

ESF Research Networking Programme (RNP) Regenerative Medicine (REMEDIC)

0. Executive Summary

The RNP REMEDIC was funded by the ESF from May 2008 until May 2013, and was supported by 14 national funding bodies. The principal goals of the RNP REMEDIC were 1) to facilitate the exchange of ideas across disciplines in the stem cell area, 2) to map unmet needs and resources, 3) to facilitate coordinated research projects, and 4) to review the regulatory laws, rules and standards in regenerative medicine.

The RNP was very active and successful in the exchange of ideas by organizing workshops in conjunction with the Steering Committee meetings, by supporting scientific conferences in the regenerative medicine field, and by organizing dedicated REMEDIC symposia at scientific meetings. For example, REMEDIC organized the very well attended Symposium on Mechanism of Stem Cell Action at the 2012 World Conference of the Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine International Society in Vienna. During the funding period of REMEDIC, several Steering Committee members of REMEDIC received funding as partners in large integrated FP7 projects, COST actions, and Marie Curie training networks.

A major activity of this RNP was the support of young scientists. During the 5-year funding period, the RNP provided 79 travel grants to scientific conferences and summer schools, 7 Short Visit Grants (< 3 weeks), and 5 Exchange Visit Grants (3- 13 weeks) for young scientists. In July 2011, REMEDIC organized the Summer School “Regenerative Medicine. From basic research to orthopaedic application and beyond” in Santander, Spain.

Another important activity of REMEDIC has been the publication of a series of reviews covering the different areas of regenerative medicine in the Journal of Cellular and Molecular Medicine. This review series (currently 6 reviews) was well received by the scientific community, and has collectively received over 200 citations as of July 2013. Two more reviews in this series will be published in the next months.

To map the unmet needs and to review the regulatory laws, rules and standards in regenerative medicine in Europe, REMEDIC brought together scientists from academia, representatives of companies organized in the Alliance for Advanced Therapies (AAT), and representatives of the regulatory authorities at a kick-off meeting in June 2012, and organized the first European Interdisciplinary Summit on Cell-Based ATMPs in Vienna in May 2013 (www.esf-remedic2013.org/). The Summit was attended by 75 persons, 60 participants from academia, 16 from industry, and 9 from regulatory authorities. The idea behind the Summit was to bring together academia, industry, and regulators in this rapidly evolving field, which is an obvious need in Europe. Because of its success, similar follow-up summits involving academia, industry, and regulators will probably be organized in the next years back-to-back with the yearly meetings of AAT.

The Summit established strong ties between European industry and REMEDIC, and led to a White paper summarizing the meeting outcome. We are indeed very proud of this exceptional document jointly authored by academic researchers, company representatives, and regulators. Teaming up of REMEDIC with AAT and regulating authorities during the last year has already evolved into added value and synergy, but this team will likely become even more influential in the near future.

The activities of REMEDIC especially during the last 2 years have greatly increased its visibility and influence in Europe. Therefore, all in all, REMEDIC turned eventually into a very successful ESF-funded RNP.