



**VINNOVA's experience of ERA-Net
and corresponding programmes
during the Sixth Framework Programme,
plus its management of new proposals**

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VINNOVA's participation in ERA-Nets and similar programmes: criteria.

0 Purpose of the study

The ERA-Net instrument was introduced under the EU's Sixth Framework Programme for RTD as an alternative to what are known as Article 169 projects, which is the term for a far-reaching integration in the EU between the European Commission and national/regional bodies in drawing up and running major RTD programmes.

At the commencement of the Seventh Framework Programme, VINNOVA found it appropriate to study how ERA-Net projects/programmes in which VINNOVA is participating or has participated have actually been realised and implemented. With what culture and rationale have ERA-Nets been initiated and developed? What sort of resource input has there been? In the Seventh Framework Programme, how can VINNOVA benefit from the experiences gained and find more precise indicators for taking part or declining participation?

Thus, the study aims to provide a profile of the decision-making process in VINNOVA, the prevailing culture, how policy has subsequently developed as the programme has grown and what policy conclusions can be drawn. Accordingly, the study is *not* an evaluation or assessment of individual projects/programmes. It is exclusively a study of culture and rationale in the decision-making process relating to individual projects/programmes and an attempt, based on experiences gained, to propose a more clear-cut policy regarding VINNOVA's involvement in ERA-Nets, or refusal to participate.

1 Background and history

Against a background of greatly increasing ambitions regarding co-ordination of RTD within the EU (the ERA¹ concept), the European Commission proposed an early increase in RTD efforts for the Sixth Framework Programme under Article 169 of the European Treaty. In brief, this article states the EU is entitled to participate in RTD programmes developed by several member states. One such project was to be decided upon (the decision-making process for Article 169 projects is relatively complicated involving, as it does, both the European Parliament and European Council).

Article 169 projects represent an extensive co-ordination from planning through to implementation, with the EU as an equal partner; they aim for a comprehensive *integration* of various regional and national RTD programmes. Both the EU and the member states consider it difficult to bring about particularly many Article 169 projects in the short term.

¹ European Research Area

During the preparation of the proposal for the Sixth Framework Programme, ERA-Net then gradually emerged as an alternative; a proposal for successive co-ordination and mutual opening of regional and national RTD programmes. The initiative would therefore rest with member states and regions in a fully developed model for a gradual building up from pilot studies to establishment and implementation of common RTD programmes (e.g. Article 169 programmes), with development more often than not taking place in relationships between Programme Managers² (PMs) in organisations which are funding candidates. Around 75 ERA-Nets were realised during the Sixth Framework Programme.

PMs have a key role as culture setters in the matter of participation or non-participation in ERA-Nets and the like. So it is particularly important to understand how PMs are and should be matched in their environment where well-thought out development of concepts and resources can and should take place.

It is possible to foresee a handful of Article 169 RTD programmes in the Seventh Framework Programme. Half the ERA-Nets which will be supported will have elements of what are actually combined resources from several countries in common programmes. Furthermore, there will be the addition of probably a handful of what are known as ERA-Net+ programmes; programmes which contribute up to 30% financing paid by the Commission of actual research within an ERA-Net with a common budget, This is to further facilitate development of the Article 169 concept.

Thus, there are now compelling reasons for examining how the ERA-Net concept has actually been perceived by VINNOVA, given the ambitions for development concept which are now clear. There should be no doubt that the European Commission has major ambitions to stimulate and work consistently for an ever-increasing co-ordination of research and innovation systems in the EU. Following increasingly extensive stimulation of transnational research collaboration in partnership with researchers and companies, the next step in realising ERA is now co-ordination with programme bodies as partners; contributing in ERA-Net structures for example, to create critical mass for certain areas with too little support.

How do national bodies meet this challenge? How do, say, TAFTIE's³ members act in order for a European co-ordination to take place in line with their national interests?

What preparations has VINNOVA made in this perspective and how does VINNOVA obtain a breakthrough for its interests within its national assignments?

This study includes 12 ERA-Net programmes (or similar) which have

² Programme Managers are people in the organisation with independent responsibility for developing and implementing VINNOVA's programme.

³ The Association for Technology Implementation in Europe.

⁴ Competitiveness and Innovation Programme.

VINNOVA involvement. The population does not constitute all ERA-Nets which VINNOVA is involved in. Furthermore, one programme has been included in the population which resembles an ERA-Net and which has major involvement from innovation authorities and ministries (so the affinity with the ERA-Net concept is clear). This belongs to the IST programme and its co-ordinating role is held by VINNOVA. There are also two INNO-Nets. The descriptions and preliminary conclusions made have been assessed as being well representative of a VINNOVA image of PMs and others concerned with responsibility for ERA-Nets and similar collaborations. It is important that it also includes the stated “non-ERA-Nets”, since their environment is also under development in the Seventh Framework Programme for RTD and in CIP⁴ and the mutual learning is thereby important.

Some strategically important studies, events and debates are briefly presented in the sections immediately below.

1.1. Conference in Manchester, 21st October 2005 on: “Co-ordination of National Research Programmes: Opportunities and Barriers”. WHY, HOW, BARRIERS and FUTURE.

The conference was arranged in collaboration between the United Kingdom’s presidency and the European Commission. It was arranged at a stage when ERA-Net was still being established. 188 research policy makers took part. On the issue of WHY, a number of generally positive answers were given: common interests, pooling of national marginal resources, complementary knowledge, large programmes too expensive for the individual country, learning/best practices, avoidance of duplicated work etc.

There are problems with HOW and BARRIERS. How to distinguish two categories: the institutional and practical. The institutional obstacles must be handled politically and at ministerial level and include such things as permission for money to cross borders. The member states need a common European strategy which extends beyond the daily problems in ministries and agencies.

1.2. TAFTIE’s Malmö meeting

At the suggestion of the European Commission, TAFTIE was stimulated through its presiding country, which was Sweden/VINNOVA, to arrange a workshop with implementing organisations to further elucidate chiefly HOW and BARRIERS. This workshop took place in Malmö on 1st June 2006.

Some important signals from the workshop are:

- PMs with national responsibility for an ERA-Net programme are key people and are expanding their networks.

- Success of an ERA-Net is a direct consequence of trust between those participating in an ERA-Net; achieving this takes time.
- ERA-Nets should be taken into consideration in the planning of all national and regional ventures.
- As a rule, barriers seem smaller than first appeared to be the case.
- Clearer national strategies should facilitate the ERA-Net work. Provide real training to PMs, who are key people.
- Continue with ERA-Nets, but give them clearer strategic support.
- Open up national programmes.
- Support harmonisation and quality control.
- Continue the dialogue between ministries and PMs in agencies. Make ERA-Net an element of the daily work.

1.3 Report by Manfred Horvat et al

On the instructions of the European Commission, a study of ERA-Net was carried out during the autumn of 2006 with the specific purpose of elucidating the strategic and policy-related matters of the ERA-Net concept. Chairing the study was Professor Manfred Horvat, Vienna University and Ken Guy of Wise Guys Ltd., UK.

The study notes the overwhelming interest in ERA-Net amongst PMs who, through the programme with its internally-led perspective, are afforded major opportunities to arrange efforts with variable geometry and which are truly in the nature of an external partner. However, the study proposes changes on a strategic level which lag behind the measures made on the basis of a researcher/PMs perspective. Efforts on three levels are proposed:

- A High-Level Group to work on the existing politically-based barriers and that the Commission should match the group with a resolution to remove barriers.
- Development of a strong ERA-Net brand with all information etc. on a website.
- Strategic cohesion in the national environments.

1.4. Discussion regarding the perspective of co-ordination and splitting/fragmentation

Occasionally, PMs voice misgivings that a large number of ERA-Nets, and subsequently INNO-Nets, would contribute to a fragmentation of the range of state support and thus be difficult to outline for various interested parties, not least of all grant applicants.

The stated studies have been “uninvolved” and not dealt with the issue from the perspective of the research financier and/or

implementer's actual acquisition and decision-making. For example, they have not dealt with the risk of ERA-Nets and INNO-Nets leading to increased European fragmentation (and not automatically to better co-ordination) of the system offering financial support.

Rather, the experiences in Sweden presented below, show the strong PM perspective was leading in the direction of "filling in holes"; making efforts purely from an implementer's perspective, using variable geometry, living close to the researchers etc. In other words, within existing constraints, increasing opportunities to provide leverage effects in, say, border regions and embryonic areas. In their range of offerings, PMs can actually have both the ordinary offering and the ERA-Net offering, making it simple for interested parties to gain the right entry.

2 Interviews with PMs and others

The 13 VINNOVA PMs have been interviewed twice. Furthermore, two heads of unit and one head of division have been interviewed. Situation reports and discussions have been conducted twice and internally in what are known as "international horizontal group".

The first round concentrated on the creation of ERA-Nets with VINNOVA participating; how VINNOVA participation came about, ideas as to what ERA-Nets actually mean and what circumstances ought to be associated with prospective ongoing work with ERA-Nets.

Naturally, there were disparate observations in this first round of interviews with more or less clear reservations regarding the main message, which is positive, and containing many suggestions for development; naturally varying within different areas.

A second round concentrated on the benefit to interested parties. It was clearly apparent that the ERA-Net can be grouped into maybe five groups which are thoroughly distinct. For some, the group of interested parties is indistinct whilst others have a clear co-ordination responsibility for established programme areas. Assessments and directives must be seen in relation to needs and positioning within different areas.

Both rounds of interviews complemented each other well and the requirement for positioning work in relation to the focus for the area has become clearer.

3 Principal results so far

3.1 How it started

The ERA-Net instrument is new. The first round was a pioneering work and obviously the introductory stages were characterised by uncertainty. It is difficult to find any real benefit to interested

parties in the initial stages. However, there are a couple of exceptions where Swedish participation is clearly based on a strategic ambition in VINNOVA. Some examples of comments for reflection in the initial stage:

- Clear that we should be involved.
- The networking is good.
- Arose naturally out of major national investments.
- Pilot efforts adapted to smaller companies.
- Major influence on the regulation system etc.
- Learning relating to the valorisation work which is often overlooked.
- Methods of characterising clusters.
- Learning methodology from the others.
- VINNOVA has been approached - interest from the Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications; relates to areas such as exploitation of research-based methods in ministries.
- Impact on common EU regulations. Drawing initiative from areas in which Nordic collaboration is working well and where the Nordic countries are far ahead.
- Europeanising.
- Marginal in all countries, Sweden has a good reputation; the ERA-Net provides critical mass.

3.2. Process of decision-making on participation and how it actually happens.

According to experience, involvement may develop as follows:

- Contacts, networks, selling oneself, not missing anything is a key issue.
- How do our close colleagues, e.g. TEKES and other TAFTIE members regard our involvement or lack of it?
- Proper backing in the management is necessary; there is a great deal of work in the application stage.
- The process starts with telephone calls, e-mails and, eventually, the application. At this stage, the commitment grows.
- Ultimately, when the application is submitted it must be clear how well in line it is with VINNOVA's direction and ambitions. What is the benefit to VINNOVA and its interested parties?
- Are there the resources/staffing?
- A recruitment process with advertisements etc. starts and the Commission works slowly.
- It costs what it costs; better to lead one ERA-Net than be involved in five.

- If we don't participate, how will our interested parties react?
- Should we continue to be mostly reactive, or lead the development of European excellence through an ERA-Net?

3.3. Connection with VINNOVA's main tasks

As already mentioned, it is quite clear that the ERA-Net can be organised into maybe five groups of benefit to interested parties. To some, the group of interested parties is unclear, whilst others recognise a clear co-ordination responsibility for established programme areas or for areas with which VINNOVA would normally concern itself, but which may become highly important through Europeanisation.

The following is an attempt to group the ERA-Nets discussed according to these principles.

Main category/end user	ERA-Nets with directions and details under main category
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Departments and authorities

SURSHIP and others within the Transport area.

Building up a basis for a regulation system and development of standards. Through strong action, Sweden can gain advantages/set its mark on developments. Sweden setting major standards. Automotive industry and shipping.

eGOVERNMENT (officially, the project is a Co-ordination Action under the IST programme with major similarities to ERA-Nets). VINNOVA is co-ordinator

The project aims to demonstrate the importance of research in conjunction with the development of eGovernment on a national and regional level and provide a basis for creating R&D programmes. Companies, researchers, policy bodies, ministries etc. are participating in the activities. The working method largely involves seminars all over Europe with participation from various players plus

reports and analyses. National efforts are benefiting from the European collaboration and VINNOVA was already active within the area.

VINNOVA adopted a leading role at the behest of the Commission. There was a quick but unsuccessful attempt to find an “ERA-Net light”.

Subsequently, through robust co-ordination work, funds were granted for the project which has major similarities to ERA-Nets through the participation of research financiers and ministries.

SAFEFOODERA

To further develop successful Nordic collaboration in order to make research on a European level more efficient and to be involved in influencing the common EU Food Safety Regulations. With relatively minor efforts, to raise the issue in Sweden and give it international exposure. The Nordic region as a whole is far ahead in food safety. Sweden has potential to develop new traceability and security techniques using such things as IT and biotechnology.

VINNOVA itself, skills development through transnational collaboration regarding new instruments and new tasks for PMs

ForesightForSociety.

Learning from similar organisations within the area of Foresight. The organisations are too dissimilar for common Foresight projects.

VALOR (an INNO-Net)

To develop the concept of Open Innovation in VINNOVA, regarding personal development, internal development needs and the innovation system as a whole.

BSR, The Baltic Sea Regions Network, an INNO-Net

Developing mainly PMs in new working methods; local co-ordinated action for innovation, roughly the same issues everywhere. “Regional Research Areas” is a designation method which is becoming more common.

COMPERA, Competence Research Centre Programmes in Europe

Finding/developing adequate forms of collaboration for the development of PM functions for Centres of Excellence-like research structures.

Work In Net, WIN

The workplace innovation system: learning from others/colleagues in Europe in order to improve. Common research areas can be achieved.

Flexibly training smaller companies to participate in international projects

ERA- SME

Facilitating transnational collaboration for companies in collaboration with institutes.

Testing new ideas for the new areas of operation which are small in the individual nation

ERA- SPOT, Optical Technologies

New/small sector in all countries: being given impetus through the enlargement provided to the sector within the ERA-Net.

Renewing the effort method in established enterprise areas.

WoodWisdom - Net

Mustering resources to strengthen expertise within/for the future forestry sector. Important areas, particularly in regard to new materials and new use of forestry resources. When collaborating within ERA-Net, it is important to respect each other's differences and for the parties to

contribute reasonably similar efforts to the common programme.

MNT ERA-Net, Micro and Nano Technologies

Finding the added value: unclear as yet what direction should be taken. A call could provide ideas as to the future direction.

Most of the Nets studied appear to have chosen the route of developing innovation systems with efforts complementing and lying beyond what are normally perceived as VINNOVA's main tasks, but where the benefits for VINNOVA's innovation system ambitions may be great. Since efforts were made which are beneficial in that perspective and which would not have taken place in solely national programmes (the other main track), the ERA-Net-efforts gained a major leverage effect.

Those of the studied Nets which now appear most robust and with a clear and well-motivated focus have had a great deal of collaboration with ministries and other agencies; they encompass much of the work on rules and standards etc. involved in governmental work. One can also see ambitions for superior European leadership; this is still not much in evidence amongst the programmes studied. One important dimension is also that a VINNOVA PM with this focus does not compete with its normal interested parties in regard to the framework programme (researchers and companies) but rather positions itself with something new that is needed in order for the innovation system in the area to develop fully.

4 Proposal

4.1. What is special about ERA-Nets?

One practical way to make a number of observations on VINNOVA's attitude to participating in certain ERA-Nets and similar collaborations is to use the structure which the Acting Head of Unit for ERA-Net at the European Commission, Markku Warras, used at the Malmö TAFTIE workshop on 6/6/01:

ERA-NET may include the following activities to foster co-ordination and co-operation between programmes:

1 - Systematic exchange of information & best practices

2 - Common strategic issues

3 - Development of joint activities

4 - Implementation of transnational research activities

It consistently seems to be the case that Programme Managers feel they have improved in their role as PMs. Intensive learning takes place through the well-developed relationships with colleagues in other countries which gradually emerge. Another issue is the extent to which each PM has opportunities to exploit this in their national work; the circumstances differ in that regard. But the first two activities in Warras' profile have been filled with content of value to VINNOVA.

Naturally, the observations regarding points three and four are far more disparate. Evidently, the areas are different, the durations are de facto different, PMs have different experiences, the area is more or less highly prioritised (centrally/peripherally) and the budget positions are different. The nature of roles in the innovation system are different, etc. etc. The common factor is an emphasis on the fact that the dialogue with the Board of Directors of VINNOVA regarding priorities and budgets must be deep and sustained.

The Commission has major expectations of what are known as joint calls and common pots plus other more or less amalgamated efforts. This provokes PMs' anxiety regarding personnel resources, possible budgets etc.

Presumably, the starting point for VINNOVA should be that not all ERA-Nets need to be developed in order to have common pots. However in many cases, they are the actual proof that the results are the important thing and not primarily resources allocation according to calculation bases other than achievable results; repayment of financial efforts, for example. There are already examples of how collaborations are taking place within ERA-Nets with virtual common pots or other methods of co-ordinated action.

A next step in working with a more robust VINNOVA ERA-Net-strategy is to intensify the work by honing and sharpening those messages in the respective ERA-Nets which may be of particular interest to VINNOVA's interested parties. The interested parties' perspective must be the starting point of activities to develop innovation systems. In the short term, developing and running these in each ERA-Net should be the most important task. At each stage, the responsible PM is actually the best informed and most well-versed person within each ERA-Net and should therefore be invited into such work. The Board of Directors of VINNOVA must be able to set standards and priorities, taking an overall view of each work area. Crib sheets need to be produced.

In this way, a more lasting and well-informed dialogue can be

developed between the Board of Directors of VINNOVA and ERA-Net representatives and then used for calls.

It is important to understand that ERA-Nets and suchlike are only a European possibility for some of VINNOVA's interested parties, particularly researchers and companies. There is also competition for ERA-Net from EU programmes such as:

- The RTD Framework Programme
- Technology Platforms
- Joint Technology Initiatives
- EUREKA

Few ERA-Nets have so far opened up programmes; they are creating new, virtual open-ups. What might ERA-Net+s entail?

The ERA-Net is unique with its strong PM position. Through ERA-Nets, a PM can create transnational programmes in unusual areas; areas which have slightly different aims to ordinary national programmes and with a major leverage effect in innovation systems. The ERA-Net is entirely driven by ambitions of creating efforts with what is known as variable geometry and initiated from the market. Given this, PMs are afforded a strong position and opportunities for complementarity, avoiding overlaps and duplicated work. Properly managed, ERA-Nets and the like eliminate the risk of fragmenting the national and regional Research and Innovation Support and instead contribute to complementing and developing niches.

4.2. Criteria for participation

The critical problem for VINNOVA is then deciding to:

- initiate: How? When?
- participate in the invitation

in line with the above discussion.

So, in what way is a participation important to VINNOVA (in relation to its interested parties in innovation systems) which results in coverage of internal development needs in organisations with leverage effects and in competition with other instruments? Key factors are finding niches of interest to VINNOVA and its interested parties and, accordingly, VINNOVA's competence development regarding:

- Personal development
- Internal development needs
- Innovation systems, e.g. networks

Thus, the right niches must involve key efforts for those Swedish innovation systems where the national support systems are inadequate, and exploiting the ERA-Net model where that is unique. This involves work, which requires resources, people and money. There is reason for optimism; VINNOVA has already shown that

proactive niching can be accomplished.

Given these circumstances, the number of ERA-Nets in which VINNOVA participates may reduce. This need not be a problem; better to have a properly niched leading participation than a lot of dubious and unclear participations.

4.3. Decision-making process

The decision-making process must be iterative between PMs and heads of units/Board of Directors of VINNOVA and proceed in several rounds with a couple of points for Go/Stop decisions. Early on, VINNOVA must decide whether it wishes to be a co-ordinator or not and whether this would be possible. VINNOVA's experience (from one programme/project) shows that a major input of resources is required from all personnel categories (including direct action by the Board of Directors of VINNOVA) but that it also provides major influence and access to knowledge within and beyond the project; this is of great value in developing the Swedish position and level within the area.

Regardless of ambitions to be a co-ordinator or not, there must be an iterative core process as to how decisions are constructed. Naturally, the resources and involvement of different personnel categories and advance planning vary in the different cases:

Main pillars of an iterative process: PM, heads of units, Board of Directors of VINNOVA:

- The PM will assemble preliminary decision-making data as soon as possible for initiating/participating in a programme. The niching should already be present and in terms beneficial to development/realisation of innovation systems and may very well comprised efforts not normally financed by VINNOVA with national funds. There should be prioritisation proposals.
- The Board of Directors of VINNOVA decides upon and approves further processing and grants resources for pilot studies, or returns the case, or says no.
- The PM carries out further work according to the decision and returns for a decision on participation with a budget and any remaining terms which are to be met.
- The PM submits a contract to the head of unit/Board of Directors of VINNOVA for a decision and signature. It is up to the PM to ensure that the head of unit/Board of Directors of VINNOVA make the necessary resources available.

In practical implementation, the various sections appear different in time and resources and naturally, the process may be interrupted at any time if reasons arise for changing VINNOVA's approach.

5 Important conclusions

ERA-Net and INNO-Net and similar European programmes are of great value to VINNOVA if:

- The ERA-Net is properly niched so as to constitute a complement/key efforts in VINNOVA's innovation system with efforts benefiting from being developed in a European collaboration.
- Using an iterative process, VINNOVA gradually secures necessary resources for full VINNOVA participation.
- The use of the ERA-Net instrument is the most appropriate one in competition with other European instruments.

The European Commission's comprehensive ideas on co-ordination and opening of national programmes have not been realised.

It is important to understand that, for certain of VINNOVA's interested parties, above all researchers and companies, ERA-Nets and similar ventures are only one European opportunity amongst others. The ERA-Net also has competition from other EU programmes such as:

- The RTD Framework Programme
- Technology Platforms
- Joint Technology Initiatives
- EUREKA

Few ERA-Nets are opening programmes; they are creating new ventures which complement what has already been done. Often, they are efforts complementing what is being done in national/regional programmes and often they concern fairly minor efforts which may be acting as cement between the national ventures; efforts influencing innovation systems with contributions of the kind not normally present as such in the national/regional RTD programmes.

The financial resources provided are small and the efforts marked by this. The major visions of co-ordination and opening are better implemented in the major efforts (see above) where the major structural changes can be predicted as results.

It is therefore possible to assert (based on observations in Sweden) that ERA-Net has found its niche; different from the Commission's original one of complementing research initiatives with efforts (other than research) in innovation systems which accelerates the development of these. The major, structurally-altered research efforts were looked after under the above alternatives by major capital contributions and input from large companies. ERA-Nets should not compete with these. Forcing out common efforts of the same kind which have already been done in national programmes/projects only contributes to fragmentation.

VINNOVA should view its efforts in the light of this. Presumably, some of the ongoing efforts may be concluded and those current or future ERA-Nets which

find their niche should be given the necessary resources and be run consistently. There is nothing to say VINNOVA should participate in a given number of ERA-Nets, e.g. whatever number is currently under discussion. VINNOVA should increasingly regard ERA-Nets as an opportunity to fulfil its own goals in terms of innovation systems and be correctly niched. If co-ordination of currently ongoing research efforts is forced, these efforts will easily take on the character of the lowest common denominator and not add much that is new. If there is a lack of strategic awareness in the management system, too many will easily slip through.

VINNOVA should increasingly seek co-ordinatorship in project/programmes. There is only one example so far. Co-ordinatorship requires sustained work and patient leadership; and with all categories of personnel. On the other hand, major influence and openings are being achieved internationally. As a rule, joint common pots should be the aspiration; only then is the overall attractiveness of the programme's possible results to innovation systems confirmed.

A small number of genuine efforts rather than a lot with meagre resources and unclear goals should be VINNOVA's watchword.

Annex VINNOVA's portfolio in the study

VINNOVA person	ERA-Net, direction, participation, presiding country
Anders Marén	<u>MNT ERA-Net, Micro and Nano Technologies</u> Materials, bio, implanted etc. The area is designer materials. 21- 22 members, Board of Directors of VINNOVA of 5- 6 members. FFG in Austria co-ordinating
Erling Ribbing	<u>Work In Net, WIN, "Innovative work organisation"</u> The workplace as an innovation system. Led from Germany, seven countries.
Eva Esping	<u>WoodWisdom - Net</u> Born of Finland's major forestry industry investment with national financiers; expanding the Finn-Swedish programme collaboration within Wood Material Science. TEKES is co-ordinating.
Helen Andréasson	<u>ERA- SME</u> Developing new and better methods of collaboration between research institutes and smaller companies. The ambition was to move quickly towards a common pot, which proved difficult; the differences are too great.
Joakim Tiséus	<u>ERA-Net Transport etc.</u> Transport issues in general, policy issues. Making Europe more efficient. Pressure not to stand on the sidelines, also in the Programme Committee. Having major influence on the regulation system etc.
Kjell-Håkan Närfelt	<u>VALOR</u> Supporting the valorisation process from knowledge to commercial benefits and from commercial opportunities to demand for knowledge. Financial instruments. Pera presiding, 16 members To develop a reference model: starting with conditions for impacts, and going to process-added value strategy. Yield dimension versus system weaknesses.

Lars-Gunnar Larsson

BSR, The Baltic Sea Region Innovation Network

Finding methods to characterise clusters and develop cluster policies.

The Baltic Sea states and Nordic countries will be participating, 13 members, co-ordinated by NICE.

Lennart Elg

Foresight, For Society

18 - 19 members, Greece presiding.

The aim is to learn methodology from each other, not to create common foresights.

Madeleine Siösteen-Thiel

eGovernnet

The project/programme aims to demonstrate the importance of research links to development and implementation of eGovernment (e-administration and public e-services) and contribute to the initiation of national and regional efforts in Europe. Officially, it is a Co-ordination Action within IST in the Sixth Framework Programme. Project duration 2006-2007. Strong connection to VINNOVA programme.

During the spring of 2004, there was a call within the IST programme, which resembled ERA-Net (ERA-Net light), to which VINNOVA unsuccessfully applied; overambitious application. In a later call, 4th Call, the project was approved. The project has eight participating countries plus one JRC (IPTS in Seville), VINNOVA is co-ordinator.

VINNOVA was asked before the first round of applications at the meeting/workshops in Brussels whether VINNOVA/Sweden could take on the task of co-ordinator ahead of any application. There was also pressure from the Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications for Sweden to show leadership within the area. VINNOVA took care of this in its leadership.

Maria Landgren

SAFEFOODERA

A great deal of duplicate work is taking place within the area of food safety. This should be reduced particularly since the EU now has common regulations within the area. There is also potential in Sweden to be involved in developing new technologies in IT and biotechnology which can be used to enforce the standards set under the regulations. Both Sweden and the Nordic region are strong within this area and this means competitive advantages for the Nordic food industry. The European Commission is very positive about an ERA-Net within this area and a strong motivator for this

has been exploiting a successful Nordic collaboration as an example of how it is possible to work with transnational programme activities and with influence/dialogue with EFSA, the European Food Safety Authority.

Using the Nordic collaboration as a model, SAFEFOODERA has worked with both distributed calls and common pot calls.

Mattias Lundberg and
Ranya Said

COMPERA, Competence Research Centre Programmes in Europe

Making VINN Excellence Centers European: creating a European VINN Excellence Center. The programme includes the whole array of clusters - competence centres.

Developing a network, webpage (everyone available there), workshops, exhibitions, most informative for new members.

Initiated by Austria, which is presiding; its forerunner had five members MAP (benchmarking). COMPERA has 20 members.

Ulf Öhlander

ERA- SPOT, Optical Technologies...

Optical Technology.

Six members.

Sweden is strong in the area, both in industry and research, Acreo and universities; 29 small companies within the area.

Present in EUREKA, SSF, Research&Grow, the Wallenberg Foundation.