

Contribution of the 'eForesee' Project to STRATA Policy Themes

Name of Project:	eForesee
Main Contractor:	Crehan, Kusano & Associates sprl
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Website of Project:	www.eforesee.info
Start Date:	1 January 2002
End date:	31 December 2003
% Completed as of 1.4.02:	12.5%

Key Objectives: (as initially planned):

Research Objectives:

- Explore how Foresight can support the accession process,
- Explore the use of foresight to link RTD policy with other major policy domains – in this case Enlargement & Agricultural reform,
- Adapt Foresight Methods to the needs and resources of small economies,
- Develop a Knowledge Management (KM) approach to foresight encompassing:
 - 'Foresight embedding' as a means to introduce and link foresight at all levels of socio-economic organization – the individual, the company, the cluster, the region, the country, the EU and the world.
 - 'Continuous Foresight' embedded into a virtuous cycle of policy development, implementation and evaluation.
 - A 'Foresight Evaluation Framework' based on the KM approach.

Operational Objectives:

- Execute 2 foresight pilots in Cyprus: Reform of the Agricultural Sector
Biotechnology & Agriculture
- Execute 2 foresight pilots in Estonia Challenges faced by the ICT sector
New Technologies in Medicine,
- Execute 2 foresight pilots in Malta New Learning Services
Marine Sciences
- Organise 3 International Foresight conferences

Key Outputs to Date (identify up to 5 key deliverables, including where they can be accessed by other participants):

- Material for the kick-off meeting held in Malta on 11-12 February 2002.
- Material presented at the FOMOFO meeting in Brussels on 28 February 2002.

- Material used at the preparatory meeting in Cyprus on 21-22 March 2002.
- Material provided for the Strata Consolidation Meeting in Brussels on 22-23 April 2002.

All of this is publicly accessible via the project website at www.eforesee.info.

Contribution to each theme (naturally, not all themes apply to all projects)

1. Globalisation

2. Sustainability

3. Policies for the Future

- Use Foresight as a tool to address specific challenges faced by accession states
- Use foresight to link RTD Policy of accession states with EU Agricultural Policy
- Use foresight to link RTD Policy of accession states with the ERA
- Provide a Basis for the development of EU+ Foresight Communities of Practice by introducing a 'foresight evaluation framework'.

4. New Instruments

- A Knowledge Management Approach to Foresight
- A Model for Continuous Foresight
- A Strategy for Foresight Embedding at all levels of socio-economic organisation
- A Framework for Foresight Evaluation

5. Futures

Important Policy Conclusions gained from work so far-highlight any which you think are very important.

A role is emerging for foresight aimed at specific needs of accession countries. Accession involves the adoption of a body of legislation called the Acquis Communautaire. Adoption results in major structural change to accession economies. Studies reveal the immediate socio-economic impact of accession and the extent of change to specific sectors (in the case of agricultural reform in Cyprus it is known that 25% of agricultural establishments will close, and more than 50% in the case of certain establishments ie. slaughter houses). In general comprehensive plans for managing these changes do not exist. Given the limited resources of smaller economies the approach to dealing with the short-term negative effects of accession may be ad-hoc or may not lie on a trajectory of development towards a feasible and preferred future in Europe. A foresight exercise would provide a long-term vision of where key sectors of accession economies should be heading. This would help planners to deal with immediate negative consequences of accession by focusing attention on a feasible preferred future, that could be attained when the structural change process is complete. Such a vision would provide a point of reference for

developing RTD priorities that are more in tune with long-term aspirations of the accession state.

The partners are all foresight for the first time, and have all expressed a desire for training on foresight specific issues. The strata program does not support training, but should consider ways of catering for the learning needs of foresight practitioners in the future.

Important lessons learned from the project itself (e.g. for the advancement of research in this field):

A Knowledge Management approach provides a useful perspective on foresight activities that indicates natural areas for the possible future development of the domain, and which naturally links up with the ‘systems’ view of innovation.

Furthermore the example of application of foresight to the agriculture domain could be generalized to other domains, or expanded within the agriculture sector itself.

The work done so far has underlined specific challenges related to the introduction of foresight in a population unfamiliar with the tool. Take-up has been slow however due to uncertainty among stakeholders as to how it can be of use to them and as to how they could meaningfully contribute to a foresight exercise. We will adopt a strategy that identifies the ‘foresight embedding’ problem with the introduction foresight to a wide range of entities in the community. This is based on a ‘foresight awareness team’ that can introduce foresight to different stakeholders on the basis of a simple request. However given the diversity of stakeholders, extra work will be required to develop material suitable for different entities ranging from government ministries and agencies, to large companies, SMEs, NGOs, consumer groups, and various other representative associations. The eForeee project on its own will not exhaust this topic, so this is another area for future development.

Is there any related work (other research, projects or programmes) which you have found particularly useful and interesting so far?

The FOREN manual has proven to be a useful starting point for learning about foresight.

However all partners have expressed a desire for ‘learning material’ that deals with ‘foresight methods’ in a more comprehensive way. Our impression is that we do not need prescriptions for tools but archetypes and ways to dynamically adapt tools for each foresight project.

Projects single most important contribution to ERA?

The most important contribution to the ERA is the possibility of linking EU RTD policy with other policies such as enlargement, and agricultural policy. We hope to demonstrate that Foresight provides a mechanism by which the whole RTD

infrastructure of the EU and its accession partners could be harnessed to support accession countries in adapting to the changes brought about by accession, in particular in adapting to the short term negative impacts of adoption of the Acquis Communautaire.

An evaluation framework will provide cues for collaboration and structured activities through which to learn by exchanging wisdom gained from specific foresight initiatives. Our expectation is that the development of a comprehensive KM approach and an evaluation framework will provide a basis for collaboration among peers in an ERA Foresight Community of Practice.

Most important follow up action the project planned or is taking?

For the moment no follow-up action is planned. However the main partners are essentially governmental and it is hoped that the STRATA financed project will lead to an enduring adoption of foresight at the institutional level in Malta, Cyprus and Estonia.

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