

Strengthening the Strategic Cooperation Between the EU and Western Balkan Region in the field of ICT Research

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Abstract	The final report of the SCORE project presents a comprehensive summary of the project objectives, methodology/workplan and key results of the project. It includes a concise dissemination plan for the project's main results and suggested follow-up actions to this project.
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1 PROJECT IDENTITY

1.1 General Project Information

Project Title	Strengthening the Strategic Cooperation Between the EU and Western Balkan Region in the field of ICT Research.
Project Acronym	SCORE
Project Contract Number	045384
Framework Programme	6th Framework Programme for Research & Technological Development (2002-2006)
Thematic Priority	Information Society Technologies (IST)
Start Date	01.02.2007
End Date	01.02.2009
Duration	24 months
Project website	http://www.score-project.eu
Contact person for the SCORE project	Raphael Koumeri (SCORE Project co-ordinator) PLANET S.A. Apollon Tower L. Riencourt 64, Athens, Greece 115-23 Tel: 0030 210 6905000 Email: rkoum@planet.gr

1.2 SCORE partners

The SCORE partners are presented in this section, including contact persons and contact details for further country-specific information.



PLANET is a leading management consulting firm advising clients in Greece and Southeast Europe on issues of strategy, technology, operations and supporting the implementation of large-scale projects. In addition to co-ordinating the SCORE project, it has contracted major RTD and IT consulting projects in the Western Balkan region, including FP6 IST Project IS2WeB (Extending Information Society Networks to the Western Balkan Region), SEE-INNOVATION (Facilitating Innovation for ICT SMEs in South Eastern Europe), the Development of Information and Communication Technology Management Capacity in Serbia and IT Strategy & Support to the Modernisation of the Ministry of Finance & Economy of the Republic of Serbia. Through the above mentioned projects, PLANET has developed an extended network of ICT contacts in the region (academic research organizations, IT companies, governmental actors). PLANET has a long-standing experience in the management of large-scale RTD and commercial projects. Since 1994, the company has participated in or co-ordinated several RTD projects funded by the 4th, 5th and 6th Community Framework Programmes including: ONTOGOV, PICTURE, SAKE, FIT, CB-BUSINESS, ISIS (e-government); KNOW-NET, LEVER, DECOR, INKASS, EKMF (Knowledge Management); ENLARGE, HERMES, WIT (e-business); K-LAB, KNOWLABORATION, MODEL, ROCKET (e-learning).

Contact persons	Raphael Koumeri, Soumi Papadopoulou
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The Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI) is a private, not-for-profit research institute. ZSI has both extensive experience in EU projects and a strong Southeast Europe orientation. ZSI hosts the 'Austrian Science and Research Liaison Offices - ASO' in Southeast Europe on behalf of the Austrian Ministry for Education, Science and Culture. These 'ASOs' are located in Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Sofia (Bulgaria) and co-ordinated by the ZSI-headquarter in Vienna. ZSI activities are concentrated on thematic priorities concerning the transformation to the Information Society and its knowledge base. ZSI

regularly conducts studies and practical projects addressing European and global social, political and economic issues. Moreover, the ZSI acts as resource and monitoring agency on behalf of the Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In this capacity, the ZSI is responsible for the establishment of Vocational Education and Higher Education Sector Programmes for West Balkan countries such as Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in order to generate a knowledge basis for the Austrian government to decide in which directions Austrian development co-operation support should be channelled. The ZSI also co-ordinated the first regional Southeast European ERA-NET project (SEE-ERA-NET). This project focused on the co-ordination of bilateral intergovernmental science and technology agreements of selected EU member and candidate countries with the West Balkan Countries. Consortium members were the ministries responsible for international S&T co-operation. Finally, ZSI was a partner in both the IS2WeB and SEE-INNOVATION projects that targeted the Western Balkan region.

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The Centre for Information Vocational Education and Training (CIVET 2000) is a private company established in 2000, which offers services like market research, training, and event organisation in Albania. CIVET2000 has a long experience in the field of studies and researches for various international and national projects. Another key competence of CIVET2000 is the organisation of events, such as the participation in the organisation of the “Lifelong Learning Week in Albania” and other national activities. Moreover, CIVET2000 has established a network with academic research organisations in Albania as a result of its involvement in the WBC-INCO.NET, SCORE and IS2WEB projects.

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ISSETI was founded in July 2003 and carries on its activity in education and research in the field of information and communication technology. It plays an important role in promoting the achievements of ICT in collaboration with governmental organizations, foundations and associations as well as native and foreign companies. ISSETI is involved in many regional and European projects such as SCORE, SMIS and SEE INNOVATION. Through its participation in these projects it has contributed in determining the priorities in the information technology field and establishing an orientating platform enabling the cooperation between the regional and developed countries. ISSETI adheres to the Albanian association of information technology AITA as well as to the SEE ICT Private Sector Forum – regional collaboration of Southeastern Europe for the encouragement and promotion of the information technology in these countries.

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World University Service Bosnia and Herzegovina (SUS B&H) is a non-profit organisation whose mission is to provide active and continuous support to higher education. A main objective of SUS B&H is to connect B&H and European universities, research centres, researchers and academics and establish inter-university and international co-operation between B&H and European institutions. SUS, was also an active partner in the IS2WEB project, where it gained valuable experiences in mapping exercises and organisation of workshops.

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The Association for Information Technologies in Bosnia & Herzegovina (BAIT) is a voluntary, non-profitable association, which emerged as a joint action of 50 private leader companies in a field of ICT from Bosnia and Herzegovina. BAIT members are IT companies whose basic activities are hardware trading , manufacturing and trading software, internet service provision, manufacturing, installation and service of networks and network applications. BAIT is experienced in engaging in consultation processes with ICT policy makers for the promotion of Information Society in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, it has experience in the organisation of professional training workshops for its members.

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The Faculty of Economics (ECCF) in Skopje, as a part of the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius”, is the leading academic institution in the field of business and economics in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Faculty and its employees are highly experienced in forming, accumulating, transferring and applying knowledge in the mentioned field. Through its involvement in the IS2WEB project, the ECCF has developed a network of contacts with academic and NGO research actors in the field of ICT, and organised training workshops on FP6 programme opportunities as well as on ICT thematic areas for the transfer of EU research results.

Contact persons:	Saso Josimovski
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MASIT

Macedonia

ICT Chamber of Commerce The ICT Chamber of Commerce (MASIT) is a voluntary, non-profitable organisation that was founded in year 2000, as part of the Macedonian Chamber of Commerce. MASIT is an ICT Chamber of Commerce in FYR of Macedonia and represents the leading companies of the IT industry in the country. MASIT covers all major sectors in ICT Industry and has numerous representatives in each sector: hardware, software and electronic communications. Moreover, all ICT multinational representative offices are valuable MASIT members. MASIT has a strong experience in the organisation of conferences and seminars, in the provision of educational and training services as well as in the execution of ICT projects. MASIT has great Government relations and constantly growing relations with the Academia and Faculties that educate ICT workforce. Finally, in the SEE-INNOVATION project, it conducted a survey of the ICT SMEs capabilities and needs in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

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BOS

Belgrade
Open
School

The Belgrade Open School (BOS) is a non-governmental, not-for-profit educational organisation established in 1993. BOS' Center for Research of Information Technologies carries out: research on Information Society, designs and implements e-learning programmes, promotes the concept of Information Society in order to build European knowledge-based society, runs its own web portals (design, editing, and maintenance), and promotes and supports EU R&D in ICT in Serbia and the region. BOS organised more than a dozen of seminars, series of lectures, public debates and book

promotions across Serbia, published six books, as a result of research, and created and implemented more than 17 e-learning programmes. Moreover, BOS has acquired valuable experience in public consultation processes and the organization of workshops. In the context of the IS2WEB project, it performed a survey of ICT research organisations and their capabilities and developed an extensive network of contacts with academic and other research organisations, and stakeholders.

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**INFORMACIONO
DRUŠTVO SRBIJE**

INFORMATION SOCIETY OF SERBIA is a nongovernmental organization, an association for information systems and computer networks. Its members are experts in computer and telecommunications sciences and ICT companies representatives. Members of the association are ICT experts from business, academic, research and governmental environment. The association is engaged with popularization of ICT technologies, dissemination of information within this area, symposium, conference and training organization, as well as with initiation and participation in both national and international projects. Lately, **INFORMATION SOCIETY OF SERBIA** is engaged in the promotion of IST concept in e-business, e-government and e-learning areas throughout Serbia. During its involvement in the SEE-INNOVATION AND SCORE projects, it performed a survey of the capabilities and needs of ICT SMEs in Serbia, as well as organized and hosted one national IST Mentoring workshop. Later it engaged most eminent ICT expert to comprise the Strategic Research and Development Agenda in the field of ICT.

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2 SCORE OBJECTIVES

SCORE is a Specific Support Action that addresses the need for well-defined future research and development priorities that will enhance scientific and research co-operation between the Western Balkan region and the EU. SCORE addresses specifically the thematic area of Information Communication Technologies (ICT), which corresponds to one of the ten themes of the FP7's "Co-operation" Programme.

The focus on ICT is based on the action plan that was set out during the first bi-regional EU/Western Balkans ministerial meeting (Thessaloniki, 26 June 2003) and identified the scientific field of Information and Communication Technologies as a high priority for EU/Western Balkan cooperation.

Addressing the above need, the objectives of SCORE are:

- **Objective 1** - Develop ICT Strategic Research Agendas for the Western Balkan countries that will define each country's ICT research priorities following a broad consultation with affected stakeholder communities (e.g. national RTD policy-makers, research actors including academic, not-for-profit and private sector research organisations, and ICT companies including software developers, internet providers, telecom operators).
- **Objective 2** - Develop a Policy Paper with recommendations for shaping EU scientific co-operation with the Western Balkan Region in the field of ICT research: 2007-2013.
- **Objective 3** - Transfer EU research results and technologies in the identified ICT research priorities/ thematic areas in order to familiarise Western Balkan research actors with current research developments and state-of-art technologies in these areas.
- **Objective 4** - Facilitate the development of networks between research actors within the Western Balkan region and between the region and the EU in order to develop contacts, exchange ideas and pursue joint research collaboration.

3 PROJECT METHODOLOGY / WORKPLAN

In order to realise the above objectives, the SCORE project was implemented in two phases. During the first year/phase of the project, SCORE identified a number of common regional ICT Research and Development (R&D) priorities through a **broad consultation process**, involving both ICT R&D experts and the ICT R&D communities. All the identified ICT R&D priorities were considered as:

- reflecting the actual research capacities and potential,
- meeting the technological / industrial trends,
- addressing real socio-economic needs per country, and
- were mapped to the ICT challenges of the EU FP7 ICT work programmes.

They were hence assessed as concrete *ICT R&D priorities in the Western Balkan region* for the future mutual cooperation with the EU.

During the second year/phase of the project, barriers to ICT R&D collaboration were identified including institutional, financial, human resource, infrastructure, cultural and other barriers. Moreover, concrete recommendations in order to minimise these barriers were proposed targeting both Western Balkan and EU decision-makers. The barriers and recommendations were further elaborated during dedicated consultation sessions in the four country-specific **ICT Workshops** involving 139 participants in October 2008. A secondary

aim of the workshops was to transfer EU know-how and results on a number of the identified regional R&D priorities.

Finally, a closing **Regional Conference** was organised in order to present the main results of the project to a regional audience of 110 participants, on 11-12 December 2008 in Belgrade.

The main activities of the project and key lessons learned are presented in more detail in the following.

3.1 Consultation Process

The key method employed within the SCORE project for the development of the country-specific Strategic Research Agendas and the Policy Paper (Project Objectives 1 and 2) was a broad **consultation process**.

Consultation has only recently been recognized as an essential element of public policy-making in the majority of OECD countries where legal, policy and institutional frameworks are still under development. In the Western Balkan countries, employing consultation with stakeholders in policy making is at a primary stage. SCORE aims to contribute to the development of a consultation culture in priority setting and policy-making within the region.

The consultation process was implemented in two main phases: an expert consultation phase and an open consultation phase.

The two phases can be summarised as follows:

- **1st phase – “Expert consultation”**: A panel of approx. 15 expert stakeholders (identified based on a set of criteria) was formed per country and consulted by means of a consultation document which included a set of questions. After the contributions were collected, a Consultation Workshop was held in order to consolidate the findings (workshops were held between June and July 2007). The initial contributions and outcomes of the workshop formed the basis for a first version of the ICT Strategic Research Agendas (one per country), that were available at the end of October 2007. Overall, during the expert consultation phase, a total of **68 ICT R&D experts** were consulted including representatives of academia, ICT industry and policy-makers.
- **2nd phase – “Open consultation”**: the initial version of the ICT Strategic Research Agenda was consulted openly with the broader stakeholder communities (direct and indirect stakeholders) via targeted mailing lists and publication at the SCORE project’s website (the open consultations commenced on the 7th November and ended on the 14th December). Comments were collected and analysed in order to develop the final ICT Strategic Research Agendas (one per country). The final ICT SRAs constitute the basis for the development of the Policy Paper. During the open consultation phase a total of **183 ICT R&D actors** across the region provided their opinion on the initial Strategic Research Agendas.

Moreover, during the ICT workshops held within the context of the SCORE project in October 2008, (described in section 3.2), the overall findings in the SRAs and the Policy Paper were further reviewed and enhanced. In the workshops, ICT experts and governmental representatives (139 participants across the region) discussed the key challenges and respective recommendations for enhancing scientific cooperation between the respective country and the EU.

Finally, during the closing regional Conference organised in Belgrade on 10-11 December 2008, the Policy Paper was further posed to open dialogue with 110 regional ICT R&D

stakeholders including policy-makers and representatives from academia and ICT industry. (see section 3.3 for details).

The consultation process lasted effectively throughout the project duration, by engaging ICT stakeholders in all key project events (e.g. the ICT workshops and final Conference).

An overview of the *main*¹ consultation process is illustrated in the following figure.

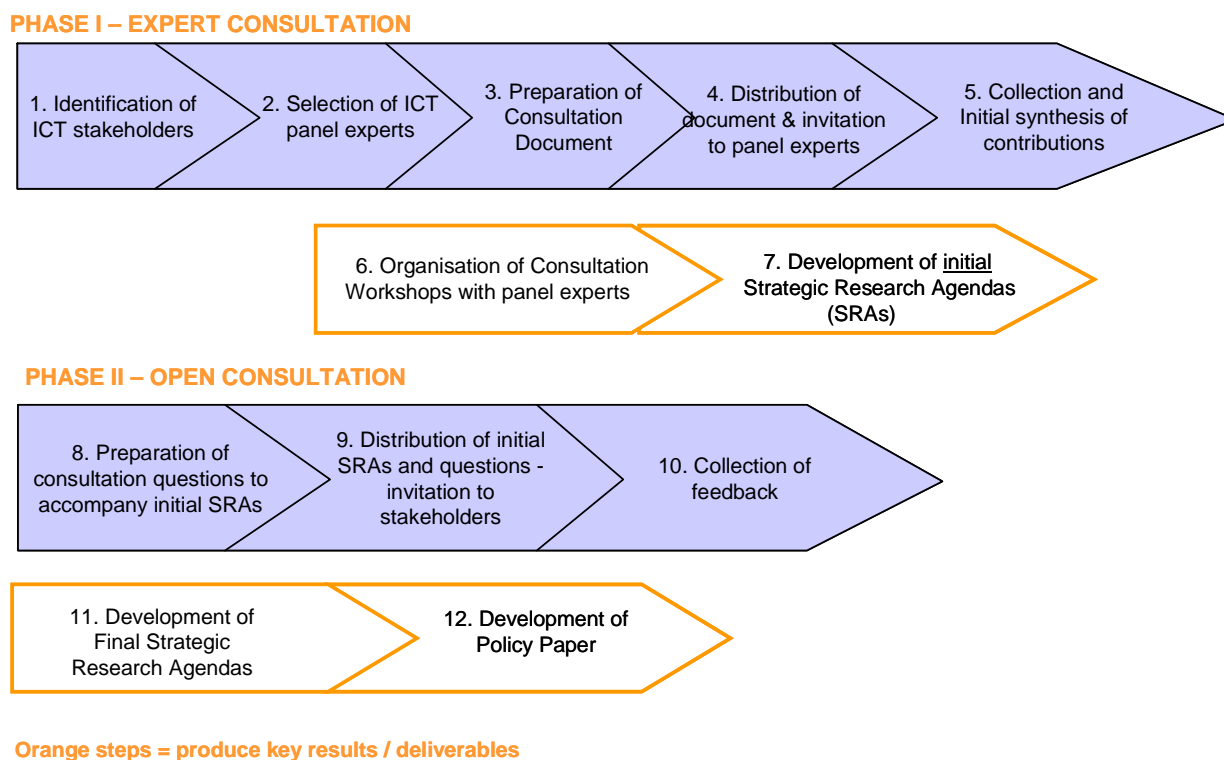


Figure 1 – Overview of the SCORE Consultation Process

For a detailed overview of the consultation process steps, see deliverable **D1 “Consultation Process Plan”**² which includes all templates used and guidelines.

The **key lessons learned** from the consultation process are presented below with a view to contribute to the development of a consultation culture in the policy-making process in the region.

- Stakeholders that were in some way already involved in FP7 projects and in particular related projects to SCORE (e.g. IS2WeB, SEE-INNOVATION) were more willing to cooperate in the consultations (since such stakeholders did not require additional introduction to the FP concept).

¹ i.e. excluding the extended consultations on the SRAs and Policy Paper during the ICT workshops and regional Conference

² All deliverables can be downloaded from the SCORE portal www.score-project.eu or can be provided by the project co-ordinator, PLANET (pls. refer to contact information in section 1.2).

- Researchers who contributed in the identification of R&D priorities in the country felt as owners of the outcome and this was a very strong motivation factor for sustainability of cooperation with the research community (also with a view to the future).
- Support of the government and institutions in charge increased the level of importance that was given to the consultation.
- The proactive mobilization campaigns and repeated direct contacts with stakeholders (including face-to-face meeting, follow-up via telephone and emails) of SCORE project partners during the whole consultation phase and especially during the open consultation were key factors for success. The outcome was the considerable number of participation and quality of representation during the consultations.
- Cooperation with stakeholders from different sectors (e.g. commercial, public, academia, government officials) is very important for assessing the real needs of a country and the key to the success of the consultation process.

3.2 Organisation of ICT workshops

Four country-specific thematic ICT workshops were organised in October 2008 that contributed to the realisation of the third and fourth objectives of the project (i.e. to transfer EU research results to the Western Balkan ICT R&D communities and to assist the development of EU-WB R&D networks).

The aim of these workshops was to provide the participants with know-how on the current EU research developments and state-of-art technologies in the identified regional ICT Research & Development (R&D) priorities, identified through the consultation with ICT stakeholders. A second aim was to contribute to the formation of liaisons between the participants and the EU research experts in the selected ICT priorities with the multiple function of: (1) facilitating the exchange of useful insights and information and opportunities for the build-up of potential partnerships, (2) rendering EU researchers more aware of the research potential in the Western Balkan countries, and (3) disseminating the preliminary results of both the Strategic Research Agendas and policy paper so as to stimulate the public debate and obtain feedback from the participating stakeholders on what the Western Balkan countries could further undertake in order to enhance the EU-WB research collaboration.

The preparation of the ICT workshops followed a generic organisation plan summarized in the next table. For detailed information, please refer to Deliverable **D8 “ICT Workshop Organisation Plans”**.

Organizational Issue	Action
Agendas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of workshop concept and baseline agendas • Finalisation of the workshop Agendas
Identification of Experts (Presenters)	<p><u>EU experts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After creating a project database, identify and select suitable FP projects • Comments on and final selection of possible speakers • Invitation of EU experts • Confirmation of participation from experts received

Organizational Issue	Action
	<u>Local experts</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify & select profiles + Profiles' comments and additional suggestions • Invitation of local experts • Confirmation of participation experts <hr/> <u>ALL (EU + Local) EXPERTS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and keep regular contacts with experts providing information and assistance also on Logistics aspects • Collect CVs
General Dissemination (Announcement) and invitation of target participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting overall workshop announcement, brief piece of information, and invitation letter for target participants (ICT stakeholder in-house lists, consultation experts, policy makers, etc.) • Preparing related detailed action plans per country • Sending first invitation letter or brief information to target participants • First overall dissemination activities (brief news on portals, networks, etc.) • Sending reminders or official invitation letter with final workshop agenda and material
Workshop presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of ppt. Presentations • Collect (and translate) Presentations of Experts
Metrics and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting evaluation forms for wks participants • Drafting Workshop report template (to be filled in by the partners involved in order to evaluate the organisation and derive lessons)

Table 1 – General Organisation Plan for the ICT Workshops

The workshops addressed four regional ICT R&D priorities (based on the list of common R&D priorities for the region, documented in D7 – Policy Paper) i.e. ICT for Government and eGovernment, ICT for Enterprise and eBusiness, Internet and Broadband technologies, ICT for Learning and eLearning.

The SCORE workshops brought in total 139 participants (apprx. 35 participants per country) and represented: the national policy sphere (21%), the local SME ICT sector (30%), the local academic research institutions (25%) and local NCPs, EU guests and other supporting Non-Governmental Organisations (20%).

The **key lessons learned** from the organisation of the ICT workshops are summarised as follows:

- When feasible, appropriate experts originating from the wider region (including NMS) and now acting at EU level should be preferred (to EU experts).
- Presentations on the selected ICT research topics should be structured with a certain level of flexibility so that more in-depth or more general information is provided according to the needs of the participants;
- Language flexibility could be important as it provides for much appreciated customised learning pathways;
- There is a genuine interest of participants towards their country's ICT environment, priorities and barriers.

- There is need for similar knowledge-transfer events and further development and reinforcement of networks between WB and EU researchers.
- In general, the support to research organisations in WB Countries is still necessary in order to foster their successful participation in FP7 projects.
- This support shall come through similar events and through local organisations trained for this purpose (“train the trainers” events should be envisaged)

Detailed information on the delivery of the workshops and all material presented is documented in Deliverable **D9 “Report on ICT Workshops and material”**.

3.3 Organisation of closing Regional Conference

Finally, a closing Regional Conference was organised in Belgrade on 10-11 December 2008 with the title “*Towards an Information Society in the Western Balkans*”. The conference was jointly organized with the WBC-INCO.Net project.

The principle aim of the regional Conference was to discuss with regional policy-makers and R&D actors the main results of the SCORE project (i.e. the regional R&D priorities, barriers and proposed recommendations³) with a view to challenging/validating their accuracy and obtaining further feedback.

In more detail, the objectives of the **regional Conference** were to:

- Present and discuss the regional ICT R&D priorities identified by SCORE and WBC-INCO.Net.
- Discuss the barriers and challenges to R&D activities in the region, in the context of EU-Western Balkan collaboration.
- Present EU (FP7-ICT) opportunities for regional co-operation as well as regional initiatives.
- Identify concrete recommendations/actions for enhanced regional ICT R&D collaboration targeting both Western Balkan and EU decision-makers.
- To facilitate the establishment of networks between R&D actors across the region (contributing to the realisation of the fourth Project Objective).

The Conference attracted **109 participants in total**, including representatives of ministries from the Western Balkan countries, researchers from academia and the private ICT sector. Participants originated from all Western Balkan countries (including Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro) as well as neighbouring and EU countries (e.g. Slovenia, Italy, Greece, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands).

The key lessons learned from the organisation of the conference are summarised as follows:

- The support and participation of high-level policy-makers in the Conference (e.g. Ministry of Science in Serbia as well as relevant ministry representatives from Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania) was an important factor in the successful outcome of the event. Even more important, was the stated willingness of

³ Documented in the Policy Paper (D7)

such policy-makers to follow-up the outcomes and recommendations of the SCORE project.

- Although the initial target of 80-100 participants seemed difficult to achieve, it was in practice surpassed, reflecting that such conferences are indeed considered useful to R&D actors in the region. The need for further such regional events was identified by a number of participants in their completed evaluation forms.
- The organisation of open multi-disciplinary panel discussions (engaging experts from academia, ICT industry and policy-makers) during the conference was welcomed by most participants, although there were some comments on the need for further structuring of such panels in order to enable more concrete outcomes. This should be considered in the organisation of future similar events.

A detailed report on the main outcomes of the Conference is documented in Deliverable **D10 - Report on the Regional Conference**.

4 KEY PROJECT RESULTS

The key results of the SCORE project are the Policy Paper and four country-specific ICT Strategic Research Agendas (SRAs).

Moreover, the two methodologies employed within the project described earlier in section 3 (i.e. the Consultation Process Plan and the ICT Workshop Organisation Plans) can be considered as “methodological results” that could be employed in similar projects.

3.1 ICT Strategic Research Agendas

The country-specific ICT Strategic Research Agendas present the R&D priorities per country involved in the project for the period 2008-2013. They were developed following a broad consultation process (as described earlier in section 2.1).

The Strategic Research Agendas include an overview of the ICT R&D environment per country, followed by the identification of key barriers to ICT research and what could be done to address these at a country level.

The main part of the SRA is dedicated to the presentation of the identified ICT R&D priorities per country including specific R&D objectives and areas. The priorities in each SRA are grouped in two categories as follows:

- **ICT R&D priorities with a high level of attractiveness and high level of readiness:** these are priorities for which the country has the appropriate capacity and resources to pursue research and development and at the same time are considered to be attractive. They are suggested as feasible priorities in the short-to-medium term.
- **ICT R&D priorities with a high level of attractiveness and low/moderate level of readiness:** these are priorities that are considered attractive for the country, however the level of readiness and capacities is currently moderate. As such they are suggested as long-term priorities for the country.

The attractiveness in both types of R&D priorities is determined by the extent to which a given priority addresses specific socio-economic needs (demand-driven) or technological opportunities (supply-driven).

The Strategic Research Agendas were the key input for the development of the Policy Paper.

For further information please refer to:

Deliverable D6 – Final Strategic ICT Research Agendas for the Western Balkan Region and its annexes:

- **Annex 1** - Final Strategic Research Agenda: “ICT Research & Development Priorities for Albania, 2008-2013”
- **Annex 2** - Final Strategic Research Agenda: “ICT Research & Development Priorities for Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2008-2013”
- **Annex 3** - Final Strategic Research Agenda: “ICT Research & Development Priorities for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 2008-2013”
- **Annex 4** - Final Strategic Research Agenda: “ICT Research & Development Priorities for Serbia, 2008-2013”

3.2 Policy Paper

The Policy Paper “*Shaping EU-Western Balkan co-operation in the field of ICT Research & Development in the period 2008-2013: Priorities and Recommendations*” is the key/defining result of the SCORE project as it synthesizes the main findings of the consultation process at a regional level.

The Policy Paper addresses decision-makers both within the Western Balkan countries and the European Union. Western Balkan decision-makers include policy makers / governmental officials related to the field of ICT / ICT research, decision-makers in the academia / universities as well as top-level management of the ICT private sector. EU decision-makers primarily targeted in this paper are policy-makers related to the field of ICT R&D.

Specifically, the Policy Paper:

- Proposes commonly accepted R&D priorities for EU-Western Balkan cooperation in the FP7 context that reflect the actual socio-economic needs and R&D capabilities of the Western Balkan countries. Moreover, it correlates/maps these priorities to FP7 ICT challenges.
- Identifies key problems and barriers faced by ICT R&D actors in the Western Balkan countries and proposes concrete recommendations for Western Balkan countries’ decision-makers in order to address/minimise these.
- Makes specific recommendations for EU decision-makers which if implemented could facilitate the further integration of the Western Balkan region in the European Research Programmes.

The regional / common ICT Research & Development priorities are captured in the next table:

ICT R&D Priorities	ALBANIA		BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA		FYROM		SERBIA	
	High A & High R	High A & Low R	High A & High R	High A & Low R	High A & High R	High A & Low R	High A & High R	High A & Low R
ICTs for Government & eGovernment	✓		✓		✓		✓	
ICTs for Enterprises & eBusiness	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Internet & Broadband Technologies	✓			✓	✓		✓	
ICTs for Learning & eLearning	✓		✓		✓			✓
ICTs for Health & eHealth	✓		✓			✓		✓
Software Engineering		✓		✓	✓		✓	
Mobile Technologies					✓		✓	
ICTs for Agriculture						✓		✓
Digital Content & Digital Libraries		✓				✓		
Distributed Systems	✓							
Embedded & Pervasive Systems								✓
Network Technologies		✓						
Knowledge Technologies						✓		

Table 1 – Integrated list of ICT R&D Priorities for all countries (2008-2013)

[Legend: “A” stands for Attractiveness, “R” stands for Readiness]

The first 6 R&D priorities are considered as the regional priorities **proposed for future collaboration between the EU and Western Balkan countries**. The criterion for the selection of a priority as regional (in the context of being suitable for EU-WB collaboration) is the evidenced high level of attractiveness for all countries and additionally, high level of readiness to pursue R&D in the given priority by at least two out of the four countries.

For further information please refer to Deliverable D7 **Policy Paper - “*Shaping EU-Western Balkan co-operation in the field of ICT Research & Development in the period 2008-2013: Priorities and Recommendations*”**

4 DISSEMINATION

Conceived as the key pre-requisite for the exploitation of the project's results and for its overall success, the SCORE dissemination strategy has essentially aimed at increasing the awareness of the project objectives and activities as well as at publicising and leveraging the final project achievements (i.e. Strategic ICT Research Agendas and Policy Paper).

The main target has been the broader RTD community. Nevertheless also the non-specialised general audience was addressed, in a twofold direction: dissemination in the Western Balkan region and dissemination in the European Union.

The strategy implied dissemination activities according to two distinct phases, each focusing on specific information to be disseminated, and encompassing different dissemination channels in order to reach the final target audience, as resumed in the following table.

Phase/ Project months	Types of information disseminated	Main target audiences	Key dissemination Channels/Activities to carry out
Phase I Months 1- 12	SCORE project presentation including objectives, activities to be done and the expected results	Technological, Research & Academic Communities (Western Balkan level primarily); General Public	SCORE portal, SCORE project mailing list, project brochure, press releases, articles, consultation sessions, f2f meetings, project presentations, participation in events
Phase II Months 13-24	SCORE project results, public deliverables, further activities to be carried out (i.e. ICT workshops in the WB countries and final conference)	Technological, Research & Academic Communities (Western Balkan and EU level); General Public, RTD policy makers (Western Balkan and EU level)	SCORE project mailing list, ICT Workshops, focused publications or articles, participation in relevant conferences

Table 2 – SCORE Dissemination Strategy

While the first project phase mainly focused on the creation of general awareness and the engagement of target organisations in the project activities, the plan for using and disseminating the project knowledge in the second period has had the following orientations:

- Dissemination of the project results to the broader RTD communities in EU and Western Balkan countries via the already exploited information channels (Portal, mailing lists, similar projects, media, etc.) as well as the ICT workshops, and Final Conference. This has led to the obtainment of further feedback on the findings and contributed to the finalisation of the project results, and
- Participation in EU conferences and other major regional events in order to increase European awareness of the SCORE objectives and results and the Western Balkan region's potential for co-operation in EU R&D programs, facilitating also the networking of the project target organisations and leading EU research players.

The participation in events such as eChallenges or ICT 2008, where also a networking session was held, as well as the organisation of the project's closing high-level EU-Western

Balkan Regional Conference are all part of this framework. Detailed information on the project dissemination activities is contained in the first and second Periodic Activity Report (D4 and D11).

With regard to the future, and considering the recommendations given by EC reviewers at the last review meeting, the key project outputs (i.e. Consultation Process Plan, Final ICT Strategic Research Agendas and the Policy Paper “*Shaping EU-Western Balkan co-operation in the field of ICT Research and Development in the period 2008 -2013: Priorities and Recommendations*”) deserve a special attention since they are likely to be of high value to future EU-funded projects as well as to the EU and Western Balkan policy makers.

This is also the reason why these deliverables were recently further improved in order to:

- become more appealing and suitable to capture the attention of policy makers leading them to take actions,
- be appropriate for the re-use in follow up projects, and thus ensure the sustainability of the project outcome.

In compliance with the commitment taken with the EU Commission, the first mean to be used for ensuring high visibility to the project deliverables is the SCORE portal (www.score-project.eu) whose domain will be maintained and accessible for at least 3 further years upon the project’s completion (on 1st February 2009). The project outputs will be all gathered in a special dedicated section of this portal.

Further dissemination actions are also envisaged for the publicising and leveraging of the project achievements as well as specific collaborations with similar EU projects.

By the end of March 2009, the SCORE key results (Policy Paper, Strategic Research Agendas and Consultation Process Plan) will be distributed among the following projects, initiatives, and stakeholders:

Addressee	Contact details
EC Project Officer	Mr Vlassios Venner vlassios.venner@ec.europa.eu
SCORE EC Reviewers	Mr Clark Eustace - clark.eustace@lineone.net Mr Daniel Camerini - daniel_camerini@fr.ibm.com Mr Gordon Pace - gordon.pace@um.edu.mt
WBC-INCO.NET	Ms Elke Dall ZSI – Centre for social Innovation – Austria E-mail: dall@zsi.at http://www.wbc-inco.net
Wins-ICT	Ms Desiree Pecarz ZSI – Centre for social Innovation – Austria E-mail: pecarz@zsi.at http://www.wins-ict.eu - Under development
ICT WEB-PROMS	Ms Ira Vater – coordinator EBA European Business Associates Srl. - Italy E-mail: ira.vater@ebanet.eu http://www.ict-web-proms.eu
SEE-ERA.NET/ SEE-ERA.NET PLUS	Ms Marion Haberfellner ZSI – Centre for social Innovation – Austria mhaberfellner@zsi.at
CeGD	Mr Blaž GOLOB -Director Centre for eGovernance Development - Slovenia Blaz.Golob@cegd.eu http://www.cegd.eu

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eSEE Europe (Electronic South East Europe Initiative) • HRCAK central portal of Croatian scientific journals • APIS IT (Croatian information systems and information technologies support agency) 	<p>Ms Jelica Minić - Regional Cooperation Council jasna.sinancevic@rcc.int rcc@rcc.int and Ms Diana Simic dsimic@hi.t-com.hr</p>
USEANDDIFFUSE – FP7 project aimed at enhancing the dissemination and exploitation of research results and facilitate the exchange of best practices.	<p>Mr Romaios Bratskas RTD Talos Ltd - Cyprus Tel: +357 22454333 rb@talos-rtd.com</p>
ICT results	<p>Eoghan O’Neill European Commission: Information and Media Directorate-General The ICT Information Desk info-is-policy-link@ec.europa.eu http://cordis.europa.eu/ictresults/index.cfm?section=home&pl=home</p>
Enterprise Europe Network	<p>Through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss. Cyril and Methodius University Skopje e-mail: v.stojkovski@ukim.edu.mk Website: www.ukim.edu.mk • Zenit Zentrum für Innovation und Technik Nordrhein-Westfalen e-mail: wo@zenit.de Website: www.nrw-europa.de • Centro Di Servizi E Documentazione Per La Cooperazione Economica Internazionale Informest e-mail: saverio.deredita@informest.it Website: www.informest.it
Kooperation International	<p>c/o German Aerospace Centre (DLR) - Germany Dr. Hans-Peter Niller Hans-Peter.Niller@dlr.de http://www.kooperation-international.de</p>
Austrian Scientific Research liaison offices (ASO)	<p>c/o ASO coordinator ZSI Mrs Hanna Scheck - scheck@zsi.at http://www.aso.zsi.at</p>
Research Innovation Business Network and COST	<p>c/o Dr. Boris Cizelj - SBRA (Slovenian Business and Research Association) – Belgium info@ribn.eu http://www.ribn.eu</p>
COST – European Cooperation in Science and Tecnology	<p>Dr Gian Mario Maggio Science Officer Information & Communication Technologies gmmaggio@cost.esf.org</p>
TURBO – public private partnership	<p>F. Mehmet GÖKGÖZ -Director TuR&Bo ppp Turkish Research and Business Organizations Belgium Tel: +32-2-285 40 20 info@turboppp.org Web: www.turboppp.org</p>
IGLO - informal association of Brussels-based non-profit R&D Liaison Offices	<p>Ms Catriona Ward - ENTERPRISE IRELAND Catriona.ward@enterprise-ireland.com www.iglortd.org</p>
ICT NCPs	<p>Through the Serbian ICT NCP at Ministry Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Society Ms Natasa Radovic natasa.radovic@mtid.sr.gov.yu</p>
List of coordinator of completed FP6 ETI contracts	<p>List available at ZSI - Coordinators were gathered in occasion of the Conference “Facilitating Optimised benefits for SME from transnational research in an open innovation environment”(Brussels, 2 June 2008 c/o DG Research)</p>

Directory of subject matter experts identified throughout the SCORE whole project life (WB ICT experts involved for consultation, EU and WB ICT speakers at workshops and/or Final Conference, List of participants at project events, ICT stakeholders mailing lists in Albania, Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina and FYROM	Addresses available at premises of WB SCORE partners, ZSI, Planet
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As previously mentioned some collaboration with similar projects has already started in the final project period in order to ensure the sustainability and further exploitation of the projects achievements, as follows:

SCORE - WBC INCO.NET

SCORE collaboration with WBC-INCO.NET started in the occasion of ICT 2008 and the final EU-Western Balkan Regional Conference. The projects jointly organised a networking session at ICT 2008 and the regional conference itself. SCORE ideally delivered its results to WBC-INCO.NET, this latter being a political forum appropriate to further deepen the SCORE recommendations. WBC-INCO.NET has already considered the priorities identified by SCORE and has enriched the priority setting exercise (applying a lighter version of the SCORE methodology) in order to identify ICT priorities in Croatia and Montenegro. WBC-INCO.NET will receive the final SCORE deliverables and will apply them in order to identify the priorities to be proposed for the SEE-ERANET PLUS call which is foreseen in autumn 2009. An article reporting on the SCORE final outcomes will also be published within the spring edition of the WBC-INCO.NET journal.

SCORE – WINS-ICT

Since WBC-INCO.NET focuses on general S&T rather than on the sole ICT R&D field, the SCORE achievements will be delivered also to another FP7 – ICT initiative that has recently started: WINS-ICT “Western Balkan Countries Inco-Net Support in the field of ICT”. This latter project is coordinated by ZSI and involves also some of the SCORE partners. It was conceived in order to continue the SCORE action and run in parallel with WBC-INCO.NET keeping a strict focus on ICT R&D. Among the activities envisaged by the WINS-ICT project the following ones aim at fostering the implementation of the SCORE achievements:

- 1) Establishment of a regular “Dialogue Forum on ICT Research for the WB countries” participated by key decision makers discussing on policy issues requiring consideration on a regional level. The Forum meeting will take place shortly before the meeting of the Steering Platform on Research for the WB countries and will feed the Platform by means of short papers dealing with current issues in ICT research projects, programmes, results, needs, barriers, etc. The SCORE Policy Paper with its regional priorities, barriers and mirror recommendations will be the first input for the discussion at the first Dialogue Forum Meeting (approx. 19-21 May 2009). A short paper on this subject, as well as the SCORE Policy Paper, will be provided to the Steering Platform immediately after the meeting.
- 2) Provision of updated information on the WB ICT environment to the ICTC committee by means of abstracts of important related EU projects deliverables. An abstract of the SCORE SRAs and Policy Paper will be produced and provided to the ICTC Committee. Furthermore ad hoc meeting with the Committee are also envisaged and the SCORE representatives will be invited.
- 3) An analysis of the WB National Policies as well as an evaluation of the current status of ICT cooperation will be carried out, as well as an updating of the ICT priorities, needs, capacities in the WB region. In this framework the SCORE deliverables will be taken in due consideration.

- 4) Dissemination of the FP in the WB region, promotion of the WBC competences in the EU, and several workshops are also foreseen by the WINS-ICT project. Therefore is likely a further cooperation with the SCORE coordinator as for these activities as well. Activity planning in WINS-ICT has recently started and appropriate negotiations between projects will follow.

SCORE – ICT-WEB PROMS

SCORE participated in the kick-off meeting of the FP7 ICT-WEB-PROMS “Promoting ICT cooperation opportunities and policy dialogue with the WB countries” project, in order to learn about the planned activities and disseminate its project results. The SCORE deliverables will be promptly provided to this project as an input for the ICT-WEB-PROMS tasks: “Summary of previous work”, “ICT areas of mutual interest”. Since this project will also implement regional workshops focusing in depth on ICT technical topics of mutual interest, SCORE will provide also the Deliverables related to the Organisation of the ICT workshops.

It is finally noted that through the implementation of all the SCORE project activities the Western Balkan project partners became part of a sustainable network of “subject matter experts” within the region. Contacts with high level policy makers were also successfully built in each country, and this will undoubtedly additionally facilitate the communication and integration of the recommendations and outputs of the SCORE project.

5 FUTURE OUTLOOK AND SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

One of the key problems identified during the SCORE consultations was that FP projects are treated as one-off projects with limited actual potential and follow-up activities. Indeed, there have been many R&D initiatives from the EU aiming at starting the digital economy in the region, however, so far, when the various Framework Programme projects end, “nothing happens”.

In particular, EU projects in the Western Balkan region, after completion, “disappear” and do not have real impact. The results and services/tools of R&D projects are not implemented by organizations and national governmental actors, despite having obtained the knowledge.

To address this problem, recommendations are made to both the Western Balkan Countries and the EU:

- The Countries to try to systematically benefit and exploit the projects’ achievements, not only in the technical aspect (know-how, research expertise etc.) but also in the aspect of developing contacts, both scientific and commercial.
- The EU to stress the element of sustainability as a very important criterion when evaluating proposals and during the review process of contracted projects.

Moreover, further actions are required on the part of decision-makers in the Western Balkan countries (as initiators) as well as in the EU to build the next steps for EU-Western Balkan scientific cooperation.

The following key follow-up actions are suggested:

- Further development of an open consultation culture in the Western Balkan countries encouraging the involvement of all affected actors (policy-makers, academia, ICT industry) in the development of ICT R&D policies.
- Implementation of the recommendations (addressing institutional, financial, human resources, infrastructure, cultural and other barriers) suggested in the Policy Paper of the SCORE project by Western Balkan and EU decision-makers.
- Future actions should focus in particular on the further enhancement of capacities and development of human resources both at an organisational and individual level.
- Further strengthening of contacts and networks between R&D actors in the region and the rest of Europe through institutionalised and *ad hoc* mechanisms.
- Utilisation / follow-up to the priorities identified in the country-specific SRAs and Policy Paper (focusing on the regional priorities), through their incorporation in relevant national strategies on the one hand and forthcoming FP7 ICT calls on the other hand.
- Special attention should be given in developing policies and R&D priorities that address the actual needs of society and the market. Only this way, R&D activities will deliver demand-driven results.
- The support to R&D organisations in Western Balkan Countries is still necessary in order foster their successful participation in FP7 projects. This support should be envisaged through the provision of training in particular on FP proposal writing and project implementation.

ANNEX - LIST OF KEY PROJECT DELIVERABLES

The following is a list of the key project deliverables. They are accessible through the SCORE portal <http://www.score-project.eu> and at all times via the project co-ordinator (PLANET S.A., contact persons: Raphael Koumeri, rkoum@planet.gr and Soumi Papadopoulou, soumi@planet.gr)

Del. ID	Deliverable Title	Short description
D1	Consultation Process Plan	The Consultation Process Plan outlines the phases and specific steps in order to implement a consultation process with ICT R&D stakeholders including policy-makers and representatives of academia and industry. The plan is structured in two main phases, Phase I: "Expert Consultation" and Phase II "Open Consultation".
D6	ICT Strategic Research Agendas for the Western Balkan Countries	This deliverable includes the final country-specific Strategic Research Agendas (SRAs) for Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. They present the short-term and long-term R&D priorities per country, as well as an overview of the ICT research environment, key barriers in ICT research and recommendations.
D7	Policy Paper " <i>Shaping EU-Western Balkan co-operation in the field of ICT Research & Development in the period 2008-2013: Priorities and Recommendations</i> "	The Policy Paper presents the regional / common ICT Research & Development priorities of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, with insights also for Montenegro and Croatia. The priorities were defined following a broad consultation process that involved more than 320 ICT stakeholders in the region. Moreover, the paper presents concrete recommendations on what the Western Balkan countries on the one hand and the EU on the other hand could further undertake in order to enhance the EU-Western Balkan R&D collaboration.
D8	Workshop Organisation Plans	The country-specific organisation plans contains guidelines for the preparation and delivery of ICT workshops (for transfer of EU know-how in ICT R&D priorities), including roles and responsibilities and a timeplan.
D9	ICT Workshops report and material	This document provides an overview of the implementation and the material used in the ICT workshops. The workshops were organised in October 2008 in the four Western Balkan countries participating in the project, with the aim to transfer EU know-how in key ICT research priorities to the local research community.
D10	Report on the Regional Conference	This report presents the main outcomes of the closing Regional Conference " <i>Towards an Information Society in the Western Balkans</i> " held on 11-12 December 2008 in Belgrade. It includes also an overview of the organisational aspects of the Conference.

