

EUREKA in the ERA

**A strategy towards becoming a leading ERA innovation stakeholder
to contribute to growth and job creation for the benefit of
European industry**

Final version
27 April 2015

INTRODUCTION

The objective of the European Research Area (ERA)¹ is to strengthen the scientific and technological basis of the European Union by achieving an “area in which researchers, scientific knowledge and technology circulate freely” (article 179 TFEU). The latest ERA Progress Report identifies the integration of innovation within the ERA as one of the key challenges, as the growth and job creation that innovation stimulates remain key objectives for the European Union.

EUREKA can respond to this challenge, as stated in its EUREKA 2020 Strategic Roadmap where EUREKA aims to ‘**contribute to the completion of the European Research Area for its innovation part**, reaching smart synergies between EUREKA instruments and other relevant instruments.’ As a well-established enabling structure for transnational cooperation with its different instruments (e.g. Eurostars, Clusters, Individual projects) and its bottom-up approach, EUREKA has sound experience and is making a strong impact on European industry by supporting innovative business-oriented projects. EUREKA therefore is a natural contributor with respect to the innovation-related aspects of the ERA.

In order to further strengthen this role, EUREKA has identified four main strategic objectives:

- I. **Towards increasing the innovation side of cross-border cooperation**
- II. **Towards facilitating international cooperation**
- III. **Towards support for effective national innovation systems**
- IV. **Towards contributing to ERA policies on innovation**

In order to reach these objectives, 12 key actions have been identified as follows:

1. Establish smart synergies with European R&D instruments and networks
2. Identify the potential for new joint programmes
3. Increase transnational cooperation within the ERA (EUREKA 2.0 toolbox)
4. Support the continuation of former FP7 dedicated instruments on internationalisation
5. Increase international cooperation (‘Global Stars’ concept)
6. Build strong cooperation with SFIC and EEN
7. Propose an ERA standard for international peer review and programme evaluation for the innovation side
8. Strengthen partnership between academia, RTOs and industry
9. Share experience in promoting open innovation
10. Enhance the policy role of EUREKA at European level
11. Enhance the policy role of EUREKA at national level
12. Enhance EUREKA’s visibility in the ERA

With these strategic objectives and the related key actions implemented, EUREKA could become a leading ERA innovation stakeholder, further contributing to growth and job creation for the benefit of European industry. EUREKA would also indirectly support the implementation of the ERA Roadmap².

¹ The ERA has been endorsed by the March 2000 European Council and is anchored in the 2007 Treaty of Lisbon.

² The February 2014 Competitiveness Council Conclusions on the 2013 ERA Progress Report called for the ‘Member States in close cooperation with the Commission, considering the ERAC Opinion and working through ERAC to develop by mid-2015 an ERA Roadmap at European level which should serve the purpose of facilitating and reinforcing the efforts undertaken by the Member States.’

I. Strategic objective 1: Towards increasing the innovation side of cross-border cooperation

Cross-border cooperation is essential to avoid duplication and fragmentation of efforts among Member States and to optimise the European research and innovation system. The majority of public funds are still at national level (around 90%), and are mostly allocated to national R&D activities, so the need to encourage the pooling of resources between Member States is crucial. EUREKA believes that there are opportunities to open up national R&D funding programmes to European cooperation. In order to boost the innovation side of cross border cooperation, three key actions have been identified.

Key action 1: Establish smart synergies with European R&D instruments and networks

Many ERA-related instruments have emerged since 2000 (e.g. ERA-nets, Articles 185, JTIs, JPIs), making the identification of synergies even more important. EUREKA, with its Clusters, Individual Projects and Eurostars programme, can find complementarities with instruments and partnerships like the SME instrument and the JTIs, but also with networks such as EEN, EBAN and others, which can create win-win situations. To achieve this, some concrete proposals are laid down below:

- Build a bridge between Eurostars and phase 3 of the Horizon 2020 SME instrument
- Establish efficient interaction with the European Commission to better coordinate existing SME instruments
- Develop an EEN service package for EUREKA/Eurostars projects to facilitate access to finance
- Establish a strong partnership with EBAN to ease access to finance (EUREKA High Tech Investment Programme – E!HTIP)
- Establish contact with the ERA-LEARN 2020 project and make use of the platform to foster cooperation with European R&D instruments
- Develop interaction between Clusters and EEN sector groups, EIPs, JTIs and JPIs.

Key action 2: Identify the potential for new joint programmes

At European level, there is a need to differentiate between instruments, ensuring they function in a complementary and non-duplicative manner. However, not all sectors are covered and gaps offer potential for new joint programmes. EUREKA should investigate such opportunities and identify the potential to develop new joint programmes, based on the winning formula of the Eurostars programme. Any new initiative should fill an identified gap, taking into account both the need for efficiency and user needs. To achieve this, some concrete proposals are laid down below:

- Identify the potential for a programme targeting smaller countries or countries willing to further develop their innovation systems
- Assess the potential of EUREKA acting as a 'follow-up' platform for industry-oriented ERA-nets (based on the Eurostars model).

Key action 3: Increase transnational cooperation within the ERA (EUREKA 2.0 toolbox)

In recent years, transnational bilateral and/or multilateral cooperation between European countries has become more and more popular. However, no real agreed standard to run transnational cooperation in a similar way has emerged (no common application form, no common evaluation principles, and no common IT platform). Such agreed standard would significantly contribute to boosting cross-border cooperation within the ERA. To achieve this, some concrete proposals are laid down below:

- To gradually develop common principles towards a standard for transnational cooperation
- To offer this standard to NFBs (including an IT tool) to facilitate cooperation.

II. Strategic objective 2: Towards facilitating international cooperation

As knowledge and markets have no borders, international collaboration with third countries is essential, for researchers as much as for industry. EUREKA opens up opportunities for cooperation beyond the boundaries of the EU. With more than 40 members and three associated countries, EUREKA offers a unique R&D&I platform that connects European companies with the rest of the world. EUREKA offers the opportunity to strengthen the international dimension of the ERA and to help European industry to increase its competitiveness in the global market. To facilitate international cooperation, three key actions have been identified.

Key action 4: Support the continuation of former FP7 dedicated instruments on internationalisation

With the international dimension becoming a cross-cutting issue within Horizon 2020, there is no longer dedicated funding for initiatives targeting internationalisation, but there are still some running FP7 international INCO-NETS and ERA-NETS. EUREKA could envisage closer cooperation with these networks, supporting the continuation of their activities in the field of innovation. To achieve this, some concrete proposals are laid down below:

- Offer EUREKA as a follow-up platform for international INCO-NETS (e.g. Western Balkan, Danube Region)
- Offer EUREKA as a follow-up platform for international ERA-NETS (e.g. ERA Russia).

Key action 5: Increase international cooperation ('Global Stars' concept)

EUREKA could also increase international bilateral and/or multilateral cooperation with the EUREKA multi-track approach³ on internationalisation and specifically with the 'Global Stars' concept. Bilateral cooperation between EUREKA member countries and third countries has significantly developed in recent years. In a recent EUREKA NFB survey, a significant number of bilateral agreements with third countries were identified. To enhance efficiency, some of these bilateral agreements could be replaced by a single multilateral agreement (Global Stars). To achieve this, some concrete proposals are laid down below:

- Establish a thematic area mapping of existing international bilateral agreements
- Gradually develop common principles/framework conditions from the EUREKA perspective towards a standard for international bilateral/multilateral agreements
- Test pilots among several EUREKA members and a third country.

Key action 6: Build strong cooperation with SFIC and EEN

EUREKA aims to share the experience gained with the association of South Korea, Canada and South Africa to support the development of policies at EU and Member State level. To achieve this, some concrete proposals are laid down below:

- Contribute to the development of the planned 'SFIC toolbox'
- Provide input and participate in the SFIC working groups on third countries
- Cooperate with the EEN, which has an active network in third countries.

³ The EUREKA multi-track approach is based on 3 steps: 1) Boost project-to-project participation with third countries through the already existing EUREKA Instruments; 2) Develop new instruments fully dedicated to internationalization (Global Stars concept) to generate more projects with third countries; 3) Consider new associated members.

III. Strategic objective 3: Towards support for effective national innovation systems

Most of the public R&D&I funds in Europe are still allocated at national level. It is therefore crucial to have effective national research and innovation systems in place based on open and competitive calls and using international peer review. EUREKA with its well-established platform, its experienced and trusted network and its track record setting European programme standards, can improve efficiency of national innovation systems. In order to support effective national systems, three key actions have been identified.

Key action 7: Propose an ERA standard for international peer review and programme evaluation for the innovation side

There are still significant differences between Member States in the way research and innovation funding is allocated with no agreed or common standards on the core principles of international peer review. To overcome these differences, some concrete proposals are laid down below:

- Share EUREKA's experience on international peer review based on the example of Eurostars and EUREKA individual projects (Project Assessment Methodology - PAM) as well as on programme evaluation
- Gradually develop common principles for peer review, quality assurance and joint evaluation for the innovation side
- Organize a NFB workshop on EUREKA's peer review system (Eurostars, Clusters and Individual Projects) and programme evaluation.

Key action 8: Strengthen partnership between academia, RTOs and industry

Cooperation with academia and RTOs is crucial for industry in terms of developing new products, processes or services, which in turn stimulate growth and job creation. EUREKA is fostering such partnerships and believes it can boost knowledge transfer by notably:

- Improving existing EUREKA instruments to foster partnership between academia and industry
- Develop joint activities with EARTO and COST to foster links between academia and industry
- Enhance participation of RTOs in the existing EUREKA instruments (together with EARTO).

Key action 9: Share experience in promoting open innovation

The central idea behind open innovation is that in a world of widely distributed knowledge, companies cannot afford to rely entirely on their own research, but should instead look outside their own company for new ideas, innovation and processes. In addition, internal innovations not being used in a firm's business should be taken outside the company (e.g. through licensing, joint ventures or spin-offs). EUREKA promotes open innovation by putting the company at the centre of the innovation process (e.g. with Eurostars, the SME is always the project leader and at least 50% of R&D is performed by SMEs within the project consortium). EUREKA therefore will promote open innovation by:

- Identifying EUREKA best practices in project generation to foster open innovation instruments (e.g. such as Eurostars and Clusters)
- Sharing EUREKA best practices on open innovation.

IV. Strategic Objective 4: Towards contributing to ERA policies on innovation

Originally, the objective of the ERA was to achieve a unified research area. Today, the integration of innovation within the ERA has been identified as one of the key challenges, as growth and job creation remain key objectives for the European Union. EUREKA, with its intergovernmental structure and market-oriented instruments, has substantial experience to share in the design of ERA policies for the innovation side. In order to contribute to ERA policies three key actions have been identified.

Key action 10: Enhance the policy role of EUREKA at European level

EUREKA has contributed more to the ERA through implementation of R&D&I programmes than through the shaping of European policies for research and innovation. Nevertheless, EUREKA has substantial experience in innovation and will actively contribute to innovation-related aspects of the ERA. In order to achieve this, some concrete proposals are laid down below:

- Establish a joint working group between EUREKA and the European Commission on the innovation dimension of the ERA
- Cooperate with ERAC and ERA related groups (SFIC and GPC), ERA research stakeholder organisations (e.g. EARTO, Science Europe, etc.) and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. TAFTIE etc.)
- Contribute to ERA policies for the innovation side with EUREKA position papers and/or joint declarations with relevant stakeholders
- Elaborate on possibilities to join the ERA Stakeholder platform.

Key action 11: Enhance the policy role of EUREKA at national level

In order to contribute to innovation policy at European level it is essential to enhance the policy role at national level. To achieve this, some concrete proposals are laid down below:

- Ensure political support and financial commitment in EUREKA member countries
- Enhance the relation with other networks at national level through complementary activities (e.g. such as EEN and NCPs).

Key action 12: Enhance EUREKA's visibility in the ERA

The communication of EUREKA remains paramount to increasing its visibility and promoting its added value. An enhanced visibility of EUREKA is an important element towards becoming a leading ERA innovation stakeholder. To achieve this, some concrete proposals are laid down below:

- Establish an ERA communication action plan
- Establish closer contacts with SME advocates (e.g. BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, ETPs, EUROCHAMBRES, EBN)
- Organize conferences to promote EUREKA's added value (e.g. EUREKA Academies)
- Participate in relevant events at EU, national, regional and local level.

ACRONYMS

Article 185	Article 185 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union enables the EU to participate in research programmes undertaken jointly by several Member States, including participation in the structures created for the execution of national programmes.
BUSINESSEUROPE	Represents European business at European level
COST	European cooperation in science and technology
EARTO	European association of research and technology organizations
EBAN	Association representing the interest of early stage investors across Europe
EBN	The European Business and Innovation Centre Network
EEN	Enterprise Europe Network
EIP	European Innovation Partnerships
ERA	European Research Area
ERAC	European Research Area Committee
ERA-NET	European Research Area Network
ERA-LEARN 2020 project	ERA-LEARN 2020 is a 3-year initiative (2015-2017) following up on its predecessors, the FP7 projects ERA-LEARN, NETWATCH and JPIs ToCoWork.
ETP	European Technology Platform
EU	European Union
EUROCHAMBRES	The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry
FP7	Framework Programme 7 (EU)
GPC	High Level Group for Joint Programming
Horizon 2020	The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation
HTIP!	EUREKA High Tech Investment Programme
INCO-NET	FP7 funded coordination and support action supporting bi-regional dialogues
JTI	Joint Technology Initiative
JPI	Joint Programming Initiative
NFB	National Funding Body
NCP	National Contact Point
PAM	Project Assessment Methodology
R&D	Research and Development
R&D&I	Research, Development and Innovation
RTO	Research and Technology Organisation
Science Europe	Association of European Research Funding Organisations (RFO) and Research Performing Organisations (RPO)
SFIC	Strategic Forum for International Cooperation
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
TAFTIE	The European association of leading national innovation agencies
UEAPME	European association of craft, small and medium-sized enterprises