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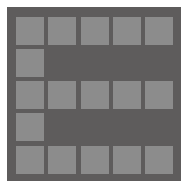
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Regional Innovation Policies Positive Plans for the Future

Ms Amanda Orchard, Innovative Actions Programme Manager, Advantage West Midlands
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The recent ERIK 'Foresight' workshop in Larissa focussed the attention on the importance of establishing firm visions and strategies which are future oriented and outward looking. The ability to meet the need to solve national economic, financial and social issues, delivered through regional strategies and policies, can be provided through the tools offered by Foresight. Strategic use of Foresight enables the development of focussed, deliverable innovation strategies, key to meeting the demands of competitiveness, globalisation, knowledge management and regional growth.

Since 1994, regional innovation strategy projects (supported by the European Commission) have assisted over 100 regions in the development of formal, deliverable innovation policies. Through the use of their own resources, many of these regions continue to develop and implement the practical elements of their strategies. The West Midlands, who successfully developed and implemented a wide ranging innovation strategy, recently held an 'Innovation Day', pulling together knowledge gained through the strategy and enabling continuing and new areas to be defined. A formal action plan, focussing on the key areas of resource development, knowledge development, company development and end-user engagement, was the result.

The priority of cohesion has meant a continued focus on regional innovation since the early 1990's. As champions, co-ordinators and catalysers in the mobilisation of enterprise, regional authorities, in partnership with local companies and the research base, are often best placed to develop and implement innovation policy. Through the delivery of regional strategies, which are developed to address the individual issues affecting that region in both the national and international context, local innovation capacity is developed and maintained, enabling global interaction.

Strategic innovation policies enable a region to look inwards at its key strengths, whilst looking forward and providing practical implementation of activity to enable economic growth. The continued development of clusters and local networks, key to implementation of innovation policy, together with support for innovative activity (through programmes of hands on support in the form of finance, start up and entrepreneurship programmes and encouragement and development of

spin out projects) is vital to enable regions to compete globally. Promoting innovation via cluster activity and regional networks gives clear, positive opportunities to those directly involved in regional growth.

The 100+ regions who have benefited through the development and implementation of their Innovation Strategy and policies offer the ideal platform for those who are at the beginning of the process to learn the strengths and weaknesses, and thus to strengthen and accelerate positive impact through inter-regional co-operation and extended learning. Practical, goal-orientated co-operation – enabling the selection, adaptation and implementation of appropriate knowledge and practical projects – can lead to finely tuned and dynamic activity, a shift in regional cultural beliefs in the importance of innovation and self propelled innovation. Regions such as Flanders, through more than a decade of public support for start ups and spin offs, are reaping the rewards of local innovation policies focussing on a dynamic knowledge corridor and a strong research base. The West Midlands, too, as one of the first regions to develop a Regional Innovation Strategy, has developed a high profile spin-out programme, support projects for hi-growth, hi-tech start-ups, a formal cluster strategy and regional, national and international networks. (An opportunity to discuss, visit and talk to those involved in all these areas is available to those attending the next combined ERIK Workshop & Study Visit, 9-11 June 2004, in Birmingham/Coventry, West Midlands, UK).

It is important to remember that, whilst an informed, proactive strategy provides a mechanism for implementation and delivery of key innovation objectives, without the engagement of the region's business and knowledge base, nothing effective will happen. The strength of any innovation strategy and the effective delivery of its policies and programmes will be in the means identified to raise the profile of innovation, to understand the 'customer' needs, in engaging regional media and the creation of 'innovation champions', willing and able to ensure the sustainability of actions taken. Without these a strategy becomes just another document.

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Blueprints for Foresight Actions in the Regions Expert Group

Dr. Christian Svanfeldt European Commission - DG Research - Directorate K Unit 'Science and technology foresight'

In order to cope with the challenges of improving competitiveness and solving economic, financial and social problems, regions are increasingly relying on strategic future vision building activities. In recognition of their motor role, regions are also increasingly addressed in EU wide strategic initiatives. In the "3 % action plan" it is recognised that new policy developments at European and national levels need to be reflected in updated and strengthened regional strategies. To develop their potential and find their new role in the emerging EU25+ knowledge based economy, regions also need to widen their focus to go beyond their own innovation landscape in order to explore the European and trans-regional dimension to the full.

Foresight is a key element in the creation of future oriented and outward looking visions and strategies, but so far relatively few regions have implemented foresight exercises. Reasons for this include doubts about the usefulness and usability of foresight (cannot be linked to existing regional mechanisms - too different; too academic; too complicated; too expensive, etc.), as well as simply lack of knowledge on how to set up foresight activities. Easy to understand and easy to adapt methodological aids or handbooks, i.e., **blueprints** for how to set up foresight activities to suit specific regional circumstances could be instrumental in pushing regions and helping them to implement regional foresight.

The blueprints expert group builds upon the Foresight knowledge base developed so far at regional and EU level by involving regional experts and policy makers active in earlier exercises, as well as using already available methodological tools and case studies, e.g., the Country specific **Guides to Regional Foresight**.

By blueprints we understand practical guides to ask valid questions, make valid considerations and take steps in the right direction. They are manuals or roadmaps to set up a foresight activity, not foresight exercises in themselves. The blueprints are supposed to be generic but should build

on real problems in real regions. They should not be prescriptive; why and how choices are being made should be made explicit, the focus should be set on specific regional challenges and they should build on stakeholder involvement.

The expert group is built around a core group of experts on foresight processes, who steers five working groups with regional partners, chosen because of their capacity to initiate actions and influence policymaking. The five working groups, each corresponding to a specific regional context, are:

- FOR-RIS: foresight in the context of RIS/RITTS (building on their results OR starting in parallel);
- UPGRADE: towards more knowledge based regional economies: reconversion of regional production systems in decline;
- TECHTRANS: trans-regional integration and harmonisation of technology support mechanisms (a multi-regional response to multi-national firms);
- TRANSVISION: bridging culturally close neighbouring regions separated by national borders;
- AGRIBLUE: foresight for sustainable territorial development.

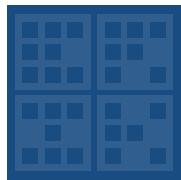
The working groups should as far as possible be open to outside participation, and the resulting blueprints (one for each working group) should be useful tools for regions not actively participating in the expert group but facing the same challenges.

The work started in December 2003 and will end with a dissemination conference in Brussels on September 24 this year.

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The Regional Foresight Workshop in Larissa - An Overview

Michal Miedzinski - Erik Network

Regional Foresight Workshop

Regional foresight is one of the strategic policy measures European regions develop in the framework of the ERDF Regional Programs of Innovative Actions (RPIA). The ERIK Network established a Thematic Working Group on regional foresight with a view of exchanging experience in implementing this type of projects. The last ERIK Workshop in Larissa (12-13 February 2004) was fully devoted to presenting experience and first results of selected foresight projects.

The speakers presented their experience of working with foresight projects in the European (representatives of the European Commission), national and regional contexts. The regional foresight cases came from West Midlands (UK) and Lombardy (Italy). Moreover, Central Macedonia and Thessaly as well as Wales presented their foresight projects developed in the framework of RPIA. The workshop also provided a wider perspective of an enlarged European Union. Accordingly, national and regional case studies from the Balkan (e.g. Bulgaria, FYROM), the Baltic (e.g. INTERREG IIIC Seagull project) and the Mediterranean (e.g. Malta) regions were presented and discussed. The audience consisted mainly of regional policy makers and project managers.

Regional foresight: key elements and general success factors

The workshop's main aim was to bring better understanding of how regions can benefit from the foresight exercises, in particular how they can improve a regional innovation system. Regional foresight was defined as a long term participatory process aiming to identify long term development trends affecting the region. Such a "strategic future vision building activity" (Ch.Svanfeldt) should lead to a refining of future visions, strategies and policies with an active participation of all regional stakeholders, hence common ownership of the strategies (see e.g. J.Harper in this issue).

Regional foresight can be implemented in different forms. Two general approaches emerged during the workshop. The first, focused mainly on the future technological development trends, can be seen as a form of technological foresight (see e.g. Lombardy and Central Macedonia cases in this issue). The second has a more generic character reaching beyond technology

to education system, consumption patterns, culture, demographic trends etc. (see e.g. Wales and Malta).

No matter what the focus of the exercise is, the necessity of a strong commitment to the project of both regional politicians and business representatives was found critical for its success (see B.Christensen). Foresight should be very carefully managed and coordinated, thus a need of a clear and understandable framework around the project (see M.Staton). Interestingly, the space for open thinking and learning created by foresight may also result in other intangible spin-offs (see J.Harper) and play a catalytic role in the establishment of initiatives and framework conditions conducive to innovation (E. Amanatidou). Some argued that strategies and policies built on such a policy exercise can prove "resilient in the face of accelerating change" (see K.Fisher).

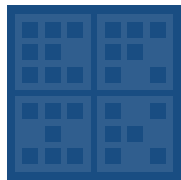
Nonetheless, it is important to underline that there was a widely accepted notion that foresight does not constitute the panacea for solving the economic or social problems of a region being rather a difficult and demanding tool to implement. It requires sound preparation, specific skills and long standing political commitment throughout the process.

Foresight blueprints and good practices

Until now relatively few regions have implemented foresight exercises mainly due to doubts about its practical application or simply a lack of knowledge regarding how to set up foresight activities. The European Commission launched the FOREN program that resulted in developing "blueprints" for how to set up foresight activities suiting specific regional circumstances (see Ch.Svanfeldt and E. Amantidou on the Greek FOREN guide).

The following sections present a collection of articles presented by the experts invited to speak in Larissa. Those interested in the original presentations are invited to visit the ERIK website:
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Examples of Regional and National Foresight Experiences

Foresight - One Percent Inspiration and Ninety-Nine Percent Perspiration

Dr. Matt Staton 'Europa-Recerca' Departament d'Universitats, Recerca i Societat de la Informació Barcelona

Lay a very strong foundation and put a clear framework around the project – this would be my message to colleagues thinking of starting foresight.

These basic management issues are so important for the simple reason that exploring the longer-term future is something that most of us do infrequently and badly, if at all. Therefore, to make sure that foresight produces useful results it must be both planned (or scoped, as it is sometimes called) and managed very carefully indeed.

Let's look quickly at planning first. I think a good plan or scoping document would probably be developed through stakeholder workshops and state unambiguously at least the following five things:

- Overall Objectives: the high level objectives or the general societal benefit, the things we'll contribute to but not solve completely with this project
- Project Purpose: what the beneficiaries will do with the outputs once the project has ended - this is the most important but difficult thing to specify
- Intended Results: the project products and what will change for the direct recipients of the products or services, the immediate difference we'll make
- Activities: what we will do - most project plans focus here, as it is fairly easy to describe what we will do but actually much more important to focus on results
- Resources/means: what we need to do our activities – most plans are quite clear about the resources they need, in fact, this is the simplest part of the plan.

Once you are clear about why you are doing the project and what results you expect from it then issues such as who the target audiences are, what the particular topic focus should be and which foresight methods to use will fall into place fairly easily.

Project management, including knowledge management, is the other aspect of the project

'infrastructure' that must be very strong. Project management should, as a minimum:

- provide a structured method with a controlled start, middle and end
- ensure that everyone knows what to expect, where, how and when
- provide early warning of problems, regular reviews of project against objectives
- ensure active involvement of stakeholders in the decision making on the project
- optimise knowledge flows inside and beyond the project to maximise impact

The management system delivers the results specified in the initial scoping phase and during any new planning that takes place as the project evolves. Never think of management without planning or of planning without management, they go hand-in-hand from the project's inception to its delivery and both are equally vital.

One practical approach to delivering successful foresight is to link existing generic planning and project management methods in a 'total foresight management package'. For scoping and planning I find Goal Oriented Project Planning (GOPP) is excellent, while for management PRINCE2 is a reliable method. Training in these skills is available and would be a wise investment. Of course, good management doesn't equal good foresight, but in my experience it certainly makes it much more likely.

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■ Practical Guide to Regional Foresight in Greece

Ms. Effie Amanatidou,
ATLANTIS Research Organisation, Thessaloniki

Foresight at a regional level can play a catalytic role in the establishment of initiatives and framework conditions conducive to innovation. It aims to provide inputs that can enhance strategy and policy planning in regions, municipalities and localities.

The Practical Guide to Regional Foresight in Greece aims to inform the Greek regional policy makers about the usefulness of the Regional Foresight and also about its implementation methods and the added value it offers to the existing strategic planning procedures. The guide explains how Foresight can be used, especially in regions and sub-national territories, and it sets out different approaches to Foresight, and when and where their use may be appropriate. It is an introductory tool for entities/authorities with the potential to apply Regional Foresight. At the same time, it may become the basis of a useful educational tool for the development of skills and the creation of a critical mass of Foresight experts in Greece.

The creation of the Practical Guide to Regional Foresight in Greece was based on a prototype developed under the EC's FOREN project (Practical Guide to Regional Foresight – the FOREN Guide:) and was commissioned by the Foresight Unit of DG Research under the European Commission's efforts to promote the strategic use of Regional Foresight in an enlarged EU.

The Greek version of the guide has been substantially rewritten, and several new sections have been added that deal with Greek specific issues covering both

- practical issues that may be confronted by potential Regional Foresight users (e.g. rationale, goals, timetable, issues that should be examined by Foresight, input and information that is required, entities/authorities that should be involved, anticipated outputs and deliverables)

- as well as issues concerning Regional Foresight in general (e.g. how it should be set in the framework of the already existing policies and programmes, how the authorized bodies / entities are identified and convinced to participate, what the intermediate benefits are).

Apart from Greece, the FOREN guide has been adjusted to the peculiarities of other countries such as the EU-15 Member States and several of the new Member States. For this reason, the countries' Regional Foresight Guides may facilitate the promotion of cooperation and the

transfer of experiences in the area of Foresight among these countries.

The Practical Guide to Regional Foresight in Greece is available in Greek, but a summary of 18 pages is also available in English.

Bibliographic Reference:

EUR 20478 EL (2003), 202pp. Free of charge; ISBN: 92-894-4707-4; EUR-OP reference: KI-NG-20478-GR-C

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■ Regional Foresight and Strategic Investments in Prospective Energy Technologies. A Case from Western Denmark

Benny Christensen, Ringkøbing County

Ringkøbing County with 275.000 inhabitants is situated in Western Jutland and covers a total area of 4,900 sq.km. With a western coastline exposed to the North Sea, the region has plenty of wind energy resources. 857 wind turbines with a total capacity of 384 MW are situated in the county and more than 35 % of the electricity consumption in the area is produced by wind power.

Wind energy is also an important background for the industrial development in the region. Two of the world's largest wind turbine producers are situated in Ringkøbing County. Together they cover nearly 30 % of the world market for wind turbines, and the wind turbine industry and its sub-contractors give 5-6,000 jobs in the region.

Apart from the wind energy the area has other valuable resources of renewable energy. Biomass is used for heat production and in cogeneration plants, and around 27 % of the Danish biogas is produced in the area. In the future there may also be possibilities of using wave energy along the 100 km North Sea coast. A prototype wave energy plant is being tested at the shore of Limfjorden, just at the northern county border.

The county administration is playing an important role in the industrial development in the area. Last year a

centre of knowledge and education in relation to the wind turbine industry was established in close connection to the Herning College of Business and Engineering (HIH). The vision of the county is to establish and develop the county's status as an important international player in the field of renewable energy technologies.

In order to reach this goal it is of primary importance to ensure the awareness of the possibilities in prospective energy technologies. In May 2003 a first step was taken with a conference at HIH on new energy technologies, where the vision for a regional future was introduced and discussed by representatives from local industry, knowledge centres, energy companies and citizens at large.

A further step after this conference was the start of a Regional Foresight on the possibilities of using hydrogen technology and fuel cells in the continued development of the region. The regional foresight should facilitate forward thinking, increase preparedness for change and improve the decision-making of the various public and private stakeholders. As the hydrogen economy is regarded as a longer-term goal, the time perspective of the regional foresight was 2030.

Central elements during the foresight process was three working groups concerned with specific parts of the topic. Two times during the process these groups were brought together in seminars with other stakeholder-representatives from the region, and the final report from the foresight was presented as part of a conference at the Danish parliament building in Copenhagen on energy technologies as a growth area. This conference was arranged by the Danish Board of Technology. The Risoe National Laboratory's department of System Analysis was engaged in an consultancy role during the whole process.

A strong commitment at high level in the political system and in industry has been very important for the process. The county mayor has been chairman of the 8-persons steering group and the many local stakeholders actively involved in the process has created the consensus and the "critical mass" necessary for change. The foresight has generated an overview on the options, which now can serve as the basis for the implementation of demonstration and development projects.

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EFORESEE: Malta's First Collaborative Foresight Experience

Jennifer Cassingena Harper, Director of the Policy Unit within the Malta Council for Science and Technology - Former Coordinator of the Malta eFORESEE Project.

Introducing more long-term participatory approaches to policy-making already constitutes a major challenge for a small country in preparation for accession, but imagine combining this with the additional stretch target of doing this within a transnational mutual learning context, involving two other countries, Cyprus and Estonia.

Indeed, eFORESEE (<http://www.eforesee.info>), a two-year EU-funded FP5 STRATA project (Strategic Analysis of Specific Political Issues – supporting Science and Technology Policies), involved many levels of action and learning, but its key remit has been to address the challenges faced by policy makers in implementing foresight activities in smaller economies and regions.

In February 2002, the partners from Cyprus, Estonia and Malta agreed at the kick-off meeting on the thematic focus of their foresight Pilot projects, which reflected priority interest in their regions. The themes of the three Malta foresight Pilots are as follows:

- Pilot 1: "Exploring Knowledge Futures in ICT and Education in 2020"
- Pilot 2: "Towards a vibrant biotechnology sector within the Maltese economy by 2015"
- Pilot 3: "Towards enhancing the marine sector's contribution to the Maltese economy in 2020"

In Malta work focused in the first year on developing the foresight skills and appropriate methodologies and approaches for embarking on the first pilot. In 2003, building on the results of the first pilot, work continued on Pilots 2 and 3, with the final project conference in November serving as a showcase for the results of all the pilots as well as the work carried out in Cyprus and Estonia (<http://www.eforesee.info/conferencesandevents/malta2003>).

One of the key impacts of the eFORESEE Project in Malta has been the embedding of foresight in various contexts (theatre, FutureChild, careers, competitiveness, tourism), as well as the adaptation of foresight approaches to the Maltese reality. Malta's limited resources and lack of a research and innovation culture forced the foresight exercise in a particular direction – foresight was applied directly to addressing RTDI policy and in particular the lack of a systemic approach to policy in this area. It also meant that foresight could not just stop at tapping expert and stakeholder opinion, building national visions and making policy recommendations. The foresight exercise had to move immediately into implementation since accession was at our doorstep and policy-makers need tangible results to be convinced of the utility of this exercise. It also meant

that the foresight exercise focused more on social and governance concerns and mobilising people and resources for research and innovation and less on identifying technology niches in view of the basic lack of national investment in research.

For the purposes of our work, the foresight process was perceived as involving "intense iterative phases of open reflection, networking, consultation, and discussion leading to the joint refining of future visions and the common ownership of strategies, with the aim of exploiting long-term opportunities opened up through the impact of STI on society It is the discovery of a common space for open thinking on the future and the incubation of strategic approaches ... in this sense the foresight process has no beginning or end, since it builds on previous and ongoing conversations and consultations and sets in motion learning curves and other intangible spin-offs which are not easily captured in short timeframes..." (see: REPORT ON eFORESEE Malta Foresight Pilot Exploring Knowledge Futures in Information and Communications Technologies and Education in 2020, February 2003).

It is impossible to give here a full account of all the spin-offs emanating from the project, although efforts are in hand to disseminate and build on the results. The full project results will be available on the web in the coming month but if you are interested in further information, contact jennifer.harper@mcst.org.mt

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RISE Project and R&D policies of the Regional Government of Lombardia

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Due to the industrial organisation of the local system composed by a large number of SMEs, Lombardy Regional Government can play an important role in promoting the technological innovation efforts of local enterprises, with a variety of strategic actions such as:

- fostering cooperation among SME's and regional universities and research centres
- supporting the transfer of scientific results into industrial applications
- promoting the utilisation of advanced technologies on a large scale creating the ICT infrastructures needed by SME's to make an effective use of e-business methodologies

More than this, Lombardia Government aims at supporting its scientific and industrial systems to gain excellence in some emerging technologies by helping existing firms to grow technologically and to be more competitive and by creating new knowledge based

firms. This in order to counterbalance the loss of many local firms in such industries as chemicals, pharmaceuticals and telecommunications. For these reasons, recently the regional Government of Lombardia decided to launch a RDTI strategy aimed at supporting the local scientific and industrial systems to achieve a strong competitive position at international scale in a few emerging technology areas. In order to provide this strategy with a reliable informative basis and the strong commitment of the most relevant regional players, a foresight study, named RISE (Research, Innovation, Economic Development) was commissioned to the regional socio-economic research institute, IReR, with the aim of assessing both the attractiveness of some technology areas (Advanced materials, ICT, Biotechnologies, Energy technologies, Nanotechnologies) for the medium-long term development of the regional industry and the feasibility of providing these technologies given the scientific and industrial capabilities of the region.

The study was implemented by IReR in cooperation with Politecnico di Milano and Fondazione Rosselli; the foresight methodology included expert panels and interviews based on a detailed check-list, the outputs of which were elaborated in order to provide some meaningful indicators of attractiveness and feasibility. These indicators were then aggregated into a small number of indexes (such as level of knowledge existing in Lombardia, number of additional researchers and financial resources needed for Lombardia to reach a critical mass, level of international competition in developing a technology, etc.), which were cross-related in order to give an overall picture of the feasibility of developing the technology (with industrial applications) in Lombardia. All these elements provide the informative future oriented basis on which to set up an effective regional strategy for S&T according to the "excellence" goals set up by the regional government.

Based on these results a few critical technologies were selected, within three areas: Advanced materials, ICT, Biotechnologies. Thereafter an action plan was designed for each selected technology, by setting scientific and industrial objectives, identifying research and industry players willing to participate in the development of the technology, and evaluating the needed resources. Anyway, it's apparent that the pursuit of these technology developments cannot be done by Lombardia's players in complete autonomy: scientific and industrial cooperation with players of other regions of EU is needed in order to reach a critical mass of knowledge and resources and to cope with all the specific disciplinary problems associated with complex innovative technologies.

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"Foresight" rather than Vision

Kevin Fisher Technology & Innovation Welsh Development Agency - Cardiff

Failing to understand what Foresight strategies can do is a "business crime" in the twenty-first century (for Foresight strategy to be "real" for companies and organisations it has to be more than just a "vision building" process. The methodology developed is based on "deep insights" over a broad spectrum of trends categories involving a large number people to give a broad view of the future and choices regarding a feasible preferred future).

Organisations need to adopt a proactive approach to the future: actively creating tomorrow's opportunities, and implementing their execution in a time of relentless and accelerating change. This can only be done by a revolution in trend-spotting methodology and in fast and different exploitation.

Gary Hamel, co-author of *Competing For The Future* and professor of strategic and international management at London Business School, calls this "resilience" – riding the waves of future and accelerating uncertainty.

"Great uncertainties of course present major challenges to organisations across all industries. It is a turbulent world and single-line forecasts no longer provide the necessary insight. Organisations need to understand the implications of a number of feasible scenarios for the evolution of their industry, which bring both enormous threats but fantastic opportunities too."

For forward-thinking companies, "foresight" rather than vision is preferred. Vision connotes a dream or an apparition, but there is more to industry foresight than a single blinding flash of insight. Industry foresight is based on gaining deep insights into trends in technology, demographics, regulation, lifestyles and any other trend category that might affect a sector, and harnessing this knowledge to rewrite industry rules and create new competitive space.

Who has these insights? Well not just the management, but the whole workforce. Hamel cites the 40:30:20 rule: this states that 40% of senior executives' time is spent looking outward; and of this time, 30% is spent peering three, four, five or more years into the future; and of this time spent looking forward, no more than 20% is spent attempting to build a collective view of the future through sharing and consulting with employees. On average, therefore, senior management is devoting or committing less than 3% ($20\% \times 30\% \times 40\% = 2.4\%$) of its energies to building a collective perspective.

Today's companies need an immersed innovative culture. One where technology is necessary, but not sufficient. One where the relentless pursuit of tacit knowledge, its retention, leverage and its clever exploitation will be seen

as providing the only future competitive advantage. And one where all staff hold the insights, make the connections, see the effects and their pace of arrival.

What are these effects? They are chaotic mix of weak signals in a variety of trend categories that come together to create a paradigm shift which can blind any company, any institution.

One of the biggest drivers for change in Wales right now is not technology but demographics. We call it the "grandparents behaving badly" syndrome. Old people now make up a growing and significant consumer group that is active and healthy and risk-taking. Compare this to ten years ago when, on retiring, "old people" in the UK were expected to sail into the sunset quietly before dying. It's an upside down perspective on traditionally expected outcomes.

Similar changes are occurring in other countries, yet so many countries ignore this global phenomenon. Demographics, in general, are fairly accurate and where necessary can be adjusted with a country's census. And when their statistics are combined with other trend insights, the results can be startling.

In Wales, for example, Cardiff City and County Council is linking the trends in single-person households, and their age and religious make-up, with consumer behaviour and the implications for waste management. The work will be used to inform and improve waste collection and recycling policies.

We face a turbulent world of connectivity and convergence. But we also face an opportunity to create bottom-up strategic policy that can be resilient in the face of accelerating change. The only challenge is whether managers are prepared to seek out their employees' perspectives – for their employees are consumers too – and tap into their latent creativity.

Welcome to turbulence and the real meaning of foresight.

Kevin Fisher is the Foresight coordinator for the Welsh Development Agency and managing director of The pi-lateral Partnership, a trends consultancy company. He is an internationally accredited facilitator and speaker in futures issues and creative thinking.

(The WDA Foresight programme began life under the DTI in London but was merged with the Future Technologies (FT) programme in 2003/2004. The FT programme is one strand of a EU TASK programme (Toward a Sustainable Knowledge Based Economy) which has made a significant contribution to the implementation of the RPIA in Wales under its Innovative Actions programme, under Key Action 2 - "Developing more high-growth potential businesses")

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Technological Foresight in Central Macedonia

Dr Yannis A. Tolias Project Manager, Technological Foresight in Central Macedonia

"Foresight in Central Macedonia" is one of the ten projects running under the "Excellence in Central Macedonia 2002-2003" Programme, co-funded by ERDF's Innovative Actions and national funds. The project's budget is 375.000 Euro (75% ERDF, 25% national funds). The project is implemented by the Research Committee of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The overall Programme is managed by the Region of Central Macedonia (Kentriki Makedonia), Greece.

Essentially, the project is an attempt to foresee the impact of technological developments on the various elements of the regional innovation system, being the first regional foresight exercise in Greece. The project's look-ahead period is 15 years; the Delphi paradigm is followed.

Central Macedonia is very small in terms of population (approximately 18% of Greece) and technological capacity; it is not considered as a technology provider. It "imports" technology from other Greek and international regions for internal use, and by adding some value "exports" technological solutions to neighboring Regions and Southeastern European countries. However, there exist some interesting strengths within the regional innovation system — i.e., a strong educational infrastructure, the presence of world-caliber research centers, an entrepreneurial attitude, easy access to significant markets outside the Greek borders, that, when supported by the correct mix of technological developments, might result in exploitable opportunities.

The project's primary objectives are to identify and interrelate the "correct mix of technological developments" to the "exploitable opportunities"; to provide hints on re-orientating the regional innovation system towards exploiting these opportunities; and influence the strategy development process of all regional actors towards supporting the transition of the region to global-grade competitiveness so that the opportunities will be effectively exploited.

The foresight exercise stems from and applies to Central Macedonia. Under the co-ordination of the Research

Committee of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, approximately sixty high-level experts were selected to form a balanced mix of the elements of the regional innovation system (academia, industry, research, regional administration, NGOs, technology transfer) and elaborate eight thematic areas of strategic importance to the Region: (a) Information and Communication Technologies, (b) Agro- and Bio- technologies, (c) Industrial processes and Materials, (d) Environment, (e) Transport networks, (f) Energy, (g) Human Resources and (h) the southeastern European economic area.

The project team is currently analyzing the results of two iterations of Delphi questionnaires to identify the consensus on the effects of technological development to the future of Central Macedonia. Appropriate awareness and dissemination measures are already scheduled to communicate the project results to the regional innovation system, due for mid-2004.

To follow up, the regional administration have already expressed their interest in utilizing the project's outcome to draft the strategic objectives of the new Regional Operational Programme covering the period 2007-2013. The Research Committee of Aristotle University has already put foresight high on its' agenda for developing the University's research orientations, being committed to repeat the exercise by establishing a foresight mechanism within the University.

For a detailed analysis of the methodology followed by the project, the reader is referred to http://www.eriknetwork.net/larissa/presentations/20040212_RPIAS.zip.

The project's interim and final deliverables are posted (currently in Greek) at <http://foresight.rc.auth.gr/>.

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on the next NEWSLETTER

RPIAs from:

Lombardia

Murcia

PROMETHEE II: The Innovative Actions Program in Wallonia

Isabelle Pierre, Ministère de la Région Wallonne – DGTRE

The general goal of the program is to reinforce the integration of the Region in the knowledge society by the implementation of innovative measures falling under the first two themes of RPIA.

A first set of actions – falling under the first theme of Innovative Actions – aims at increasing the valorisation of scientific and technological potential of the Region. This part of the program is directly built on the foundations resulting from the Walloon RIS experience – PROMETHEE – conducted between 1998 and 2000. The success of this project in mobilising regional actors to the definition of a common innovation strategy induced the Region to keep this acronym for the RPIA. It is actually well known by all regional actors and automatically associated to a dynamic and open process.

This first set of actions has been completed with a second axis - articulated on the second theme of RIAP – aiming at improving access to ICT's for the largest part of the regional population.

Human capital being actually closely connected to the development of knowledge capital, it is essential, as part of a coherent and integrated approach, to take into account these two dimensions.

A better valorisation of the regional scientific and technological potential will be pursued by three kinds of actions:

- Stimulating synergies, collaborations and economies of scale amongst research operators by the implementation of a pilot program to encourage research laboratories to network around strategic research areas.

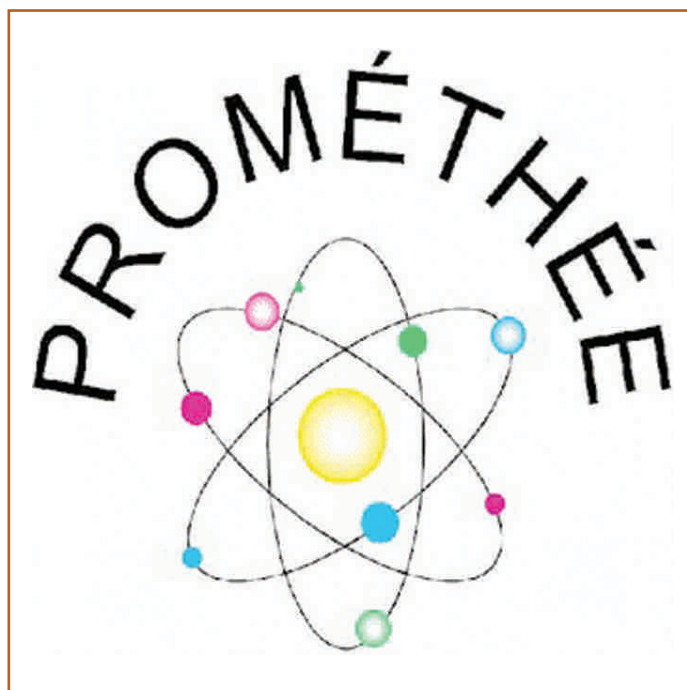
- Promoting quality management amongst R&D laboratories by the implementation of increasing awareness measures and the financing of pilot experiences to help some structures to get into a quality management process.

- Improving the visibility of regional resources and services in the field of R&D and innovation by the development of electronic public databases organising a structured access to state-of-the-art research equipment, technological services and other innovation support services, available in the Region.

A double objective will be pursued under the second program axis:

- As far as training will play an increasing role in the ICT's appropriation process by the population, the first objective will aim at building methodological tools and making them available to regional actors in order to stimulate the e-learning development.

- At the same time, we will try to touch more isolated people who for economic, organisational, psychological, cultural or mobility reasons, don't take the step to move to training centres. Proximity actions will be conducted by mobile training platforms to disseminate knowledge in the field of ICT's amongst the most isolated people living in rural or semi-urban zones.



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Lower Austria encourages the Innovative Potential of Located Companies

Mag. Irma Priedl, Lower Austrian Department of Economic Development

To strongly enhance Lower Austria's competitiveness, it is necessary to increase the innovative potential of located companies. In 2001, Lower Austria participated in the EU's tender "Innovative Actions" to expand the since 1997 existing "Regional Innovation System – RIS". The State Councillor in charge of economic affairs was able to obtain an EU co-funding for the sponsorship programme. The declared goal of the department for economic development is to turn Lower Austria into one of the leading high tech regions in Europe. To achieve this ambitious aim, better and closer cooperation of all organisations is needed, according to the RIS-motto "Together we are strong!"

Outstanding technologic competences for particularly competitive branches of industry and higher quality of the exchange process between economy, public authorities and science are critical success factors of the system as a whole. Innovation, technology, cooperation, internationalisation and mobilisation of start-ups have been identified as strategic key segments of Lower Austria's regional innovation policy. Based on this strategy, on the one hand the department for economic development is anxious to optimise the

general conditions for enterprises in Lower Austria and on the other hand to align the encouragement with companies' needs. Supportive assistance can be engaged in terms of individual, personal coaching, external consulting or usage of experts if questions arise during the start-up-phase.

All actions are focused on small and medium-sized enterprises. Hence within the framework of "Innovative Actions" RIS++ several integrated programmes have been designed to encourage their abilities. The main five areas

1. innovation by user-orientation
2. establishment of innovation assistants
3. networking by B2B-solutions
4. acceleration of the business start-ups
5. communication

were identified to primarily strengthen both innovative ideas and R&D-projects.

The first action "innovation by user-orientation" shall result in more intensive development of international competitive and innovative products and services, which are aligned with consumers' needs. Companies that fail to realise their ideas due to the lack of personnel know-how, can employ so-called "innovation assistants". These assistants are then partly financed by the Lower Austrian department for economic development. The usage of state-of-the-art information and communication technologies is encouraged by the government to advance the networking of processes and activities between different enterprises. The acceleration of business start-ups of technology-oriented companies shall be implemented by professional and active expert guidance. Finally, the intensification of the dialogue between science, public authorities and economy in Lower Austria is a basic requirement for a successful implementation of the planned actions. Hence the department for economic development organises "innovation days", which focus on networking and cooperation as well as the first contact between small and medium-sized companies and research establishments.

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News

Third Report on Economic and Social Cohesion and the European Cohesion Forum

The European Commission presented the Third Report on Economic and Social Cohesion in February 2004. Following the Commission's budgetary proposal for the period 2007 to 2013 and laying the foundation for a new legislative framework for the Structural Funds later this year, the Report sets out the basic data and a new political blueprint for a reformed cohesion policy in the enlarged EU. The proposals follow those on the Union's future budget which includes a 336 billion package for cohesion policy.

The report deals with:

- Cohesion, competitiveness, employment and growth - Situations and trends
- The impact of Member State policies on cohesion
- Impact of community policies: competitiveness, employment and cohesion
- Impact and added value of structural policies

The Report contains concrete recommendations on how the resources should be used in order to narrow the economic gaps between Member States and regions and achieve faster growth and more sustainable development. Full text of the report can be found at: http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion3/cohesion3_en.htm

The "European Cohesion Forum" has taken place on 10 and 11 May 2004 in Brussels. At this occasion the Commission's proposals of new regulations for the Structural Funds for the new planning period beginning in 2007 have been discussed. The Forum has represented an opportunity for Member States, regional authorities, economic and social actors and European citizens to take active part in the planning of the European cohesion policy and to present their contributions to this debate. For further info please visit:

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/debate/forum_en.htm

Regional Innovation Awards Ceremony

The winners of the first 'European Regional Innovation Awards' competition were announced on the 22nd April 2004 in Brussels. The winning regions with the most innovative projects were presented with their awards during a plenary session of the Committee of the Regions held in the European Parliament. The competition was organised by the European Commission Directorate General for Regional Policy and was targeted at regions who are experimenting with new ideas and new ways of promoting innovations at the regional level through the Regional Programmes of Innovative Actions which are co-funded by the European regional Development Fund.

Candidates were chosen for each of the three themes of the Regional Programmes of Innovative Actions and the winners were:

Theme 1: Regional economies based on knowledge and technological innovation: helping regions to raise their technological level

In 1st place, "NanoBioTech-Region Saarland" a nano-biotechnology project submitted by the Ministry of Economic Affairs of Saarland, Germany to strengthen Saarland's image as an innovative region. The project involved the creation of a virtual 'Centre of Excellence' in nano-biotechnology helping all relevant partners to work together to place Saarland at the forefront of this new technology.

In 2nd place, "X-Proi" – a biotechnology project submitted by the region of Centro, Portugal. The University of Coimbra has developed a new type of recombinants proteins which have encouraging commercial potential to stimulate new business and new jobs in the regions.

In 3rd place "Prodima" – a knowledge transfer project submitted by the regional Ministry for Economy and Labour, in Sachsen-Anhalt, Germany for the development of innovative products and services to revive and modernise the small mechanical and plant engineering in the region.

Theme 2: e-Europe-Regio: the information society at the service of regional development

In 1st place, "Gnulinex" – an e-educational project submitted by the regional Ministry of Education, Science and



Technology, in Extremadura, Spain .

In 2nd place, "Pilot Wireless Care"- an e-medicine project submitted by the Province of Overijssel in the Netherlands .
In 3rd place "IT Quality Seal" – an e-business project submitted by the regional Ministry of Economic Affairs, Employment and Transport in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany .

Theme 3: Regional Identity and Sustainable Development

In 1st place, "TANNO meets GEMINI", a sustainable development project submitted by the regional government of Styria, Austria .

In 2nd place, "TEKNIKBUSSEN (TEKNO)" – a project to preserve the identity of the region submitted by East Central Sweden.

In 3rd place, "LES CRéANAUTES"- a regional identity project submitted by the Regional Council of Limousin, France.

For more information: http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/innovation/concours_en.htm

Event News

MAY 2004

>> 25-27

EU Presidency Conference 'Territorial Cohesion: Meeting New Challenges in an Enlarged EU' (Na Forbacha, Co. Galway, Ireland)

An high-level conference for senior officials on Territorial Cohesion is being organised by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, in co-operation with the Directorate General for Regional Policy of the European Commission.

This conference will present a useful and timely opportunity to debate the concept of territorial cohesion generally. It will focus on the issues that are critical to the continuing development of those areas of the EU with recognised territorial constraints, for example, islands, mountainous regions and sparsely populated areas. It will also have a focus on urban and rural interactions and interface as well as the drivers for territorial cohesion. Building on the recently published Third Report on Economic and Social Cohesion, the conference will present analyses and proposals on the strategies necessary for sustainable development in an enlarged EU and on relevant national, regional and Community policies.

For more info: www.territorialcohesion.ie

JUNE 2004

>> 3-5

The 2nd OCDE Ministerial Conference on SMEs: Promoting Entrepreneurship and Innovative SMEs (Istanbul, TR)

The objectives of this second OECD Ministerial Meeting on SMEs are to:

- Assess the impact on SMEs of new developments relating to globalisation, four years after the Bologna Charter on SME Policies.
- Further increase the understanding of issues and policies related to entrepreneurship, SME competitiveness and growth in the global economy.
- Identify "best practices", and develop policy recommendations.
- Strengthen the policy dialogue and co-operation among OECD and non-OECD economies.
- Agree on policy initiatives through which entrepreneurial activity can be enhanced and SME competitiveness and globalisation may be facilitated.

More information: <http://www.oecd-istanbul.sme2004.org/>

>> 9-11

WEST MIDLANDS ERIK WORKSHOP & STUDY TOUR

'Creating and Connecting Companies – A West Midlands Perspective' (Birmingham/Coventry, West Midlands, UK)

A 3-day multi-centre event for local practitioners and partners, based upon the ERIK network's thematic areas of Spin Outs/Start Ups and Clusters/Networks and designed to deliver maximum learning in relation to current EU Best Practice in the themes delivered in an innovative way, through interactive activities, presentations and region wide study visits.

Further information: www.eriknetwork.net - www.makinginnovationreal.co.uk
www.innovativeactions.org - www.advantagewestmidlands.co.uk



>> 9-11

IANIS Annual Conference 2004 "Information Society & The Regions: Contributing to Cohesion in EU-25" (Budapest, Hungary)

The IANIS Conference will focus on issues related to the information society and knowledge-based economy. Presentations and debate will focus on both policy and practice. The conference will cover a range of themes from regional, national and European perspectives, including:

- Reform of EU regional policy and the impact of enlargement, including the Mid-Term Review and the future of the Structural Funds
- Achieving cohesion and solidarity in the new Europe through the information society
- Medium and long term trends in technology development and their implications for regional development
- ICTs and the ICT sector as an engine for growth, employment and competitiveness; the Mid-Term Review of eEurope 2005 Action Plan

Further information: <http://www.ianis-budapest2004.net>

SEPTEMBER 2004:

>> 9-12 Baltic Association of Science/Technology Parks and Innovation Centres conference: Baltic Dynamics – Innovation and Development of Knowledge-Based Entrepreneurship (Riga, LV)

The conference venue is rotated between the Baltic States Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The conference organisers invite everyone involved in the dynamic development of high-tech entrepreneurship - leaders of innovative companies, managers of science/technology parks and centres, public authorities responsible for innovation in the region, venture capital organisations, etc. - to present and discuss initiatives in the area of innovation strategy and policy. The main topics of the conference include the development of national innovation systems, co-operation between networks supporting high-tech entrepreneurship (including the IRE and the IRC networks), access to venture capital, business incubators, and technology transfer.

More information: <http://www.innovation.lv/baltdyn04>

>> 20-23

World Conference of the International Association of Science Parks "Regional Attractiveness in the Knowledge Economy" (Bergamo-Italy)

In the era of global competition, the most successful territorial systems are those which are able to incorporate within their economic organisation initiatives with a high level of knowledge.

What are the characteristics that make these areas attractive? What criteria are used by managers when choosing the location of a company? Does the presence of scientific and technological parks improve the attractiveness to investors? What services should be offered to companies and the territory?

The aim of the conference is to verify to what degree the presence of structures dedicated to research and technological transformation, increase the competitiveness of an area.

More information at:

http://www.iaspbergamo2004.com/english/first_announcement/index.asp
info@iaspbergamo2004.com

>> 27-30

Call for Papers "Managing Regional Development" Brussels (Be), September 2004.

In the framework of the OPEN DAYS - a joint initiative of the Committee of the Regions and the European Commission's Regional Policy DG

2004 is a crucial year for the future of the Union's cohesion policy after 2006. Structural Funds will be of great importance for the new Member States and regions in the EU of 25. The Commission's 3rd Cohesion report published in February 2004 outlined a new partnership on cohesion policy for the period between 2007 and 2013. In order to address these issues and based on a joint initiative of the Committee of the Regions and the European Commission's Regional Policy DG, over 70 regional representation offices in Brussels will take part in the OPEN DAYS event between 27 to 30 September 2004. The event is meant to be a forum of exchange between national, regional and EU players and institutions on regional policy management, best practices and the future of cohesion policy.

By this call for papers, the Regional Policy DG looks for about 60 speakers and contributions for a programme of about 30 workshops, which will accompany the OPEN DAYS. Interested speakers should send their proposals for contributions to the Regional Policy DG by filling in the application form.

For more info: http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/events_web/public/managingform/registration.cfm



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