

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

### CASCADE Project

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

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

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

The 18 month CASCADE project is led by the University of Salford from the UK but targets and has the participation of all seven South Asian countries specified in the call: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

During the project, the team will:

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



*Photograph: EU Ambassador, David Daly, speaking at the launch*

### Latest News

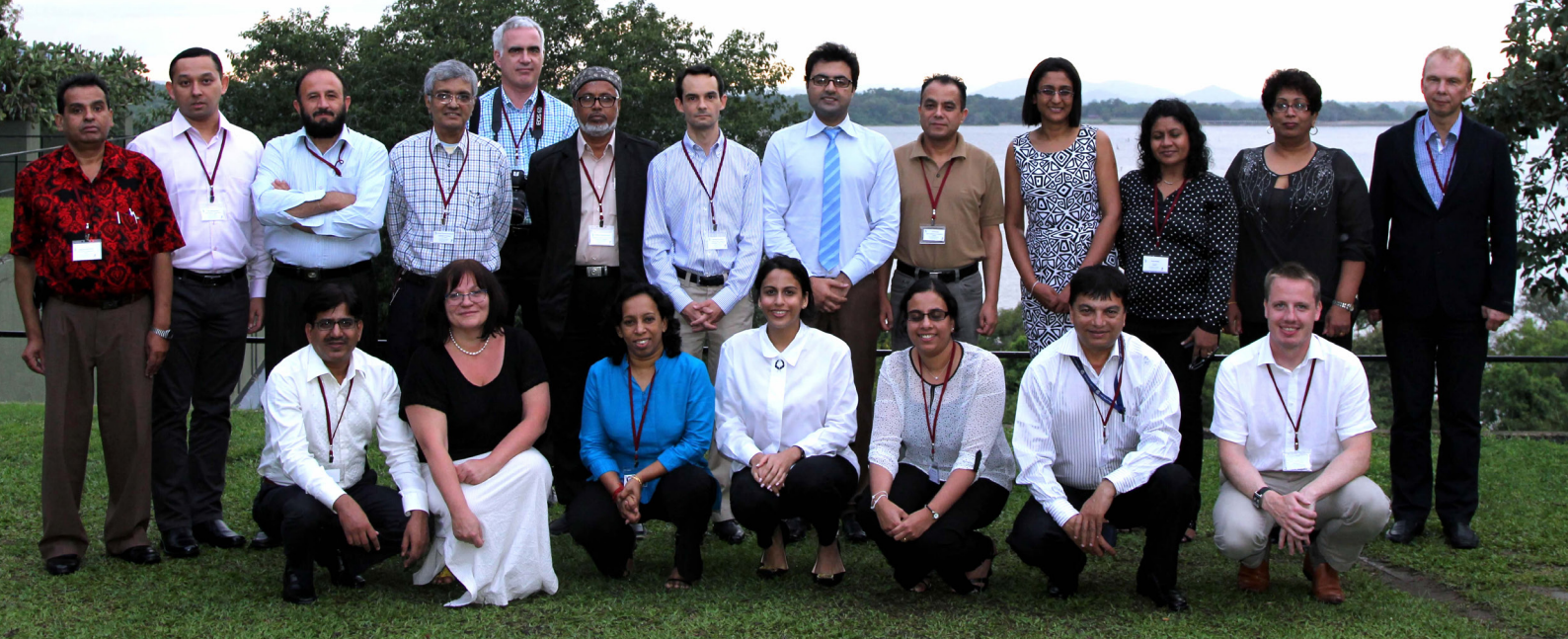
#### Launch of Horizon 2020 in South Asia

The European Union in collaboration with the University of Salford, UK, and University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka, organised the launch of the 'Horizon 2020' programme for the South Asian Region. The event took place on 24th January in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The programme that was launched in December 2013 in Brussels and now in South Asia aims at further boosting the participation of key researchers, academics and industries from the South Asia region.

'Horizon 2020' is the EU flagship programme for Research and Technological Development. With an overall budget of EUR 80 billion (LKR 14,000 billion) over the period 2014-2020 the programme is one of the most significant in its kind. It is also most open to international cooperation.

EU Ambassador David Daly, who spoke at the event, reiterated that: "Many countries had accelerated their economic growth, development and industry competitiveness by paying close attention to research and innovation. With the Horizon 2020 funding, the goal is first and foremost to contribute to growth, jobs and a better quality of life. It has the potential to make a substantial contribution to reaching Mahinda Chintana's goal of making Sri Lanka a Knowledge Hub in the region. Investment in this field is an investment in our shared future and over the last few years numerous European and Sri Lankan academics have been increasingly working together through such programmes. With a simplified and more accessible Horizon 2020, I encourage researchers, universities, business including SMEs to sign up!"



*Photograph: Representatives from the 17 CASCADE partner organisations meet to launch the project in Kandalama, Sri Lanka*

## Work Package Update

### First meeting of the CASCADE project consortium

The European Union organised the first meeting under the Collaborative Action towards Societal Challenges through Awareness, Development, and Education (CASCADE) project, held during between 3rd – 6th November 2013 at Kandalama.

The three day workshop in Sri Lanka was a platform where partners from various countries in South Asia and their European colleagues have actively engaged in constructive discussions on how to address prevalent issues in the disciplines of sciences' and humanities, including health, agriculture, maritime research, energy; climate action, and resource management. This initiative involves a number of European and Asian research institutions, including the University of Salford (U.K.), the University of Moratuwa and the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities.

Speaking on the occasion, the Science Counsellor of the EU Delegation in Delhi, Denis Dambois said "CASCADE is an excellent opportunity for raising awareness of the potential for EU-Southern Asia cooperation and stimulating regional and international participation. With the active contribution of countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, the endeavour will be to pave the way for more advanced, inclusive and innovative societies".

### Preliminary analysis of societal challenges in South Asia

A major aspect of the CASCADE workplan is to identify global societal challenges of mutual interest to the EU and South Asian region. Phase 1 of this work consists of a policy analysis and Phase 2 uses semi-structured interviews and focus groups

During phase 1, a content analysis approach was carried out to analyse available policies in the 7 South Asian countries targeted by the CASCADE project. The focus was specifically on each of the seven societal challenges targeted under Horizon 2020. This phase set out the current statistics and trends, assessed the policy availability in each area, carried out a situational analysis, and finally, identified key informants that have knowledge or are responsible for developing policies in those areas.

During the 2nd Phase of the project, thus far, well over 200 semi-structured interviews have been conducted in all 7 countries, with experts in each area of social challenges. In addition, at least one focus group has been carried out in each country. The experts represented academia, industry and public organisations.

A brief summary of the preliminary findings:

**Challenge 1 - Health, demographic change and well-being:** almost all SA countries recognized 'health' as a very important sector that requires appropriate measures for improvement in health and social care on a priority basis. The 'health' need is greater in countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan, compared to other countries, due to the scarcity of hospital facilities.

**Challenge 2 - Food security, sustainable agricultures, marine and maritime research and the bio-based economy:** many countries identify this as an important sector as well, as the main industry in many of the SA countries (except for Maldives) is agriculture and farming. However, very few data is available on sustainable and competitive agri-food sector and bio-based industries at national level, in countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Pakistan.

**Challenge 3 - Secure, clean and efficient energy:** a very important sector in all SA countries, however, only a certain percentage of the population has access to electricity in all SA countries (e.g. Nepal – 75%, Pakistan – 67% and Bangladesh – 46%).

**Challenge 4 - Smart, green and integrated transport:** also crucial considering the SA context, statistics shows that these countries are behind in upgrading their transport infrastructure with the prevalent state-of-art technologies.

**Challenge 5 - Climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials:** As climate changes affects the agricultural sector, some SA countries (e.g. Bangladesh and Pakistan) are facing an unprecedented situation given the large-scale agrarian nature of economies. They (including Maldives) are at greater risk of climate change that demands a comprehensive climate action.

**Access to information/data on Challenge 6 (Asia in a changing world-inclusive, innovative and reflective societies) and 7 (Secure societies-protecting freedom and security of Asia and its citizens)** were very limited. However, in terms of Challenge 6, given the numerous economic drawbacks, these countries show their potentials to be regarded as innovative societies and are on the way of catching up new technologies. It is evident that the available data on crime, illegal trafficking and terrorism, border management, and cyber security are not sufficient to analyse the prevalent situation of targeted countries with regard to Challenge 7.

Overall, it is evident that all 7 challenges have a key role to play in all SA countries. Further data collection and analysis will be undertaken prior to reporting in the third quarter on 2014.



# HORIZON 2020

## Recent events

The CASCADE project team organised several events aimed at raising awareness of Horizon 2020. These included:

- The Horizon 2020: Teaming up with the EU for Research Excellence - A workshop for Sri Lankan Scientists; organized by the National Science Foundation, Sri Lanka in Collaboration with the European Union, 2 May 2014, At the Auditorium, National Science Foundation, Sri Lanka.
- Pathways for Sri Lankan Scientists via Horizon 2020: Opportunities for South Asian Institutions – a Workshop for University of Moratuwa Academic staff, 2nd May 2014, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka.
- The Horizon 2020 – funding opportunities for research excellence; CIB International Conference 2014: W55/65/89/92/96/102/117 & TG72/74/81/83 Construction in a Changing World; Kandlama, Sri Lanka, May 2014.
- Awareness seminar on Horizon 2020 Program, targetting all the universities in Islamabad, KPK, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan, organised by Dr Arshad Ali, Prof & Principal, NUST (National University of Sciences & Technology) School of EE&CS, Islamabad, Pakistan.

## Future Plans

Over the next six months, the project will start to focus on the development of national and regional position papers, and commence a stakeholder mapping exercise. These activities will culminate in a policy brief with recommendations to the European Commission on how to promote bi-lateral cooperation with Southern Asia with a view to tackling key societal challenges of mutual interest. They will also promote Southern Asian contacts among major European stakeholders.

### *National and regional position papers*

Initially, seven national position papers (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) will be developed, led by the respective national partners. Each paper will address the relevancy and the scope of the societal challenge and outline how the problem affects that country, providing high level statistics if appropriate. They will go on to specify the current official position and policies of the country in respect to the issues under consideration, including the major players (key informants), any recent developments concerning the issues under discussion, and the action that has been taken, whether by specialized agencies, regional bodies or non-governmental organizations. Finally, each paper will focus on summarising national priorities associated with the thematic challenge, including specific suggestions and actions that the country will support in providing a solution for the issues in question. These national position papers will then inform the development of a regional position paper that identifies global challenges and research priorities of mutual interest to the EU and South Asia.

### *Commencing the stakeholder mapping exercise*

The project will identify and develop an inventory of the national and regional stakeholders that can influence the global challenges and research priorities relevant to the South Asian region. National partners will hold expert groups & interviews with key agencies (government, non-governmental, industry, academia) to identify and map stakeholders in each of the target countries, as well as links to regional & international stakeholders. These maps will be analysed to develop an inventory of national and regional stakeholders related to global challenges. The inventory will be used to promote EU-South Asia partnerships that address global challenges.

## CASCADE Partnership

### Europe

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

### South Asia

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

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

## Principal Investigator

Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga, Centre for Disaster Resilience, University of Salford, Salford, Greater Manchester, M5 4WT, United Kingdom  
w: [www.salford.ac.uk/disaster-resilience](http://www.salford.ac.uk/disaster-resilience) e: [r.d.g.amaratunga@salford.ac.uk](mailto:r.d.g.amaratunga@salford.ac.uk)

CASCADE is a project (Contract Number: 609562) co-funded by the European Community's Programme for International Cooperation under the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (2007-2013). The sole responsibility for the content of this information sheet lies with the CASCADE consortium. It does not represent the opinion of the Community. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.