

Economic and Social Research Council




Norface Conference

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From Individual Agency to European Collaboration


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Where ESRC (UK) was and what it has gained –
both within and from the experience of Norface


Pre-2003

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- Researcher to researcher collaboration
 - The Framework Programmes: FP4 and incorporating the social sciences
 - Promoting participation in FPs 5 and 6
 - Working with other agencies (within and outside Europe)
 - The European Science Foundation


From 7 to 12

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- ❑ First years of Nordic plus North Atlantic
 - ❑ Learning we can learn from each other
 - ❑ Common concerns (peer review, evaluation, take-up and utility)
 - ❑ The widening of Europe and new Accession States
 - ❑ Countries with research agencies and those without
 - ❑ Commission-led vs. Agency to Agency


The Norface Programmes

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- Learning from the Pilot on Religion
 - Directed mode vs. open competitions
 - Size of grants
 - Can we really operate a “common pot”
 - Choosing topics
 - What we require and how we do peer review

Bilateral agreements

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- ❑ Building on Norface
 - ❑ Different cultures, objectives and procedures
 - ❑ Removing barriers to collaborative funding: putting the researchers first
 - ❑ Bilateral partners in and beyond Norface


ICAP and Lead Agency

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- Setting Understandings about Common Standards and Procedures
 - Common operative criteria
 - One decision making body – lead agency or common panels
 - Who leads whom?
 - Can we really remove the barriers?


Towards a European Grant Union

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- ❑ Problems of “Openness” of National Systems
 - ❑ ESRC Overseas Co-Investigator Scheme
 - ❑ The ECRP (European Collaborative Research Projects)
 - ❑ Open Research Areas
 - ❑ The European Research Council
 - ❑ Joint Programming
 - ❑ Money, money, money

Other developments within Europe – Informal advantages

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- Infrastructure and ESFRI
 - Common Data Sources
 - Measuring Outputs on a Common Basis
 - Research Ethics as an European issue

The World Beyond Europe

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- ❑ Developing social science globally – a challenge still to be addressed
 - ❑ Europe and North America
 - ❑ Europe and the new Tigers
 - ❑ Europe, Norface, or “Variable Geometry”
 - ❑ Building Common Programmes

Norface

- ❑ The window was ajar but Norface helped push it wide open
- ❑ It started the key stage, but more remains to be done
- ❑ Has to adapt to new European and global developments (the world has changed in 5 years)
- ❑ Still a role to be played between Europe as a whole and bilateral relations

