Forest-Based Sector
Technology Platform

The Forest-Based Sector Technology Platform (FTP) in the Implementation Phase

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1. European Technology Platforms

The main objective of an ETP is to boost European competitiveness through a coherent approach in formulating strategic research priorities involving a broad range of relevant stakeholders and interest groups, with industry in the lead.

ETPs will have a significant influence on setting priorities for Community funded research programmes, but their influence goes much wider and will impact positively national and regional initiatives. As such, ETPs are set to play a key role in shaping research and innovation policies within Europe. However, ETPs will also impact a range of other Community policies. This is especially important when considering the long-term view of the Strategic Research Agendas (SRAs).

A strong commitment to openness and transparency is a key success factor of an ETP. Given that the majority of ETPs are currently preparing for their implementation stage, issues are now beginning to arise regarding how to obtain an appropriate balance between openness and transparency on the one hand and propriety of knowledge on the other.

Effective and efficient organisational structure is also important to ensure the successful development of ETPs. Each ETP has its own characteristics, history and modus operandi and can determine the most appropriate organisational structure for its needs. A "one-size-fits all" approach is not appropriate. However, certain guiding principles should be respected. The ETPs must have strong leadership with the credibility to bring together and mobilise stakeholders as well as to maintain their long-term commitment.

ETPs should be proactive in identifying sources of financing. They should not focus exclusively on Community and national public funding sources, but also identify sources of private funding. The role of public funding should be to leverage substantial private investment in the SRAs.

SMEs can add significant value to the process of developing and implementing ETPs, but awareness of the particular needs and constraints of SMEs is essential for their effective participation.

The above was underlined at a recent Austrian Presidency Conference on European Technology Platforms, which took place in Vienna on May 4 and 5 with 500 participants from all platforms.

2. Where is FTP in its development?

On 15 February 2004, the European forest-based sector launched its Vision 2030 as part of its Technology Platform initiative. The aim of the initiative is to drive the industry toward the continued sustainable development and innovation needed to nurture growth in the sector over the next 25 years. This event was also the start of the next phase of defining an SRA.

Effectively, more than 1,000 forest-based sector representatives in some 20 European countries have been actively engaged in this process, which generated a pool of more than 700 proposals. These proposals have been condensed into the SRA document published in February 2006 as a main document and an annex. The main content was first presented and discussed in a large open conference in Stockholm, Sweden, on November 9-10 2005.

The next phase – the Implementation Phase – was started with a successful conference "Bringing the Vision to Reality" in Irdning / Admont, Austria, on May 2-3 2006.

3. What is in front of us? – The Implementation Phase.

The SRA with its 5 Strategic Objectives and 26 Research Areas points out the directions in which the forest-based sector needs to go in order to realize its Vision 2030. The SRA now has to be turned into programmes and projects during the Implementation Phase.

In the SRA, the implementation is treated under the chapter – "Implementation – Bringing the Vision to Reality" and its sub-sections:
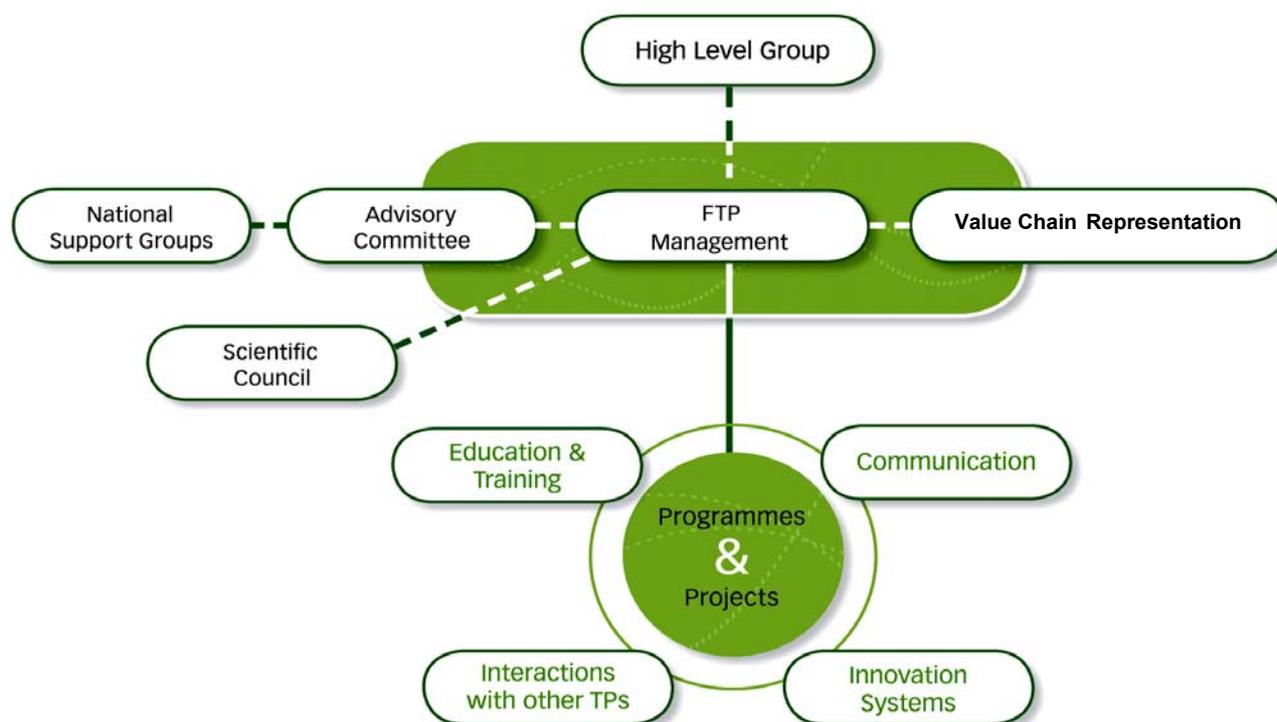
      3.1 From planning to action
      3.2 A need for a broad spectrum of sciences
      3.3 An improved climate for innovation
      3.4 Strengthening education and training
      3.5 Communication with society
      3.6 Synergies with other Technology platforms

![Forest-Based Sector Technology Platform]
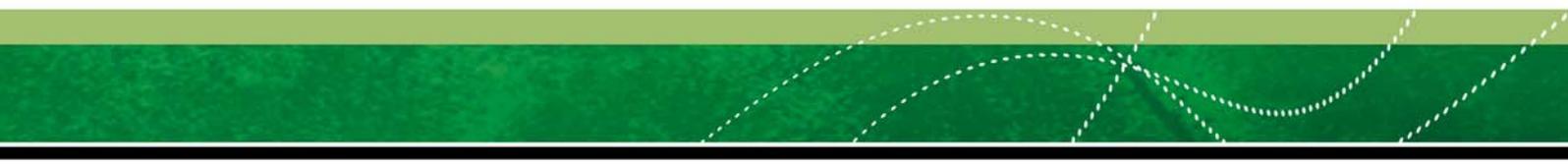
4. Structure and roles in the FTP from now on

Implementation Structure

4.1 High Level Group (HLG)

The HLG is as earlier the decision body of the FTP. The composition of the HLG is:

Wolfgang Pfarl, SAPPI (new chairman since May 1)
Giuseppe Fedrigoni, Cartiere Fedrigoni, Italy (CEPI)
Mikael Eliasson, Setra, Sweden (CEI-Bois)
Antti Sahi, MTK, Finland (CEPF)
Tomasz Lucjan, STEICO, Polen (representing the new member states)
Teresa Presas, Managing Director, CEPI
Filip de Jaeger, Secretary General, CEI-Bois
Natalie Hufnagl, Secretary General, CEPF
Lars Gädda, M-real, Finland (chairman of Advisory Committee)
Yves Birot, INRA, France (chairman of Scientific Council)

Commission representatives participate in the HLG work as observers.

4.2 FTP management

The FTP management has since April 1 2006 moved its secretariat to CEI-Bois office in Brussels. During the Implementation Phase, the FTP management will:

- Support the prioritization of European and national agendas and work programmes
- Facilitate the development of the SRA into programmes and projects
- Identify funding opportunities
- Have a dialogue with EU Commission and Parliament
- Facilitate research-consortia creation, cooperation with other ETPs and identify funding options
- Address the issues education and training as well as innovation
- Develop and execute an Action Plan for research and a Communication Plan
- Promote the availability of evaluators in FP7

4.3 National Support Groups (NSGs)

To be successful, the FTP has to mobilise the NSGs including all key stakeholders and the research community. An NSG will in the Implementation Phase have to adapt to national conditions but is expected to

- Promote the implementation of the SRA through national participation
- Introduce and inform about the FTP in its country, e.g. contacts with the high level authorities, public funding agencies etc., and do active lobbying work
- Facilitate coordination of national agendas
- Secure that the key stakeholders are represented in the NSG.

4.4 Advisory Committee (AC)

The AC will as earlier be forum for stakeholder information and feedback with representation from all NSGs and core federations. Also, the Commission participates with observer. In the AC, all types of questions related to the FTP can be treated.

Chairman of the AC is as earlier Lars Gädda.

4.5 Scientific Council (SC)

The SC has during the SRA development phase been a valuable body with a holistic and independent view. It will continue during the Implementation Phase with partly new tasks and participants.

The tasks of the SC during the Implementation Phase are:

- Review the Action Plan
- Promote an holistic approach in the SRA process
- Support in organising strategic workshops and consortia
- Liaise with other Technology Platforms, networks and instruments (COST actions, ERA-Nets etc.)

- Promote the participation of a broader spectrum of scientists and emerging technologies into the FTP
- Evaluate the scientific value of cooperation outside of Europe

Chairman of the SC is as earlier Yves Birot.

4.6 Value Chain Representation

The defining of Research Areas in the SRA was based on a crosscutting approach of different value chains (forestry, wood products, pulp & paper products, bio-energy, specialities) and impact dimensions (consumer, society, environment, energy, competitiveness).

A value chain representation is necessary also in the Implementation Phase. As this phase will be much longer time wise than the SRA phase, it is necessary to have a more permanent structure than during the development of the SRA. Therefore the Value Chain Groups used during the SRA development will be restructured into a body which is connected to existing core federations and associations. This should, combined with the Advisory Committee (AC) and the Scientific Council (SC), secure a proper balance between major stakeholders.

The new value chain representation will if possible be based on industry federations and research associations as can be seen below.

Value chain Forestry will be represented through CEPF, EFI and other forest owners (state, industry etc.).
Value chain Wood Products through CEI-Bois and Innovawood.
Value chain Pulp & Paper Products through CEPI and EFPRO.
Value chain Bio-energy is under consideration by the FTP management. CEPF, CEI-Bois and CEPI will be represented.
Value chain Specialities is under consideration by the FTP management.

The major task of the Value Chain Representation is to support the FTP management during the Implementation Phase and more specifically to:

- Secure close links to European core federations, associations and industry
- Participate in monitoring and reviewing the implementation process
- Promote access to core competencies
- Participate in prioritisation processes related to the Action Plan
- Secure the industrial commitment to the implementation process
- Assess the industrial impact of project proposals
- Contribute to dissemination, communication and education and training

The function of the Impact Coordinators during the SRA phase will with the new tasks be taken over by Value Chain Representation and SC in the Implementation Phase.

4.7 Communication Group

Effective communication is a critical success factor for the FTP.

The FTP envisages a bottom-up communication approach, mirroring the platform's organisational structure during the implementation. A network will be established which includes the NSGs and which can both facilitate communication and deliver on communication objectives. This network will focus on key SRA messages to:

- Raise awareness of the role of the forest-based sector in the wider community by promoting the importance of research in advancing Europe
- Assist in spreading information and knowledge of research from the SRA-implementation
- Stimulate industry and forest owners to mobilize research resources and invest in research

A Communication Plan will be developed covering internal and external activities.
To guide the work; the FTP has a Communication Group chaired by Teresa Presas.

4.8 Special Task Forces

In the SRA process a special IT Task Force was established to cover IT related questions crossing all value chains. For the Implementation Phase the same demand for an overall treatment of IT questions exists, so the IT Task Force will continue as a resource.
Task Forces can, from time to time, be considered also for other areas. One area under discussion for establishing a Task Force is biorefinery.

5. The Action Plan for research

During the AC and HLG meetings in March, it was decided that the FTP shall now develop an Action Plan. This Action Plan was later decided to focus on research and it will in the short term be the instrument for managing and guiding the FTP, including influencing the work programmes issued by the European Commission (SRA prioritization). It will also define how to establish necessary links and cooperation with other ETPs .
One of the most urgent tasks is a prioritization of the SRA content. During meetings in AC and HLG, European Commission representatives have asked for such a prioritization. This will help the European Commission to understand which Research Areas, or parts of the stakeholders of the FTP consider most urgent in time and most important. It is not necessary to make an absolute prioritization list of all Areas. The important question is which Areas FTP prioritizes per Theme in the first place during 2007/08. This will allow FTP management to push for early FP 7 calls in these Areas and the countries to support this.
In such a work it will be a value in itself for FTP to find Areas or programmes covering several value chains.

Following the above principal, the Action Plan will include:

o   SRA prioritisation
o   Criteria to be a FTP project or programme
o   Actions to coordinate SRA with national agendas
o   The connection between FTP/SRA and existing instruments, programmes and projects
o   Identification of instruments and activities outside 'Cooperation' in EC FP7 that are of interest for the FTP
o   How to deal with IPR issues
o   Dissemination issues

FTP has applied for a Specific Support Action (SSA, see picture below) to support its activities during the coming 18 months of the Implementation Phase. This application provides in many aspects the base for the Action Plan and Communication Plan.
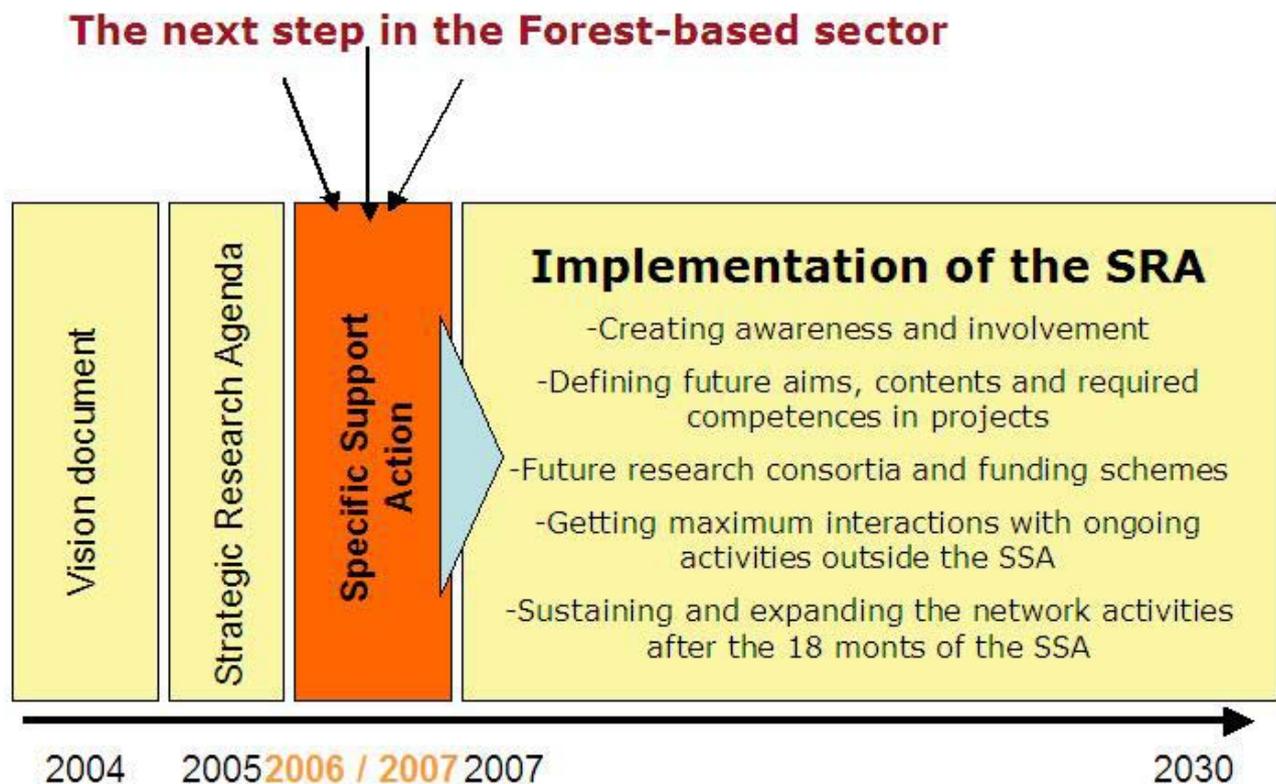
Lund, 2006-05-31
FTP management/CG Beckeman