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Sources

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Austrian Science and Research Liaison Offices
(ASOs) Ljubljana and Sofia



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International Workshop

Benchmarking RTDI Organisations in Central and Southeast European Countries

**19 November 2004
Sofia, Bulgaria**

Hotel Bulgaria
Hall Desislava - 1st Floor
Boulevard Tsar Osvoboditel 4

Organisers

Austrian Science and Research Liaison
Offices (ASOs) Ljubljana and Sofia

Applied Research and Communications
Fund (ARC Fund) and IRC Bulgaria

Background

The creation of a truly European Research Area in the context of the Lisbon targets forces all European countries to modernise and upgrade their national systems of innovation.

A key element of the capability of a national (or regional) system of innovation is the state of art of the existing innovation oriented research organisations.

Benchmarking between research organisations, mapping of excellence and the identification of centres of excellence (CoE) in the New Member States of the European Union has been actively supported by many initiatives, such as the EC funded STRATA project 'RECORD' which was concluded early this year.

Under this project a method for benchmarking RTDI organisations has been established and tested in a couple of New Member States.

This instrument and other issues of mapping excellency and of identifying CoE will be presented and discussed in Sofia. On that basis, also not (yet) European Union member states should be included in the dialogue on this important instrument.

Benchmarking can also be seen as a potential strategy tool for national S&T policies. It can be utilised to enable the identification of excellent RTDI organisations compared to less successful ones on an objective basis.

After the completion of the analysis phase, instruments and initiatives should be developed by pro-active S&T-policies to counterbalance the weaknesses of the existing national research and technology structure or to even enhance the existing strengths by a well targeted allocation of resources. The results of the benchmarking processes could also be used to optimise the distribution of structural funding between the RTDI organisations under scrutiny.

Participants

Experts, stakeholders, civil servants and institutions in charge of or interested in benchmarking will have the possibility to exchange their experience and to reflect on their efforts in their respective countries. Participants are coming from EU-Member states, Candidate Countries and other Southeast European countries.

Objectives of the workshop

The main aim of the workshop is to promote benchmarking as an internal and external self assessment tool to the stakeholders of national RTDI organisations (universities, Academies of Science, non-university RTDI institutes, industrial research labs and others). Possibilities for the further development and application of benchmarking should be discussed and potentials for future network activities throughout Southeast Europe be identified.

In particular, the workshop emphasises

- to present evaluation approaches for RTDI organisations
- to promote the Benchmarking Manual of the RECORD-Network established under STRATA (5th European Framework Programme for RTD) in Southeast Europe
- to discuss how an eventual Centres of Excellence calls for proposal could be shaped for the so called West Balkan countries (eventually to be targeted under FP7)
- to show how S&T policy can react upon the findings derived from benchmarking exercises with concrete strategies targeting the improvement of the existing national research and technology structure.