



# Research Success Stories



February 2013

## Coordinating a project: an exciting challenge

The Swiss Centre for Applied Human Toxicology (SCAHT) is participating for the first time in an EU project – and decided not only to contribute but to go a step further and coordinate it.

The project that the SCAHT coordinates is called HEROIC. It aims to better integrate data on risks of various substances for both people and the environment. For the members of the Centre, the story began when partners from previous projects approached them and asked whether they would be interested to jointly submit a project proposal to the European Commission. But when the partner who initially wanted to coordinate the project withdrew, SCAHT was asked to also act as coordinator – and to write the project proposal.



**Prof Martin Wilks**  
 University of Basel  
 HEROIC Coordinator

would this mean in practice and can we actually do it?”. After consultation with and encouragement from the University of Basel and Euresearch Regional Office, they decided to do it, enlisting the help of experts from the Zurich-based agency Eurelations AG to coordinate the submission process. And so far, what they have been told turned out to be true: coordinating such a project is not a walk in the park, but it’s not

**“As an institution that coordinates an EU project, you do get noticed.”**

### Coordination isn’t rocket science ...

Before writing the proposal and – should the proposal be successful – embarking on the coordination of the project, the members of the Centre asked themselves “what

rocket science either. Despite a steep learning curve, “so far we haven’t regretted it”, says coordinator Martin Wilks.

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

Chemicals can pose risks for the environment in general and for people in particular. Typically, the corresponding risk assessments are conducted independently from each other, which can be detrimental to both efficiency and quality of risk assessments. At the same time, the need for risk assessments is increasing, and there is a clear move to reduce the number of animal tests. Therefore, HEROIC aims to promote the integration of human health and environmental risk assessments. The goal of this project is not to generate new data but to collect, organize and share existing knowledge. Sharing knowledge will be encouraged and facilitated by the data and training platform “Tox-Hub” that HEROIC aims to set up.

### ... and coordination is rewarding

So it turned out that the Centre was able to coordinate a project, but why did they want to? “Well, it was the appeal of the challenge. Also, you are taking the lead and, above all, you not only are in contact with the project partners but with the other stakeholders as well. As an institution that coordinates an EU project, you do get noticed”, says Martin Wilks. For an institution like the SCAHT such increased visibility is particularly valuable, as it was set up only four years ago with funding from the Swiss Confederation at the Universities of Basel, Geneva and Lausanne to provide risk assessment advice to regulatory authorities, carry out applied research and set up educational programmes in human toxicology. The involvement in such a project is also a recognition of the SCAHT’s competence, and collaboration with partners from abroad is indispensable for the Centre to achieve its objectives in Switzerland.

### FACTS AND FIGURES

<b>Project Name:</b>	HEROIC – Health and Environmental Risks: Organisation, Integration and Cross-fertilisation of Scientific Knowledge
<b>Research Area:</b>	FP7-Environment
<b>Organisation:</b>	University of Basel, SCAHT – Swiss Centre for Applied Human Toxicology
<b>Start Date - End Date:</b>	01.10.2011 – 30.09.2014
<b>Duration:</b>	36 months
<b>Project Cost:</b>	1’310’234 Euros
<b>Project Funding:</b>	980’278 Euros

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Euresearch  
Enterprise Europe Network - Switzerland  
Effingerstrasse 19  
CH - 3008 Bern  
Tel: +41 (0)31 380 60 00  
E-mail: [info@euresearch.ch](mailto:info@euresearch.ch)  
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