



Scoping Paper | Tools for international collaboration

The aim of the MLE is to foster a policy exchange on the various national approaches towards international cooperation in research and innovation. Thus the activities of the group of MLE participants are focused on learning from each other and taking these lessons ‘back home’ to implement good practices and good ideas within the national context. On the topic of **Tools** for international cooperation a strong evidence basis has already been developed by SFIC, in particular the Toolbox Working Group that produced its report in December 2018. The report identified six types of instruments:

1. Strategies and roadmaps
2. STI agreements
3. STI Counsellors
4. Aligned funding schemes
5. Research and Innovation networking activities
6. International research marketing

The report also identifies a number of purposes for cooperation instruments including: meeting global challenges; achieving scientific excellence; leverage funding; explore competencies and complementarities; attract talents and STI investments; access to new markets; capacity building; regulating IPR; science diplomacy and international cooperation as a goal in itself. These are the different types of goals that policy makers want to achieve with international cooperation. Each country will have different priorities for each of these purposes. The added value of the MLE is to take this SFIC analytical work a step further and engage in concrete operational policy learning by the participants. Each participating country will have a different set of needs and interests. In light of what has already been achieved by the participating member and associated states, the focus of the Toolbox topic could take three different avenues:

- 1) Learning from each other how to develop an appropriate portfolio mix in the context of the national strategy for instance the question: should every country employ a complete set of instruments or rather develop a specialisation for some types of instruments in line with national priorities and strategies? This avenue could be aligned closely with Topic 1 as the toolbox should reflect the overall national strategy as well as the available human and financial resources. A possible drawback of this avenue is that the work might remain quite general as it is difficult to address the complete policy mix within the timeframe of the MLE. The visible result from MLE related actions in each country might be lower.
- 2) Focusing on one specific type of instrument (e.g. STI Agreements) or one specific goal (e.g. Science Diplomacy) and learn from each other how these are implemented in different contexts, what makes them successful and what pitfalls need to be avoided. This avenue assumes we can arrive at a consensus on which instrument/goal to focus on. This should be explored in the kick-off meeting. An advantage of this more focused approach is that participants can start working on concrete operational improvements in their own policy environment within the timeframe of the MLE.
- 3) Identifying a limited number of proven good practices (regardless the instrument or goal) from the group of participants and sharing their strengths (what has made them good practice) and weaknesses in more detail. This approach depends on whether there is a sufficient number of (transferable) success cases to explore in more detail. This should be explored in the kick-off meeting.