

How to Improve the Scientific Cooperation between France and Korea?

Daniel Thiel

Scientific Attaché, French Embassy in Seoul

I am most grateful to the Korean Society for Microbiology and Biotechnology and all the organizers for their kind invitation to this famous Annual Meeting and to this International Symposium.

I thank very much the President of KMB, all the scientists who are present this week in Daegu and particularly, the French delegation for coming in Korea.

Firstly, I will present the situation of the French-Korean scientific and technological Cooperation.

In promoting and facilitating cooperation between Korea and France, one of the key elements was the financial resource to support cooperative activities. The two sides shared the view that, in order to promote and facilitate bilateral cooperation, it was desirable to establish a channel for communication and coordination for each of the major fields for cooperation, including bio-science, new materials, information technology and basic sciences. Thus an agreement was made that each side designate an expert as the focal point for each of the major fields which were :

- Material sciences and Nanotechnologies
- Life sciences and Biotechnologies
- Information and Communication Sciences and Technologies
- Physics and Natural products Chemistry

According to this framework, a new joined program called STAR (Scientific and Technological Amical Relationships), has been started in September 2002. Further to a first call for proposals, the French Embassy (www.ambafrance-kr.org) and the KISTEP (www.kistep.re.kr/) received 27 projects in these different fields. In February 2004, after a second call, 10 new projects have been submitted.

In total, 22 projects are running after selection by the scientific committee composed by four Korean experts and four French experts.

Regarding Life Sciences and Biotechnologies, the expert chosen by the Korean government is Dr Lee Hong Weon from the Korean Research Institute of Bioscience and Biotechnology (KRIBB) and the French expert is Pr Jean-Loup Salzmann from University Paris 13.

The seven projects in Life Sciences which are still running, are the following:

Project title : "High throughput screening of a chemical library for inhibitors of RUNX protein

interactions using protein-domain arrays”

Principal Investigators : Dr. Suk-Chul Bae from Chunbuk National University & Dr. Patrick Hughes from Institut Curie, Paris

Project title: “Immunotherapeutic approaches for HBV chronic infections.”

Principal Investigators : Dr. Young Chul Sung from POSTECH & Dr. Marie-Louise Michel from Institut Pasteur, Paris

Project title: “Towards the surface display of therapeutic and biotechnological molecules in lactic acid bacteria: characterization of the sortase complex through a genomics and proteomics approach.”

Principal Investigators : Dr. Chang-Won Lee from Gyeongsang National University & Dr. Jean-Christophe Piard from INRA

Project title: “Plant lipid metabolism: from genomic aspects to biotechnology.”

Principal Investigators : Dr. Mi Chung Suh from Korea University & Dr. Jean-Claude Kader from University Paris 6, CNRS.

Project title: “Characterization of vasotocin and mesotocin receptors: involvement of vasotocin and mesotocin systems in the biosynthesis of neurosteroids.”

Principal Investigators : Dr. Jae Young Seong from Chonnam National University & Dr. Hubert Vaudry from University of Rouen, INSERM.

Project title: “Cross-comparative studies of gene expression profiles in clinical tissue samples using MYOchips and Cancer-chips.”

Principal Investigators : Dr. Sangsoo Kim from KRIBB, Daejeon & Dr. Jean Léger from INSERM, Nantes.

Project title: “Neuroprotective effects of 7-hydroxylated DHEA and its derivatives in Alzheimer’s disease and in vitro models of Parkinson’ disease.”

Principal Investigators : Dr. Byun Kwan Jin from Ajou University & Dr. Robert Morfin from CNAM, Paris.

Let me now remind you that after more than one year of relentless work, the Pasteur Institute of Korea (IP KOREA) has been created this year. This recent opening is a tribute to a very close collaboration of many partners in Korea (Ministry of Science and Technology and Scientists from different Korean Institutions) with France (the “Institut Pasteur” in Paris, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French Embassy in Seoul). The Korea Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) and “Institut Pasteur”, Paris, agreed for the sake of fostering research partnership in biotechnology, nanotechnologies and information technologies between the two parties. IP KOREA will be supported by the Korean Ministry of

Science and Technology (MOST) for a budget of 100 millions of USD for ten years. French Researchers from IP Paris will work permanently in Korea for developing common research projects.

I also would like to point out the effort of the European Commission for developing international collaboration in the 6th European Research and Development Framework Program. For your information, last year, the MOST has sent an observer who was located at the EU DG Research in Brussels. The former Korean Minister of Science and Technology, Dr Park O Gun, discussed with Commissar Busquin in charge of this EU Program, about the improvement of the relationships between Europe and Korea.

Finally, it was a great honour for France to have been identified by some National Science and Technology Roadmap Experts as an interesting strategic partner according to your five “visions” of Korea for the next ten years, particularly in Life Sciences.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish that this first International Symposium shall be the place of effective scientific work, of friendly cooperation and of promising results for the benefit of all of us. I believe that today’s symposium represents an excellent opportunity to bring together key players in this fast moving sector, and to expand co-operation further in our mutual interest.

I wish the participants the best of success and good luck.

Thank you very much.