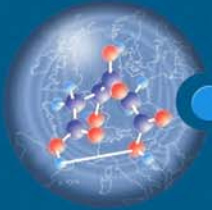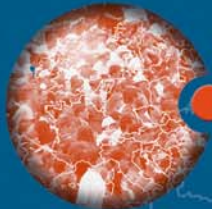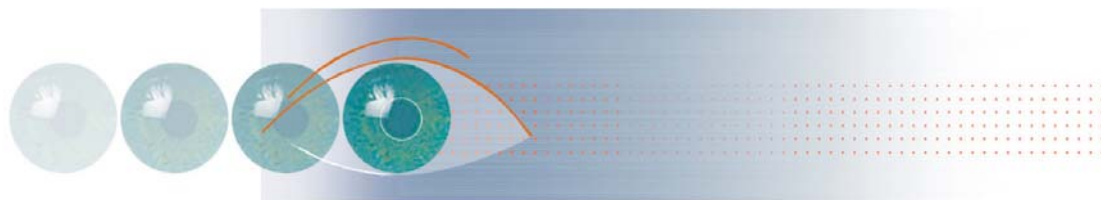FOR-RIS

UPGRADE

TECHTRANS

TRANSVISION

AGRIBLUE

Building the Future on Knowledge

FORESIGHT AND TRANSITION TO REGIONAL KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMIES

BLUEPRINTS FOR FORESIGHT
ACTIONS IN THE REGIONS

DISSEMINATION CONFERENCE
BRUSSELS, SEPTEMBER 23, 2004

Foresight and the Transition to Regional Knowledge-based Economies

To develop their potential, and find their new role in the emerging EU25+ knowledge based economy, regions need to widen their focus and go beyond their own innovation landscape 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. Many regions considering implementing foresight exercises need help to overcome initial barriers, such as doubts about the usefulness and usability of foresight, problems linking foresight to existing regional mechanisms, as well as simply lack of knowledge on how to set up and undertake foresight activities. Easy to understand practical blueprints on how to set up a foresight activities to suit specific regional circumstances could be instrumental in supporting regions to implement regional foresight.

The blueprints expert group builds upon the existing Foresight knowledge base developed so far mainly at 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.

▶ **Blueprints are practical guidelines to the setting up and planning of foresight. They are manuals or roadmaps, not foresight exercises in themselves. Blueprints build upon real problems in real regions, with strong stakeholder involvement.**

The expert group is built around a core group of experts on foresight processes, who steer five working groups with regional partners, chosen because of their capacity to initiate actions and influence policymaking. The working groups are open to outside participation, and the resulting blueprints (one for each working group) are being designed so as to provide useful tools for regions not actively participating in the expert group, but facing the same challenges. The work started in December 2003 and its present stage will end with a dissemination conference in Brussels on September 23, 2004.

▶ CONTACTS

The Blueprints exercise is an open process. If you would like to have more information, please contact the core group coach(es) of the working group that is most relevant to you or else one of the persons below.

Chairman	Prof. Liam Downey	*rhona.bradshaw@may.ie*
Secretary	Prof. Peter Heydebreck	*p.heydebreck@inno-group.com*
Horizontal aspects	Günter Clar	*clar@steinbeis-europa.de*
	Hugues de Jouvenel	*hjouvenel@futuribles.com*
EC DG RTD:	*Christian.Svanfeldt@cec.eu.int* or *Marie-Christine.Brichard@cec.eu.int*	

www.cordis.lu/foresight/

Foresight in the context of RIS/RITTS[1] (and similar exercises) - building on their results or starting in parallel

Focus

The FOR-RIS exercise is focused on the regions that have conducted a RIS/RITTS project or are going to start such a project. RITTS/RIS projects involve several elements - both regarding the form and the contents - that are similar to those of a foresight project and can be utilised in it. In the RITTS/RIS projects the operational environment is analysed in a versatile way, regarding both technological, management, financial, commercial, training and organisational issues. Co-operation between the key actors is promoted, strategies for innovation support are formulated and monitoring and evaluation instruments are developed.

On the other hand, there are important ways in which a foresight project differs from a RITTS/RIS project and can provide useful additional input into it. In a foresight project the time-horizon is longer, and taking into account alternative development possibilities is emphasised. Mobilisation of stakeholders is also usually broader in foresight, as the idea is to produce a genuinely common vision and build today's strategies and actions on it.

Objective of the FOR-RIS blueprint

The objective of the FOR-RIS Blueprint is to provide guidelines for regional foresight activities either as a consecutive step to a RITTS/RIS project or parallel with it. In the FOR-RIS Blueprint, the different stages of a foresight project are analysed in the light of the above-mentioned similarities and complementarities in two cases:

1 - in a case where a foresight exercise is built upon the mobilisation and analysis already made through the RIS/RITTS

2 - in a case where a RIS/RITTS and foresight are conducted in parallel, hence profiting from direct synergy effects and mobilising business to participate in foresight through the RIS/RITTS.

Like the other Blueprints, FOR-RIS emphasises the initial stages of a foresight exercise, as the critical issue is very often: how to get foresight started.

▶ CONTACTS

| Karel Klusacek | *klusacek@tc.cas.cz* |
| Marja Toivonen | *marja.toivonen@te-keskus.fi* |

Using Foresight to stimulate the transformation of a traditional industrial region into a dynamic and knowledge based community

Focus

Strategic up-grading of the economies of regions which may be characterised as areas which formerly were dominated by traditional heavy industries from which they previously derived substantial strength and prosperity but which now need to re-position themselves, so as to avail of the opportunities presented by high value knowledge based economies. Three special needs can be observed:

1 - A general aim to raise skill and technological level in reconversion regions. Focus is set on problems linked to ecologically degraded regions, industrial decline and military withdrawal - and the transition to a sustainable, eco-efficient knowledge consuming society.

2 - A need to "energise" innovation policy at the regional level, adapting it to address the specific structural deficits affecting traditional, slow moving economies in a fast changing world.

3 - A need to recognise existing potential and also to realise new opportunities by concentrating on strengths and developing the capability to implement effective learning processes

Objectives of the UPGRADE blueprint

To make use of Foresight as a structured methodology for creating a knowledge-based economy with the intention of:
• living trustfully with change;
• developing a learning region;
• ensuring competitiveness in the long term.

The UPGRADE Blueprint documents the sequence of practical steps involved in embedding the foresight process in policy formation for regions that need to re-position their economies. Methodology will be designed to accelerate the development of "local" capability in regenerating infrastructure, modernising industry, promoting enterprise, capitalising on strengths and exploiting new opportunities made available by global R&D.

▶ **CONTACT**

Gordon Ollivere   *gordon.ollivere@rtcnorth.co.uk*

Development of differentiated portfolios or tool-boxes for trans-regional innovation support mechanisms, especially those related to Trans-Regional Technology Transfer (TTT)

Focus

Considering the 'co-opetition' strategies of multinational enterprises and companies connected through new-type clusters, regional foresight can be used to systematically widen the horizon for regional co-operation regardless of geographic considerations. Regions with either similar economic profile or supplementary structures can join forces and act upon a common strategic plan for developing their industrial and economic strength and to define fields of cooperation to reach the critical momentum necessary to become global players. Since communication networks transgress national boundaries, and transportation of goods and services do not limit the competitiveness of a market, cooperation even between distinct regions can flourish and produce significant added value.

Objectives of the TECHTRANS blueprint

• Develop a shared vision and understanding of effective trans-regional innovation support mechanisms (tool-boxes), especially related to Trans-Regional

Technology Transfer (TTT)..

• Build a strategic network: for the establishment of a common trans-regional innovation strategy (e.g. detection of future markets, shaping of institutional landscape) and run joint research and product development activities.

The network should serve as an innovation backbone of regional innovation policies in Europe, improving the efficiency of regional innovation systems and actions (e.g. better time-to-market; demand-led R&D). The results are expected to stimulate and support the co-evolution of the different regional innovation systems in a way that ensures the long-term competitiveness of each of the involved regions, by:

• involving the important key players for innovation development (RTD) and implementation (SME, industry);

• orienting the TT & innovation process, adapting to the changing market structures, less dependent of geographical closeness;

• developing the regional innovation support portfolios in a way that companies can always get the optimum knowledge-mix of intra- and/or trans-regional TT.

▶ **CONTACTS**

Henning Banthien	*henning.banthien@ifok.de*
Rafaël Muguerza	*rmuguere@cfnavarra.es*

TRANSVISION

Bridging neighbouring regions belonging to different jurisdictions, i.e., historically and culturally close regions divided by national borders

Focus

Closer integration of development policies and support measures between neighbouring regions that share common borders and also important historical, cultural, organisational and developmental characteristics, although operating in separate jurisdictions and under different political systems, with special focus on:

- multilevel coordination: consistency between transborder and respective regional visions, strategies, actions i.e. concept of "variable geometry of cooperation");

- critical mass of development through the interregional cooperation: communication infrastructure, harmonization of procedures, interregional networks development, business cooperation (clusters, etc.), efficient use of complementarities, joint initiatives (i.e. joint research initiatives - institutes, cooperation between incubators/ science and technology parks), educational institutions reinforcement (co-operations between the universities- agreements), concrete cooperation projects implementation, etc.; common vision and promotion of the competitive advantages of the region.

Objectives of the TRANSVISION blueprint

Development of a practical framework of concrete sequential steps designed to build cross-regional strategic visions and guide decision making in neighbouring regions. The regions of this area could capitalise on their geographical proximity, through closer harmonisation of their regional development programmes and the development of inter-regional knowledge based economies, involving closer integration of their RDTI support measures and infrastructure.

The TRANSVISION Working Group comprises two reference sub-groups, the so-called "Large Region" comprising Luxembourg, Saarland, Rheinland-Pfalz, Lorraine and Wallonia, and the so-called South East Europe Foresight Triangle (SEEForesighT) comprising the South Great Plain of Hungary, Vojvodina of Serbia and the West Region of Romania.

The "Large Region" and the "SEEForesighT" region are markedly different and are in some respects incomparable. The TRANSVISION Sub-Working Groups will be faced with distinctly different circumstances and goals in the two Reference Regions. Developing a common Blueprint for the two regions will present a substantial challenge.

▶ **CONTACT**

Philippe Destatte   *destatte.ph@destree.org*

Foresight for Sustainable Rural Economies: challenges faced by rural areas by the impact of structural change to agriculture (e.g. abandonment); the economic, social and environmental aspects of land use and the diversification of rural economies.

Focus

Sustaining the economic, social and environmental viability of rural regions in transition poses new and unprecedented challenges for policy makers, regional authorities and local stakeholders. Until recently many such regions created wealth though agriculture, forestry and the low value-added processing industries associated to theses sectors or primary production. While some rural areas will adapt and intensify their production systems to compete globally in the provision of agricultural goods, many will become increasingly dependent on part-time farming and urgently need to diversify the sources of rural income. There are risks associated to this transition in terms of the long-term social, environmental and economic viability of rural communities - risks associated with the abandonment of agricultural activity, damage to local ecologies, the loss of landscapes of high amenity, the degradation of cultural sites as well as the risk of a breakdown of social cohesion.

Objectives of the AGRIBLUE blueprint

Successfully addressing above issues requires an approach to policy development that achieves a balance between the economic, social, environmental and spatial dimensions of the development of rural economies. AGRIBLUE clarifies the role that foresight can play in policy development for rural regions in transition. It provides a sequence of practical steps on how to conduct a foresight exercise on these specifi topics, how to embed Foresight into rural policy development processes. It explains how Foresight can help to bring about changes in mind-set among key-stakeholders and assist in securing the investments required to facilitate the structural transformation of rural areas to sustainable knowledge based rural economies.

▶ **CONTACT**

Patrick Crehan   *Patrick.Crehan@cka.be*