APORTA

Supporting EU Access to Brazilian National research programmes –
Acesso por Ciência e Technologia no Brasil

Project reference 244388

Database on Brazilian research programmes open for EU researchers/ institutions and rules for participation

Deliverable D1.3

Work Package 1

Delivery Date: M12 – September 2010

Leading Partner: CNPq

Contributing Partner(s): all

Dissemination Level: Public (PU)

December 2010

Version 1.0

Project Details

Project Reference	244388
Acronym	APORTA
Project Title	Supporting EU Access to Brazilian National research programmes – Acesso por Ciência e Technologia no Brasil
Project URL	www.access4.eu/brazil/
Authors (Partner)	

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Versioning and Contribution History

Version	Description	Comments
0.1	Draft Version	Paulo Siqueira
0.2	Revision and comments through consortium	Anna Schwachula
1.0	Final Version	Paulo Siqueira

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Introduction

Within APORTA, more specifically in task 1.2 ("Implementation of information on access opportunities for EU researchers"), an inventory of existing programs in Brazil is foreseen, effectively opened to researchers from the European Union. According to the Description of Work (DoW) of APORTA, the result of this task shall be documented in the form of

- a report, corresponding to deliverable D1.2 ("Inventory of grant opportunities with rules for participation and potential obstacles") and

- a database, corresponding to deliverable D1.3 ("Database on Brazilian research programmes open for EU researchers/institutions and rules for participation").

The deliverable D 1.2 has already been produced in form of a report, based on the analysis of the performance of seven Brazilian agencies of support to research and innovation, and their respective programmes and calls for submission of proposals in S&T. Of these Brazilian agencies, three are federal (CAPES, CNPq e FINEP), and four of them selected Foundations of Research Support (FAPs) (FAP-DF, FAPEMIG, FAPERJ and FAPESP). This report comprises of an annex with more than 450 Brazilian mapped calls, analyzed regarding their openness towards European participation.

The database that composes D1.3 has 36 Brazilian calls catalogued until this date (November 2010), selected from the mapping described in D 1.2. The database is available through the web portal www.access4.eu, in the part referring to Brazil of the Common Database Calls. This report on the database seeks to explain how this outcome was achieved, basically detailing: a) what were the criteria for the selection of these calls and b) what conventions were adopted for its codification.

For the general process of implementation of the common ACCESS4EU web portal and database, please compare APORTA deliverable D 3.5.

1   Criteria for the selection of the calls

It was observed initially that, except in some cases specified, all calls issued by the Brazilian agencies allow foreign participation, if the essential requirements of coordination by a Brazilian researcher linked to a Brazilian national institution are met. The main exceptions to this basic rule concern individual (person-centred) funding, funding schemes for human resources/ staff training; and funding schemes for international bilateral cooperation.

The calls of the other categories, published in order to finance research and/or innovation projects (i.e. project-centred funding), with or without specified conditions for composing national teams, offer opportunities for foreign contribution, as long as the Brazilian proponent/coordinator consider it important for the execution of the project presented. The implementation of international involvement

through project resources is favoured if the issuing funding agency includes certain facilities in the call itself, like international fares, hotel and visiting specialist scholarships, notably. The political will of international openness of these calls is therefore essential, sometimes demonstrated.

In this first phase of APORTA, a general inventory of national calls was realized to identify those calls that will be disseminated among the European scientific community, to the extent that this mapping work identifies the most pertinent parameters (Cf. D1.2, § 1.2). Thus, the decision on including a Brazilian call in the Common Call Database (CCD) of the ACCESS4EU web portal is based, a priori, on the set of four parameters. Calls are chosen respecting the following criteria:

a) Open currently or at least periodically recurrent;

b) Political will of international openness, or at least indication of that interest;

c) Appropriate funding of individual proposals to arouse interest of participation by the European scientific community;

d) Sufficient overall financial resources of the call, so that the competition is not too fierce.

It is intended to apply these criteria with some flexibility, in order to include all Brazilian calls judged most original and creative, which deserve to be brought to the attention of the international community.

The limiting values of the parameters were chosen to reach a reasonable number of calls selected to be released among the more than four hundred national calls identified[1]. Once we eliminated the one-shot calls closed already and those with "negative outlook of openness", it was decided, therefore, to set the minimum funding threshold to 150,000 Reais (approximately 65 000 EUR) of funding, for each selected project, and to six million Reais (approximately 2.6 million EUR) of total allocation to the call (compare annex of D1.2). It is observed then, that the selection is of about 70 calls, which is approximately 15-20% of the total.

This means that only those seventy calls (among more than four hundred mapped) could have served to be brought to the attention of the European scientific community via the ACCESS4EU web portal. However, as the duration of most of the Brazilian calls is very limited - often no more than forty five days - the number of calls that were actually stored in the database in 2010, due to its dissemination, is significantly lower, of approximately thirty.

Our selection included initially some calls already closed, but that were used for testing and improvement of the codification process: For that matter, the most important periodical calls were chosen, such as the INCTs, for example, with the purpose of contributing to inform the European scientific community about the main Brazilian STI programmes. This same guidance on the announcement of Brazil's most important and/or original calls has also led the APORTA team to include some calls in the selection, even if not fully satisfying the quantitative criteria, such as CNPq's "use and consumption of crack" call for example, imagining that the originality of the theme covered aroused the interest of researchers that cannot easily find such opportunities to fund their research.

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[1] It is intended this way to be in sync with the other Acess4EU projects.

2   Conventions for the codification

In order to include it in the Common Call Database, the Brazilian calls selected for international dissemination were coded according to the rules established and prepared jointly during the conception phase of this database. The chart therefore designed by the ACCESS4EU coordination provided only one information structuring in many fields, with the maximum size set for each of these fields, without defining in detail the coding and arrangement of data within each of them.

It was decided, therefore, to complement this overall framework with some additional conventions, susceptible to provide greater homogenization of Brazilian calls stored. The manual filling thereby prepared defined basically general rules of syntax and proposed recommendations regarding the coding of each field.

It was intended to follow, formerly, the rules adopted implicitly in the document "Find your RTDI call", approved by the round of coordinators of the ACCESS4EU projects, particularly using the charts provided in some fields, following the same encoding for the dates, obeying the maximum sizes of the fields, using uppercase and lowercase letters the same way, etc. However, in fields where there is more than one type of information to be given, these should be separated by a semicolon. These are the fields: Keywords, Call owner and Contact information. A point is placed after the last information provided in each field of the text type. Also, when there is no contrary information in the example of filling (example: Country), the contents of a text field were codified with a first letter capitalized and the rest in lowercase.

Regarding the details of each field, it's interesting to stress a few recommendations:

a) In the "Keywords" field, in view of its interest to the researcher, via search engine, it is important to try to put a maximum number of keywords. It is suggested to put simpler keywords (for example, prefer energy or renewable energy to sustainable renewable energy), using the singular form, preferably. Avoid words that do not make much sense in isolation (for example: partners, co-operation, research, etc.).

b) In the "Call Acronym" field, adopt abbreviations or acronyms of calls as they are known in conversations with professionals involved (eg. Biofuels, INCT, ProAntar, etc.). Moreover, the number used by the agencies for the calls (for example: CNPq nº 006/2009) must be maintained, incorporating also the name of the financial sectorial fund (as CT-AGRO, for example), so to promote the dissemination strategy based on the type of sector funds.

c) In the "Call Owner" field, when several international institutions are mentioned, it   is suggested to put only one institution per country, always putting the Brazilian institution first. If the call is strictly Brazilian, it is necessary to put only one institution. Always put the full names of institutions in English;

d) Under "Call Description", details related to the call that could not be registered in other text fields (i.e. in "Call abstract", "Eligibility conditions" and "How to apply") can be entered. This

field should therefore be completed last. Put in this particular field all the information that best describe the call for proposals, which are usually in the "objectives" part of the call. Information about the evaluation of the calls should also be mentioned here, when possible.

e) The "Eligibility conditions" field is split into four parts, each detailing requirements. The first relates to the applicant (or co-ordinator), as individual. The second refers to the main executing institution, the third to the other institutions and other participating researchers, while the fourth refers to foreign institutions and foreign researchers. The corresponding information is usually available in the "Eligibility Criteria" chapter of the calls, but those corresponding to foreign researchers must be deduced from the reading of the text of the call, to the possible extent. Specific conditions, such as "includes the participation of institutions from different states," should be incorporated.

f) In the "Budget in EUR (appr.)" field, information on the total available amount to the call should be given, converted in Euro and using a conversion rate of 2,4 R$. There is no interest in detailing the origin of the resources. Only three significant digits are used at most. It is mandatory to mention if the foreign researcher must (or not) include additional financing.

3 Conclusion

At this stage, the permanent supply of Brazilian calls to the Common Call Database is considered as an essential result. In the particular case of the APORTA project, it is necessary to structure and carry out constant monitoring of the websites of the major funding agencies in order to maintain a reasonable flow of calls coded (due to the issue of the very short deadline for proposal submission of 45 days). This demands also sufficient time for an English translation of the selected calls. The experience of this first stage of the project shows that it is a task within the reach of an intern working half-time. It is essential to ensure this feature - including the specific framework of the intern – in CNPq. It is significant that there are 36 calls from Brazil available on the website until the present date. Brazil occupies a prominent position, only behind China (50 calls) and ahead of Canada (23 calls), the United States (13 calls), India (9 calls), Russia (8 calls), Australia and New Zealand (7 calls each), naturally taking into account the adopted criteria of value, relevance and appropriateness to the purposes of the APORTA project.