

**Institutional support to international  
cooperation at the  
Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE),  
Helsinki**

RUSERA EXE training course, Vienna

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S Y K E

# Finnish Environment Institute

- **Functions under the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry**
- **Established on 1st March 1995**
- **Approx. 600 employees (incl. 400 with university-level education)**
- **We are integrating expertise from a wide range of disciplines**
- **We produce information and solutions promoting ecologically sustainable development**



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# Research Department

- SYKE has 8 departments, of which the Research Department is the second largest with about 200 employees.
- Our department consists of 7 research programmes with different themes (global change, biodiversity, protection of the Baltic Sea etc), and about 12 persons directly under the Research Director.
- The team handling EU-projects is amongst those 12 mentioned above.

## International cooperation at SYKE

- My colleagues and I assist the whole institute with financial and administrative tasks in Framework Programme projects, LIFE and Interreg projects. At the moment we have **19 ongoing FP projects**.
- SYKE and its predecessors have been participating and coordinating projects since the **4th** Framework Programme

- **Team:** 2 full time + 1 part time. We have a financial background (mine: Bachelor of Business Administration) and receive our FP **training** mostly from The Finnish Secretariat for EU R&D (the National Contact Point for FP legal and financial issues).
- Besides the training, we study the FP7 guidelines and rules and visit the EC and Cordis **web sites** frequently for new information.
- Since SYKE doesn't have any project training for our tasks, we have to be active ourselves and search for appropriate training. The role of "learning by doing" is very important, and we have informal internal meetings almost every week.

# General support and questions

- We assist researchers from the **proposal stage**:
  - budget calculations
  - contract preparations
- **Implementation stage**:
  - financial reports
  - person month tables
  - preparation of auditing
  - preparation of meetings, and meeting minutes
- The most **common questions** researchers ask are about the remaining funding & man months, and if the national funding level will be met.
- Patience is a virtue, but be prepared for **last-minute questions and dead-lines** nobody remembered to tell you.

# RU challenges and experiences

- Electronic (e-mail, SKYPE) and paper contacts can be challenging. **Reserve enough time**, and remember the time difference.
- In my experience, the **Russian partners** were kind enough to ask about open issues as soon as the project got started, and well before the reporting stages. They also kept the tight dead-lines, the documents arrived on time.
- FP rules are not yet that familiar, so it requires extra effort
- Keep in mind that **every partner institute is different**, and although quite a lot of the questions are similar, new interesting issues arise all the time.

# RTD and Russia

- SYKE does not have any specific activities to support RTD cooperation with Russia, we follow the motto of Hard Rock Cafe: *Love all, serve all!*
- It is recommendable that the Russian institutes/universities inform about their willingness to take part in FP7 proposals at: *Finding Project Partners* (web site: [http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/partners\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/partners_en.html))