

Brussels, 6 December 2006

Frequently Asked Questions about European Technology Platforms

President Barroso will today address leaders of European Technology Platforms. This background note answers some frequently asked questions about ETPs. A list of all ETPs currently in existence is attached.

What is a European Technology Platform?

A European Technology Platform allows a new approach to research at European level. It brings together all those who have an interest in a particular industrial sector to establish a vision of how that sector should look in the future, and identify what research is needed to make that vision a reality. This is done through the implementation of a Strategic Research Agenda, agreed by all ETP participants.

Who participates in ETPs?

An ETP brings together all those with an interest in that particular sector. This will vary from one sector to another, but will include research institutes, universities, financial institutions, consumers organisation, regulatory authorities and NGOs, as well as large and small companies in that sector. National and regional authorities are also involved through national "mirror groups".

Why have ETPs been set up?

ETPs have been set up to bring new impetus to European research linked to the needs of industry. It is becoming ever clearer that future competitiveness of European industry will rely on the development of innovative products and services. By bringing together all those in a sector around a common vision and research agenda, industry knows that the research that is done takes their needs into account and will support the future of their sector. ETPs also allow all the different resources available to research – public or private, European or national – to be used as effectively as possible, avoiding gaps or overlapping.

What is the relationship between ETPs and the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research?

Where a Strategic Research Agenda has been agreed for a sector, this will be reflected in the work programmes that are the basis for EU financial support to research in that sector from the Seventh Framework Programme for Research. It makes sense for the Commission to align its own research funding with a strategic view from the sector concerned. However, the role of ETPs goes beyond the European level funding programme, to include all possible sources of financing.

What is the difference between ETPs and Joint Technology Initiatives?

The EU's aim is to provide research that responds to the needs and challenges of our economy and society. That is why the ETPs have been created and why the work programmes of FP7 reflect these commonly identified research priorities. ETPs are a forum for identifying and planning research, but not research ventures themselves. Their operation is not usually financed by the Framework Programme.

In a few areas more is needed than just a joint vision or a shared research agenda. For such areas, there is a need for an extra effort to invest resources over a longer timeframe and in a joint effort between the public and the private sector. In these cases, Joint Technology Initiatives can be launched. These are public-private partnerships which will address a narrowly defined research topic with dedicated financial support from the EU's 7th Research Framework Programme. For this, there are various conditions which need to be fulfilled such as bringing new resources on the part of industry, a European perspective, and proven market failure in that field.

What is the future of ETPs?

ETPs have an important role to play in efforts to boost research and development in Europe. In its Broad-based Innovation Strategy adopted in September (IP/06/1181) the Commission supported the concept of "lead markets" as a way to identify and remove barriers to the take-up or development of innovative technologies, products and services. ETPs are perfectly placed to play a major role in such "lead markets" as they have the necessary overview of the sector, a good cross-section of those involved and have experience in more than one market. An example of a potential lead market and the role to be played by the relevant ETP is eco-innovation. The pull of eco-innovation can be enhanced by environmental policy, notably through the development of market-oriented instruments. For example, a mechanism could be put in place whereby the current "best performance" in the market for a given set of products could become the reference standards within a certain time-frame to encourage other enterprises to adapt to it. Eco-innovation can also be promoted by supporting research and enterprises cooperation in promising areas, such as construction, water-management, bio-industries, carbon capture and storage or recycling. In this context, the concept of an "intelligent, zero energy, building" offers the prospect of a new, technology intensive, European market with obvious world-wide export potential if timely action is taken on standardisation and regulation. The **European Construction Technology Platform** has already brought together, under industry leadership, architects, engineers, and key technologists to develop a research agenda and is examining demand issues.

Current European Technology Platforms

Advanced Engineering Materials and Technologies (EuMaT)

www.eumat.org

Advisory Council for Aeronautics Research in Europe (ACARE)

www.acare4europe.org/

Embedded Computing Systems (ARTEMIS)

www.artemis-office.org/

European Construction Technology Platform (ECTP)

www.ectp.org

European Nanoelectronics Initiative Advisory Council (ENIAC)

www.cordis.europa.eu/ist/eniac/

European Platform on Smart Systems integration (EPoSS)

www.smart-systems-integration.org/

European Rail Research Advisory Council (ERRAC)

www.errac.org/

European Road Transport Research Advisory Council (ERTRAC)

www.ertrac.org/

Food for Life

<http://etp.ciaa.be/asp/home/welcome.asp>

Forest based sector Technology Platform (FTP)

www.forestplatform.org/

Future Manufacturing Technologies (MANUFUTURE)

www.manufuture.org/

Future Textiles and Clothing (FTC)

www.textile-platform.org/

Global Animal Health (GAH)

www.fedesa.be/EUPlatform/Platform.htm

Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Platform (HFP)

www.hfpeurope.org/

Industrial Safety ETP (ETPIS)

www.industrialsafety-tp.org/

Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI)

www.cordis.europa.eu/lifescihealth/innovativemedicines.htm

Integral Satcom Initiative (ISI)

www.isi-initiative.eu.org

Mobile and Wireless Communications (eMobility)

www.emobility.eu.org

Nanotechnologies for Medical Applications (NanoMedicine)

www.cordis.europa.eu/nanotechnology/nanomedicine.htm

Networked and Electronic Media (NEM)

www.nem-initiative.org

Networked European Software and Services Initiative (NESSI)

www.nessi-europe.com

Photonics21

www.photonics21.org/

Photovoltaics

www.eupvplatform.org/

Robotics (EUROP)

www.robotics-platform.eu.com/

Sustainable Chemistry (SusChem)

www.suschem.org/

Water Supply and Sanitation Technology Platform (WSSTP)

www.wsstp.org/

Waterborne ETP

www.waterborne-tp.org/

Zero Emission Fossil Fuel Power Plants (ZEP)

www.zero-emissionplatform.eu/