



Association of
Science-Technology
Centers

STEM PUBLIC PROGRAMS: Updates and Opportunities for Science Centers

Volume 1, Issue 6

November 28, 2012

*In an effort to make ASTC members more aware of some of the lesser-known programmatic and funding opportunities offered by a variety of sources – and available to science centers and museums across the world – ASTC has launched **STEM Public Programs: Updates and Opportunities for Science Centers**, a series of electronic briefs where we'll share details from meetings and conversations with key representatives from U.S. federal agencies and elsewhere. After a brief hiatus in conjunction with the 2012 ASTC Annual Conference, we return to highlight an opportunity offered through the European Commission that is designed to “Raise Youth Awareness to Responsible Research and Innovation through Inquiry Based Science Education...”*

In July, the European Commission released Part 5 of its “Work Programme 2013,” designed to “give citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in constructing an ever-closer Europe, which is democratic and world-oriented, united in and enriched through its cultural diversity, thus developing citizenship of the European Union; develop a sense of European identity, based on common values, history and culture; foster a sense of ownership of the European Union among its citizens; and enhance tolerance and mutual understanding between European citizens respecting and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, while contributing to intercultural dialogue.”

Part 5 of the Programme focuses upon “Capacities,” and pays specific attention to “Science and Society.” While each of the four “Action Lines” outlined in the document, will likely be of interest to ASTC members, the second one, entitled “Strengthening potential, broadening horizons,” seems especially noteworthy. After all, Activity 5.2.2 addresses young people and science, and the summary of the corresponding Area, Area 5.2.2.1, reads: “Supporting formal and informal science education in schools as well as through science centres and museums and other relevant means.”

Area 5.2.2.1 outlines the “importance of building a scientifically literate society which enables its citizens to participate in the research and innovation process.” Specifically, it addresses the need to provide young people with the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills they need, both personally and professionally, and the importance of helping citizens of all ages make informed choices and become (or remain) engaged in related societal conversations.

To help bring this about, the Programme notes that the European Commission (EC) is “financing projects in the field of teacher training on Inquiry Based Science Education with the aim of raising children's interest and knowledge in STEM.” According to the Programme, the EC will support “actions to raise awareness of young people on the different aspects of Responsible Research and Innovation. The actions are intended to complement school science curricula and should focus particularly on teacher training activities (pre-service and in-service) and make use of existing European teachers' networks. The actions proposed should be open to the participation of entities seeking to gain experience in the area of raising youth awareness

about Responsible Research and Innovation through Inquiry Based Science Education techniques.”

The EC notes that proposed projects should cover a broad range of European Union Member States and Associated Countries (for details, visit: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/who_en.html) so that true impact is felt, and that at least 10 independent legal entities in at least 10 different Member States or Associated Countries should participate. In addition, proposed programs should have a minimum duration of three years. The indicative (estimated) budget for Activity 5.2.2 is EUR 4.5 million, and one proposal in Area 5.2.2.1 is expected to be funded. The application deadline is January 16, 2013 at 17:00, Brussels local time. Evaluations are expected to be completed in April 2013, and grant agreement negotiations for the shortlisted proposals are expected to occur in June 2013.

For more information about the more general Work Programme 2013, please visit: http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/news-events/news/13082012_en.htm. For detailed information about the Science and Society component of the Work Programme, including guides for potential applicants, fact sheets, electronic proposal submission instructions, and a list of National Contact Points, please visit: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/capacities?callIdentifier=FP7-SCIENCE-IN-SOCIETY-2013-1>.

Previous issues of “STEM Public Programs: Updates and Opportunities for Science Centers” have focused on the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, the Science Education Drug Abuse Partnership Awards program, the Museums Connect program the Environmental Education Grants program, and the Women and Minorities in STEM Fields program. Please visit: <http://www.astc.org/about/government/STEMprog.htm> to view these archived bulletins.