

AERTOs: An ERA-NET Project of RTOs

February 13, 2008

ERA-NET projects were first introduced in FP6. They aim at networking national (or regional) R&D programmes in similar thematic areas, e.g. medical biotechnology or nanotechnology. The objective is to encourage greater coordination among national programmes with similar objectives: why not pool resources around similar objectives and projects rather than operate parallel national programmes, often at sub-critical scale? – that is the Commission’s rationale.

Most current ERA-NET projects network R&D programmes that fund third-party research, e.g. projects by industry, RTOs or universities. Now, a group of RTOs has successfully applied for an RTO ERA-NET, called AERTOs (Associated European RTOs). The five members of the consortium are: Fraunhofer (lead partner), CEA, SINTEF, TNO, and VTT. The rationale for this ERA-NET project - which the Commission and the ERA-NET evaluators have accepted - is that these publicly core-funded RTOs each serve in their respective country a similar, strategic objective, namely to develop and widely disseminate technologies for a better society, including a competitive economy: in other words, these RTOs are strategic “national programmes” in their own right.

The objective of AERTOs, similar to other ERA-NETs, is to explore among the project partners the possibilities for long-term sustainable cooperation. AERTO will participate in the project with the role of keeping other RTOs informed about AERTOs’ progress and facilitating their involvement in cooperation activities launched by the AERTOs partners.

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