

## **EARTO Feedback on EUREKA's Strategic Roadmap**

23 September 2014

On the occasion of the IGLO Open on 'EUREKA - from strategy to implementation' organized by the Research Council of Norway Brussels Office and SwissCore in Brussels on 2 September 2014, EARTO was asked to provide feedback on EUREKA's new roadmap to the EUREKA Chairmanship Troika.

In the new EUREKA 2020 Strategy Roadmap, the EUREKA network identified among others two set of key actions for its objective to contribute to the completion of the European Research Area for its innovation part, reaching smart synergies between EUREKA instruments and other relevant instruments: to "*develop smart synergies with ERA and Horizon 2020 Instruments*" and become "*a visible and recognized place in the European Research Area*". For such actions with its sub-set looking at "*identifying smart synergies between Clusters, Umbrellas and EU level initiatives (EEN, ERA NETs, ERRIN, ETPs, KICs, PPPs (incl. JTIs), Structural Funds*", EUREKA Member States could use the knowledge they have at hand within the EARTO members in their specific countries who have been, already for many years, very active in EUREKA projects, umbrellas and clusters as well as in other EU initiatives mentioned above. EARTO members could very much support EUREKA members in looking at synergies between the various activities.

Accordingly, following the IGLO panel discussion, this document summarizes the main issues identified by EARTO experts which the EUREKA network could further look at when implementing its set of actions as defined in its new roadmap. Of course, EARTO members very much welcome further dialogue on their suggestions with the EUREKA Chairmanship Troika and Secretariat.

**EUREKA has a unique and flexible bottom-up approach. Since its establishment in 1985, European programmes more and more focus on 'innovation' and a series of new instruments have been created. What is the role of EUREKA in this new funding landscape?**

- EUREKA is still the only instrument clearly addressing bilateral cooperation projects (H2020: minimum three countries to be involved in each project – with the only exception of the SME-specific instrument, which addresses single applicants); the bottom up oriented bilateral level within the ERA should be clearly connected with EUREKA.
- The general bottom-up principle and open-call system gives the EUREKA system very high flexibility – on the other hand there is plenty of "room-to-maneuver" within this system: common bi- and multilateral deadlines can be defined, bi-, trilaterally or between groups of member states, thematically open or with a special thematic focus. These opportunities are being more and more used by the EUREKA countries – the flexibilities and advantages offered are worth to be far more recognized by governments and agencies – as very attractive, flexible tools within their cooperation policy toolbox.
- JTIs and similar (H2020 co-funded) instruments have the tendency towards rigid regulations, which in some cases will be justified and acceptable for industry, whereas in other cases more flexibility is needed. EUREKA clusters are good examples for industry led initiatives, which offer the necessary level of flexibility for industry, which will often be most important also from member states perspective; therefore, they are attractive alternatives; the upcoming (new) EUREKA metallurgy cluster may serve as a good and actual example.
- EUROSTARS, as the European instrument for R&D cooperation of R&D-intensive SMEs, has exceeded most expectations.

**There is a trend in research and innovation in Europe towards more harmonization in rules and procedures. What could EUREKA's contribution be to this development keeping in mind the three EUREKA characteristics "national funding, market-orientation, and bottom-up approach"?**

- A still closer cooperation between the national funding bodies (NFB) with respect to EUREKA is required. This is addressed by the new roadmap by giving a clearer voice to the NFBs within the EUREKA system. The target to be aimed at is twofold: a) to let the NFBs articulate their requirements with respect to EUREKA more clearly and b) to use the platform for a transnational mutual learning process. Here EUREKA members could also further look at the "synchronized call" tool offered by the European Commission as a pilot under Horizon 2020.

- The EUREKA funding mechanism, where each country evaluates only its share of the project according to national regulations is not an inferior quality standard of evaluation and project selection, but is a valuable element of the transnational cooperation toolbox, which can be made use of easily and flexibly (in comparison, the setting up of joint call and evaluation systems is far more complicated and time-consuming);
- However, EUREKA's funding mechanism is not always reliable. In some cases, insufficient resources committed by some Member States have led to the result that their national participants, although positively evaluated, could not be funded.
- Differences between countries rules for participation and funding rates can also be sources of problems in some cases. Standardizing/harmonising these rules across countries may be difficult for EUREKA but further efforts can be made. More clarity on the specific conditions for each country could be better provided (funding, deadlines, entities entitled to participate for each call). More regular updated information on the EUREKA website and further harmonisation of documents templates are also welcome.
- EUREKA network is now looking at "re-energising its brand name for SMEs". In this context, it has rightly partnered with the EEN network. EUREKA members should also look at their relation with their respective RTOs in their countries who are very often offering shared technological facilities to SMEs and as such also often advise the SMEs they have as client on how to best continue their innovation efforts and find sources of funding. RTOs have been very much working in supporting SMEs to access and understand EUREKA funding opportunities. Such efforts by EARTO members could be further supported by EUREKA members, which in turn, would support SMEs accessing EUREKA instruments.

**EUREKA is a platform for global industrial R&I cooperation. How can this role best be developed?**

- With the successful integration of Korea and Canada, EUREKA has proved its suitability for cooperation beyond Europe. The recent association of South Africa is another promising step.
- The EUREKA funding mechanism can offer advantages for cooperation beyond Europe, guaranteeing autarky, flexibility and reduced administrative burden. Another advantage for the non-European states is to be appreciated: with only one process of association the way is open for bi- and multilateral cooperation projects with 40 European states.
- The new EUREKA portfolio (as outlined in the EUREKA roadmap) should also contain more flexible approaches with respect to third country participation: Full association is not the only option, but cooperation can also take place on a case-by-case basis. A few "pilots" of more flexible cooperation with third countries could be used to test possible new "cooperative tools".

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**EARTO - European Association of Research and Technology Organisations**

*EARTO is the European trade association of the research and technology organisations (RTOs), a non-profit organisation founded in 1999. EARTO groups over 350 RTOs with a combined staff of 150,000, an annual turnover of €23 billion, special equipment and facilities to a value of many €billions and more than 100,000 customers from the public and private sectors annually.*

*This paper was produced with the support of the EARTO Working Group Horizon 2020 composed of 58 EU Affairs Specialists working within our membership. Established in 2010, this Working Group has also produced many papers supporting the setting-up of Horizon 2020 and now its implementation, available on our website.*

**EARTO Contact:**

Muriel Attané, Secretary General

[attane@earto.eu](mailto:attane@earto.eu)

Tel: +32 2 502 86 98