

eFORESEE

The 'FOMOF0' Meeting
Brussels 28 February 2002

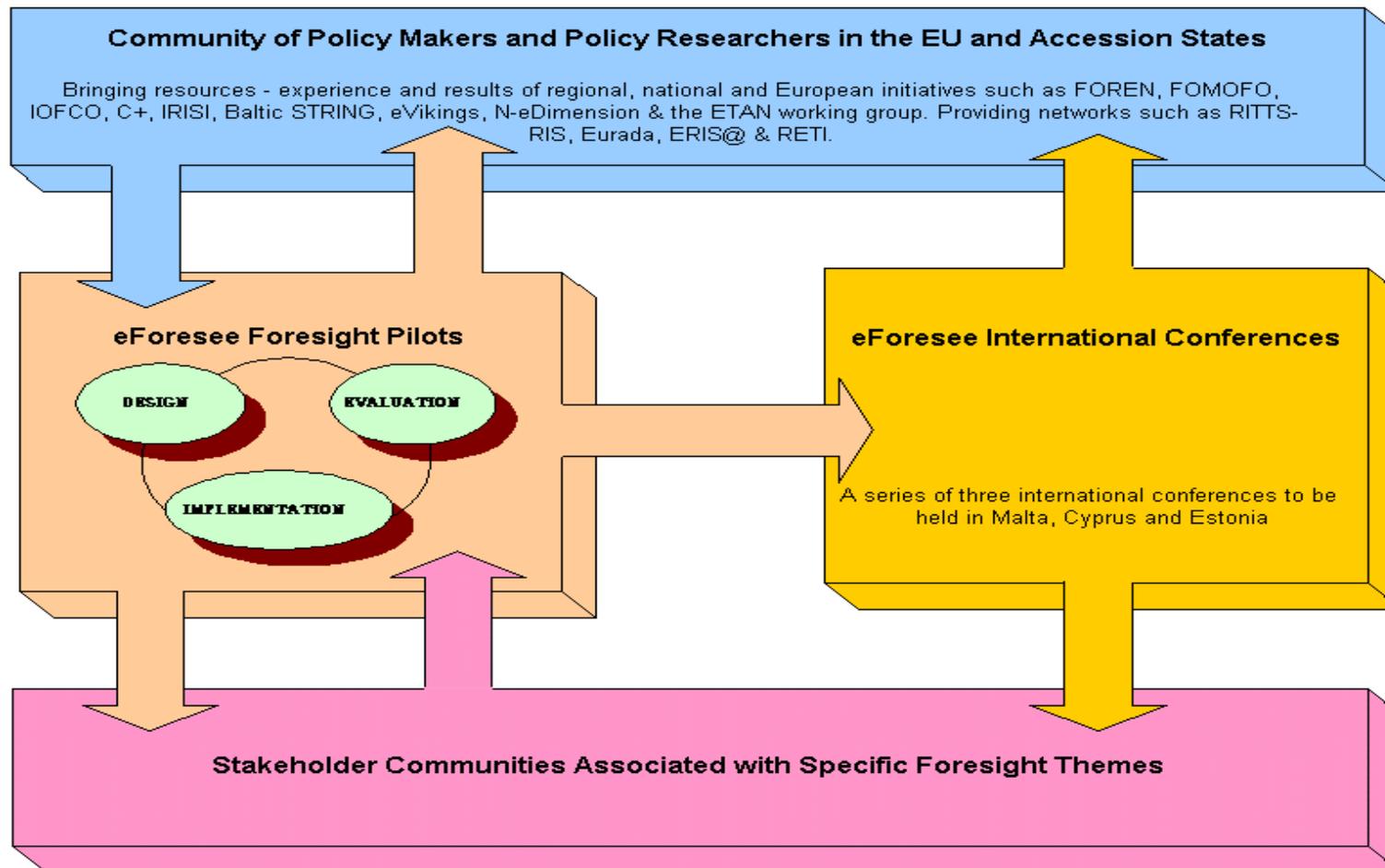
**A 'snap-shot' of where we are
2 months into the project!**

eFORESEE

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Overview

eFORESEE Schematic Diagram



The Goals of the eForesee Project

eForesee is a project on two levels

- Collaborative research on ‘foresight’ by policy makers in Malta, Cyprus and Estonia involving 3 international conferences and a shareable web-resource,
- A series of 6 pilot projects undertaken separately and autonomously by the partners, in which they will learn about foresight by ‘doing and adapting’.

The goals of the collaborative research are as follows:

- Investigate the embedding of a **‘Foresight Culture’**,
- Investigate the potential of foresight as a tool in the **Accession Process**,
- Contribute to research on foresight by understanding it from the point of view of **Knowledge Management**,
- Investigate the application of a **Quality** approach for continuous improvement,
- Establish foresight ‘communities of practice’ in the **ERA**, the **EU+15** and the **Euro-Mediterranean**.

The Six Pilots – Part 1

The themes for the first 3 Pilots have already undergone radical revision. This reflects our desire to ‘seize the moment’ in terms of what is timely, useful, and likely to receive broadly based support in the various stakeholder communities.

Cyprus: **Agricultural Policy Reform** – In the context of EU Accession, Cyprus is currently negotiating a number of issues related to the CAP. The goal is to use the ‘foresight’ tool to improve aspects of these negotiations.

Estonia: **Boosting the Planning Capacity of IT Sector Companies** – Estonia carried out a cluster analysis of its IT sector companies. It discovered that the planning horizon of companies in this sector is very short - from as little as 2 months to 2 years max. The idea is to use a foresight exercise specifically to boost the capacity of the sector to prepare for the future. One element to be addressed is the dependence of certain players on outside contractors. How will this foresight action factor in such external variables?

Malta: **Distance Learning** – leveraging local successes to boost a nascent local industry.

The Six Pilots – Part 2

The second series of 3 Pilot actions is a long way off. There is a general interest in bio-technology applications. However things are not very focused for the moment. Current thinking about options can be summarized as follows:

- Cyprus:** **Biotechnology applied in Agriculture** – there is no ‘biotech’ sector as yet in Cyprus, but foresight could help to plot evolutionary steps leading away from traditional approaches to agriculture and towards higher value added, more knowledge intensive activities.
- Estonia:** **ICT and Biotechnology in Medicine** – areas in which Estonia has already made a commitment or has significant centers of expertise.
- Malta:** **Biotechnology Applied in the Marine Sciences** – in this case we might use foresight as a tool to mobilize a sector with great potential but arguably unable to act due to fragmentation, dispersion of effort and lack of critical mass.

Most of these themes are interesting in that they involve an ‘ethical’ dimension that we may or may not need to make explicit in a foresight action. The ‘PRAXIS Center for Policy Studies’ in Estonia is involved in the project and explicitly deals with the ethical dimension of public policy issues related to Biotechnology

Issues Raised at Kick-off

Practical Questions Concerning Foresight 'Components'

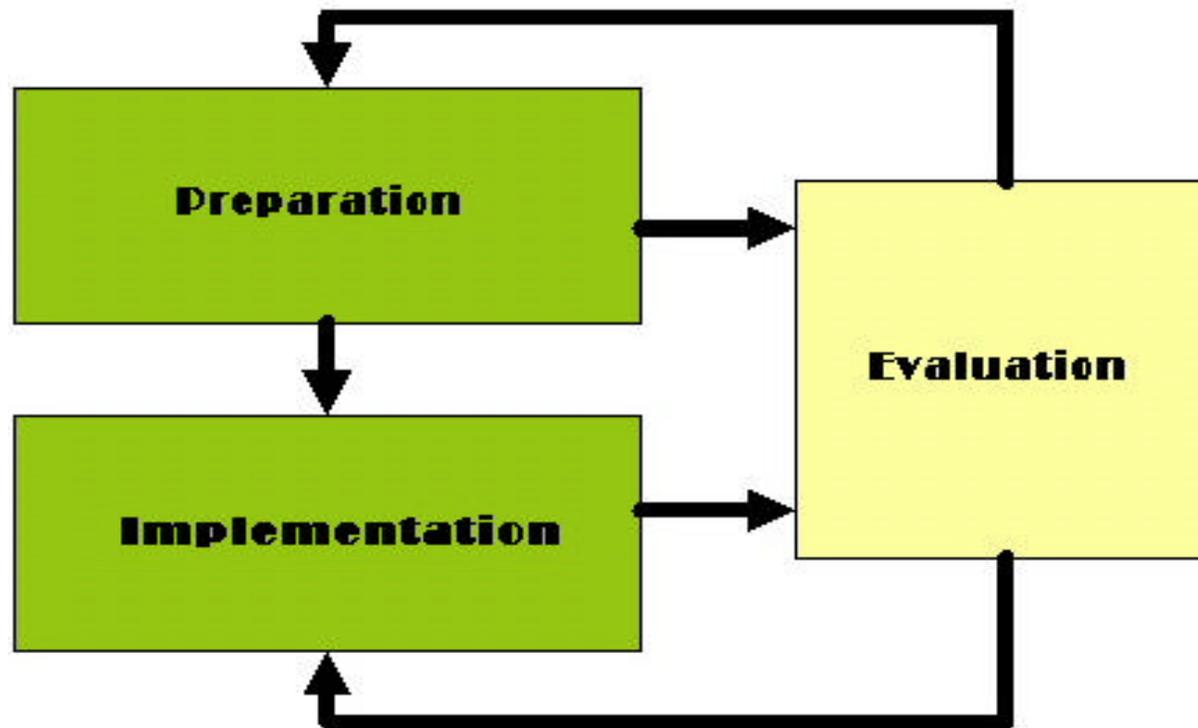
Issue 1- Foresight: People do not know generally know 'what is foresight?'. It is difficult to initiate a foresight exercise when people are not sure what it means. The 'initiation' of a population therefore requires careful consideration and 'embedding foresight culture' seems to start right here.

Issue 2 - Delphi: Everyone agrees that 'Delphi' is easy to understand conceptually, but feels unclear as to how to implement it. In Estonia the local marketing-survey companies had never heard the term. The Estonian team questioned the value of the 'Delphi' approach given the small population of Estonia. They concluded that it could nevertheless be an effective mechanism to mobilize experts to think about the future. The feeling is that work is required to adapt and localise methodologies not just for delphi but for all generic tools - roadmapping, scenario writing etc..

Issue 3 - Breakfast Meetings: After the kick-off meeting in Malta a breakfast meeting was hosted by a prominent political figure, attended by local 'stakeholders'. It was efficient and business-like with a vigorous exchange of opinion that provided clear leads as to what kind of foresight activity could be of immediate interest. It was felt that such a meeting-tool could be difficult to exploit in another cultural context – this raised the question as to the existence of alternatives approaches to the staging of 'transparent constructive public debate'.

The 'PIE' Approach

An introduction to our 'model approach'



'Preparation' is half the work (OK one third)!

Foresight Embedding

In our ‘model’ of the foresight process we put a lot of emphasis on a phase called ‘preparation’ – that involved preliminary ‘diligence’ such as:

- An **initial & iterative exploration** of themes,
- Stake-holder mapping,
- Feasibility analysis,
- Constituency building.

The idea emerged that we might establish a ‘**foresight awareness team**’ that would introduce foresight concepts to local companies, organisations parts of government administration, in response to a simple request such as ‘hey please come and tell us about foresight’. This would accomplish the following goals:

- Raise **general awareness** about and prepare the ground for ‘organised’ foresight,
- Establish **realistic expectations** as to what foresight can achieve,
- Encourage organisations to **independently carry out their own foresight**
- Contribute to the **embedding of a ‘foresight culture’**.

The Knowledge Management Approach - 1

Knowledge Management is mainly about the management of **'intangibles'**. In particular it gives due consideration to techniques for working with **'tacit'** factors of production and innovation.

- Knowledge has an **epistemological dimension** that varies across a spectrum including 'tacit' and 'explicit' or codifiable knowledge.
- Knowledge has an **ontological dimension** that starts at the level of the individual, passes through teams, organisations and informal networks to arrive at the level of an economy or even that of human civilisation. Knowledge encompasses skill, craft and intuition. The 'Knowledge' that enables a team to work together is different in nature from that of its members – the knowledge that allows them to accomplish their individual tasks.
- Knowledge has an **ethical dimension** in that with knowledge comes responsibility, accountability and other qualities of especial significance in planning and public policy.

Knowledge Management is about **describing, developing and measuring** knowledge as a function of position in this 3 dimensional space.

The Knowledge Management Approach - 2

Some thinkers look upon organisations as ‘collections of conversations’ and approach Knowledge Management as the ‘management of conversations’, ie. knowing what conversations should happen in an organisation and making sure that they do. In this way we are lead to a (tentative) KM based definition of foresight as:

‘The Management of Conversations About the Future’

At the kick-off meeting we started by considering an approach based on:

- Missions,
- Methods, &
- Models.

... but one of the participants (Joe Wood from Malta) suggested that this should be preceded by:

- Values &
- Visions.

So these are the five lenses we intend to apply in our investigations!

The International Conferences



Estonia in September 2002: ‘Foresight’ in the Development of RTD Policy for the Applied Biosciences.

Cyprus in October 2002: Knowledge Management Issues for ‘Foresight’ and Related Policy Tools.

Malta in 2003: ‘Foresight’ as a Policy Development Tool for EU Accession States.

The titles and themes continue to evolve, but to receive news about these events please subscribe to the mailing list via the eForesee web-site.

Our intention is to use these events to develop **Foresight Communities of Practice** in the ERA and EU+ and to provide (admittedly limited) support enabling experts from Accession countries to attend.

The team, Website and Mailing Lists

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