

EUROPEAN POLICY BRIEF

EQUIP: EUROPE-INDIA RESEARCH IN SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

March 2017

INTRODUCTION

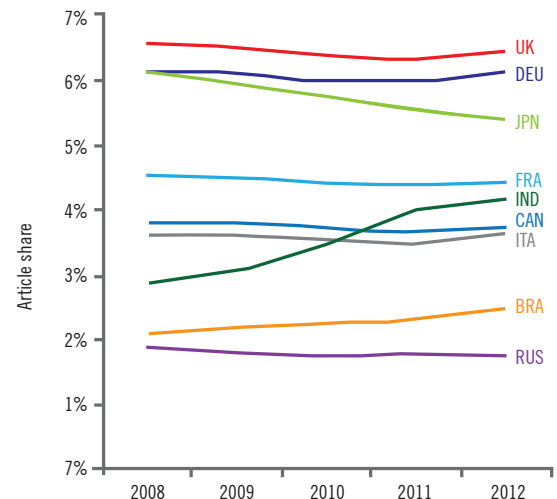
EqUIP, the Europe-India Platform for the Social Science and Humanities, is a network of research funding and support organisations from Europe and India specifically dedicated to strengthening research collaboration in the social science and humanities. It was established in 2014 through a €1.5 million grant from the European Commission (Grant No. 613236) and, to date, has brought together 16 research funding and support organisations from 11 European countries and India to develop stronger strategic partnerships.

BACKGROUND

India has a thousand-year long tradition of scientific and technological endeavours, and is rapidly growing into one of the world's leading research nations. In 2013, 4.4 per cent of the world's scholarly output – 106,065 papers – came from India, and the trend is accelerating. India's output is far outpacing the world average, increasing by 14 per cent compared to a world average of four per cent.

In an increasingly interlinked world, global perspectives are needed to understand global challenges and develop nuanced and locally relevant ways of tackling them. Rarely are there technical, or wholly technical, solutions to these challenges, many of which are fundamentally human in nature. Social science and humanities research perspectives and questions need to be at the centre of integrated approaches to tackling them.

However, international research collaboration between Europe and India in the social sciences and humanities is much less well established than in science (ie, life sciences and physical sciences) and technology. EqUIP was created to build on the experience of European Research Area networks, which have demonstrated the key role that funders play in stimulating and supporting international collaboration – removing administrative barriers and pooling resources on areas of common interest.

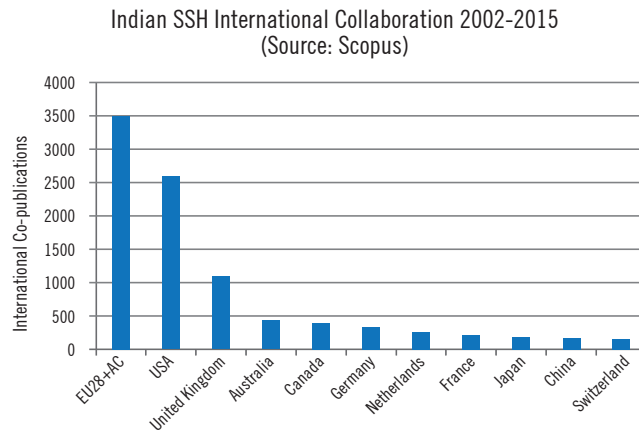


Share of world articles for selected European and India comparators (also Brazil and Russia), 2008-2012. Source: Scopus.

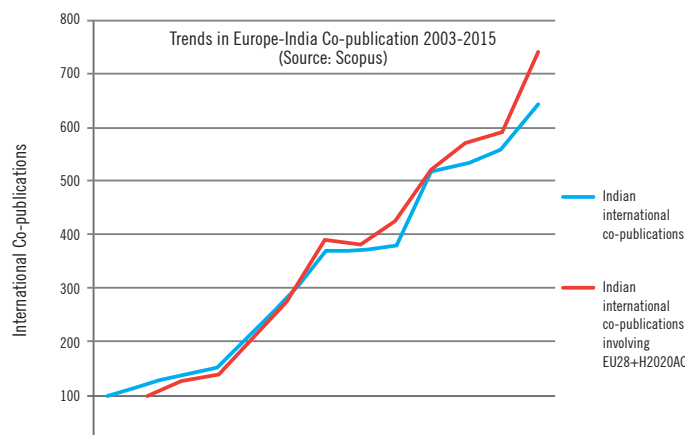
EU-INDIA COLLABORATION IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

Although there are high-quality, world-renowned researchers, writers and artists in India within social science and humanities (SSH), the volume of SSH research activity is low compared to science and technology. Of the total publication output in India in 2002-2015 recorded in Scopus, social science (SS) publications counted for four per cent and arts and humanities (AH) publications for only 0.69 per cent of the total – lower than the global share of publications (SS seven per cent; AH four per cent of global publications). However, around 16 per cent of this Indian SSH output was published with international co-authors in this period, reflecting an internationally engaged research community.

Although SSH research activity and share of Indian international co-publication was relatively low in this period (SS 3.4 per cent; AH 0.65 per cent), just under half of these co-publications were with Europe (SS 40 per cent; AH 48 per cent). While collaboration with the UK is significantly stronger than other European countries (as with other Anglophone countries outside Europe) there are low-level ad hoc collaborations across Europe that amount to more than that with the US, the country with greatest collaboration with India in SSH.



SSH Europe-India collaboration with Europe is also increasing, outstripping the increase in international collaboration overall, despite a reduction in Indian participation in EC-funded research since FP7 with the exclusion of funding for Indian researchers. This increase reflects a relatively long-term trend since 2004, but there was a marked step-change which may relate to the tripling of national Indian social science research budgets in 2012 following a Government of India Inquiry into social science research. This also coincides with the first Europe-India multilateral programme in the social sciences, the Indian-European Research Networking Projects, which provided groups of researchers with funding to build collaborative networks (projects were funded 2013-16). These developments in the Indian SSH research funding environments marked a key moment of opportunity for the development of the EqUIP platform in 2014-17.



ABOUT EQUIP

The EqUIP platform is a collaborative network of SSH research funders across Europe and India. By bringing together a significant body of national research funding agencies, EqUIP builds on a breadth of experience from successful European partner relationships (the NORFACE and HERA European Research Area Networks) as a basis for extending European research collaboration with India. As in those networks, EqUIP is supporting research funding agencies across Europe and India to strengthen their strategic engagement through sharing best practices, networking, development of a strategic research agenda and the development of joint funding initiatives.

The Economic and Social Research Council, UK, co-ordinates the platform alongside the Indian Council of Social Science Research. Since its launch the platform has grown with participation of the Indian Council for Historical Research and the Indian Council of Philosophical Research, the University Grants Commission, the India Foundation for the Arts and a number of other Indian research funding and support organisations through its events. From Europe it has also been joined by the Czech Academy of Sciences with engagement from the Irish Research Council. It will continue to expand its membership beyond the EC funding period.

THE AIMS OF EQUIP

- Provide a more coherent overview of current research collaborations between Europe and India in the social sciences and humanities
- Develop best practice approaches and identify challenges for research co-operation between Europe and India in the social sciences and humanities
- Identify opportunities and priorities for future research collaboration between Europe and India in the social sciences and humanities
- Establish networks of pan-European and Indian researchers in the social sciences and humanities addressing cutting-edge research questions.

DETAILS

NAME OF INITIATIVE	EqUIP: Europe-India Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities
COORDINATOR	Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Swindon, UK. equip@esrc.ac.uk Indian Council for Social Science Research, Delhi, India equip2017icssr@gmail.com
CONSORTIUM	The beneficiary partner countries participating in EqUIP are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UK - Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) ▪ India - Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) ▪ Finland - Academy of Finland (AKA) ▪ France - French National Research Agency (ANR) ▪ Italy - Agency for the Promotion of European Research (APRE) ▪ Germany - German Research Foundation (DFG) and German Aerospace Centre (DLR) ▪ Portugal - Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) ▪ Slovenia - Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MIZS) ▪ Netherlands - Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) ▪ Norway - Research Council of Norway (RCN) ▪ Austria - Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI)
FUNDING SCHEME	EqUIP is funded by the European Commission under its 7th Framework Programme for Research (FP7)
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BUDGET	€ 1,498,394.39
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