comments)
- Possibility to learn from another science culture
- Possibility for comparative studies (e.g. other framework conditions, different samples)
- Access to unique sources (e.g. archives, archaeology, ecosystems)
- Additional funds for networking
- Additional funds for research
- Other (please specify under comments)

Comments

Impact

2) (2) Has the SCOPES contribution had an impact on the team/department of your EASTERN EUROPEAN partner(s) in the following areas:

Improvement of infrastructure?

- Basic infrastructure
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)
- Research equipment
- Teaching equipment
- Improvement of libraries
- Services (e.g. lab analyses)
- Other (please specify under comments)

Comments

3) (2) Improvement of research and teaching?

- Teaching curricula
- Quality of teaching
- Integration of education and research
- Use of new methodologies and approaches in research
- Other (please specify under comments)

Comments

All questions: 5 categories: 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent) + can't say / not relevant

- 1 (not at all)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (to a great extent)
- Can't say / not relevant

4) (3) What kind of impact has the participation in SCOPES had on the perception of your PARTNER(S) institution(s)/department(s)?

- In your country
- In Eastern European countries
- In Western European countries
- In non-European countries
- Other (please specify under comments)

Comments

Answers to all options:

- 1 (very negative)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (very positive)
- Can't say / not relevant

5) (3) What kind of impact has the participation in SCOPES had on the perception of YOUR institution/department?

- In your country
- In Eastern European countries
- In Western European countries
- In non-European countries
- Other (please specify under comments)

Comments

Answers to all options:

- 1 (very negative)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (very positive)
- Can't say / not relevant

Visibility of research

- 6) (1) Please indicate the number of publications in international peer-reviewed journals that resulted from this project

Please also include the full list of publications in the output data.

Number of publications:

- 7) (1) Please name the publication you consider the most important:

Feedback on the programme

- 8) (2) Apart from yourself, did additional staff from your team work on the project (even if they did not receive funding through SCOPES)?

Total number of people:

Thereof women:

- 9.) Comments

- 10) Please indicate in which of the following areas you faced challenges in your project and explain these under comments:

Communication with your project partner(s)

Administrative issues of your own organisation (e.g. financial issues, accounting, human resources management)

Administrative issues of partner organisation (e.g. financial issues, accounting, human resources management)

Differing levels of scientific competence among partners

Other

All questions: 5 categories: 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent) + can't say / not relevant

1 (not at all)

2

3

4

5 (to a great extent)

Can't say / not relevant

- 11) How heavy was the administrative work load in your opinion (scientific and financial reporting to the SNSF)?

Appropriate

Heavy

Very heavy

Can't say

Please specify:

12) How do you rate the support provided by the programme management at the SNSF?

- Very good
- Good
- Neutral
- Poor
- Very poor
- Can't say

Please specify

Challenges and funding needs

13) If there were no specific Swiss-Eastern European research cooperation programmes, what kind of funding would be the most helpful to support scientific cooperation between researchers in Switzerland and Eastern European countries?

Please choose the three you consider the most important.

- Travel grants for visits (up to 1 week)
- Funds for short-term stays (up to 3 months)
- Funds for workshops/conferences
- Funds for research equipment for Eastern European partners
- Funds for consumables/field trips for Eastern European partners
- Grants for young scientists
- Other (please specify under comments)

Comments

14) What are the main challenges with regard to research and development in the EASTERN EUROPEAN country/countries you worked with (please specify under comments)?

- Support of research careers
- Institutional framework conditions
- Research funding
- Policy aspects
- Other (please specify under comments)

Comments

General information about investigator

15) Gender: Female Male

16) What year were you born?

17) Please mention your partner countries (as many as applicable):

Partner 1:

Partner 2:

Partner 3:

Partner 4:

18) Which area of disciplines was the SCOPES project on?

Humanities and social sciences

Mathematics, natural and engineering sciences

Biology and medicine

Comments

19) Type of SCOPES project:

Joint Research Project (JRP)

Institutional Partnership (IP)

20) Do you have any other general remarks about the SCOPES programme?

(Comment/Essay Box)

We thank you for participating in this survey! (Descriptive text)

15 April 2014 / IZ