

Frequently Asked Questions

- How is a technology platform set up and who are the stakeholders?
- What is the typical lifecycle of a platform?
- How are technology platforms funded?
- What is the role of the European Commission in technology platforms?
- Who can I contact for more information relevant to my sector?
- Is the information on technology platforms on this website exhaustive?
- What is a Joint Technology Initiative?
- Can I attend an event on technology platforms organised by the European Commission?

- **How is a technology platform set up and who are the stakeholders?**

Due to their demand driven nature, key industrial concerns in the field in question play a leading role in initiating and advancing the platform. Nevertheless, to be effective, the platform approach is inclusive and mobilises the efforts of all other key stakeholders. These typically include:

- *Industry* (large, medium and small, embracing the whole production and supply chain)
- *Public authorities* (given their role of policy-makers and funding agencies, as well as promoters and consumers of technologies)
- *Research institutes* and the *academic community*
- *Financial community* (e.g. Venture capital organisations and the European Investment Bank)
- *Civil society*, including users and consumers

It is up to the interested stakeholders themselves to decide whether or not to set up a technology platform. The relevant thematic services of the European Commission are however usually in a position to provide guidance.

- **What is the typical lifecycle of a technology platform?**

While each technology platform has its own origins and approach and its own particular way of working, they normally follow a “three-stage” development process:

Stage 1: Stakeholders getting together in order to establish their “vision” for the future development of the field concerned and to set up the technology platform;

Stage 2: Stakeholders define a Strategic Research Agenda setting out their common views on the necessary medium to long term research, development and demonstration needs for this technology;

Stage 3: Implementation of the Strategic Research Agenda - for which, in many instances, it is anticipated that significant public and private investments will need to be mobilised.

- **How are technology platforms funded?**

In general, the stakeholders themselves fund their own costs in participating in technology platforms. Limited Community support for funding operational entities (for example a Secretariat) can however be mobilised in the case where a given platform’s objectives and activities correspond closely with the thematic areas of the current 6th Research Framework Programme.

- **What is the role of the European Commission in technology platforms?**

The European Commission is encouraging this bottom-up, industry-led approach, for example through active participation as an observer in many platforms and by playing a guiding role where necessary. The Commission however does not “own” technology platforms (which do not have any legal basis) nor is it bound by their views.

The Commission services are actively following the developments of technology platforms and, where appropriate, are using their results in the course of developing European research policy. In this context, the Strategic Research Agendas have already provided a valuable and a significant input to the nine themes put forward for the “Co-operation” programme in the Commission’s proposal for the **Seventh Framework Programme (FP7)** and they will be further reflected in more detail in the Specific Programmes and Work Programmes.

- **Who can I contact for more information relevant to my sector?**

The Commission services have compiled a **Status Report on the Development of Technology Platforms** (February 2005) which contains further information and contact details on many of the individual platforms. Additional information on the context and rationale of platforms are also available in the report also compiled by Commission services on **Technology Platforms - from Definition to Implementation of a Common Research Agenda** (September 2004).

- **Is the information on technology platforms on this website exhaustive?**

Developments on technology platforms are evolving rapidly and the information provided on this site is by no means exhaustive. In general, information is provided on those platforms which have reached a certain maturity and of course when it is available to the Commission services.

It should be noted however that the Commission services are not giving any formal recognition to individual platforms and thus that the inclusion of a given topic on this site does not prejudice its individual merits to be known as a technology platform.

- **What is a Joint Technology Initiative?**

Joint Technology Initiatives are a specific new mechanism, envisaged to be introduced under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), which will enable coherent, large-scale structures to be set up in order to support the implementation of all or part of the Strategic Research Agendas defined by a limited number of technology platforms which are of such an ambitious scale that they will require the mobilisation of very high public and private investments, as well as huge material and human research resources.

Further information on the ongoing preparatory work on Joint Technology Initiatives is available in the **Commission Staff Working Document: Report on European Technology Platforms and Joint Technology Initiatives: Fostering Public-Private R&D Partnerships to Boost Europe’s Industrial Competitiveness (SEC(2005)800, of 10 June 2005)**.

At this stage, Joint Technology Initiatives are envisaged in the following fields:

- Innovative Medicines
- Aeronautics and Air Transport
- Hydrogen and Fuel Cells
- Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES)
- Nanoelectronics Technologies 2020
- Embedded Computing Systems

Can I attend an event on technology platforms organised by the European Commission?

The Commission has held seminars with the industrial leaders of technology platforms (in December 2004 and June 2005). The objective is to share experiences and best practice and promote synergy between the technology platforms whenever this adds value to their work. Whilst attendance at such meetings is normally by personal invitation, the **proceedings and reports** are publicly available on this site.