
INNO-Learning Platform
**“A targeted action to support trans-national policy
learning and policy cooperation”**

6th INNO-Learning Steering Group Meeting

MINUTES

Wednesday, 13 May 2009

**Van Nelle Design Factory
Rotterdam, the Netherlands**

1. Participants

ILSG Members:

- Koen de Pater, SenterNovem
- Mauro Mallone, IPI – Institute for Industrial Promotion.
- Knut Senneseth, Innovation Norway
- Irma Peçiak, Polish Development Agency
- Anne Lidgard in replacement of Sven Gunnar Edlund, VINNOVA
- Michel Ganoote, OSEO innovation
- Lucia Seel, in replacement of Werner Pamminer, Clusterland Upper Austria
- Alfredo Sanchez Gimeno, Madrid region
- David Golding, Technology Strategy Board
- Aliko Pappa, GSRT
- Tom Schamp, IWT

European Commission :

- Reinhard Büscher
- Christophe Guichard
- Sven Schade
- Kincso Izsak
- Mette Quinn
- Lisbeth Bahl-Poulsen

INNO Learning Platform:

- Alcardo Furlani, INNOVA Europe
- Eurico Neves, INNOVA Europe
- Babis Ipeksidis, Intrasoft
- Bart Kamp, INNOVA Europe
- Rebeca Lucas, INNOVA Europe
- Marc Pattinson, inno

- René Wintjes, MERIT
- Nils Gabrielsson, inno

Invited speakers:

- Irini Efthimiadiou, Euroconsultants
- Andrea di Anselmo, META Group
- Bnejamin Kuscher, RAPIDE
- Hans-Christian Jäger, ERIK
- Gecas Kastyris, Lithuanian Innovation Centre

2. Minutes

Peer review slot:

After the presentations of René Wintjes and Andrea di Anselmo and the affirmation that the peer review exercise has until now been very useful and satisfactory for the organization whose support measure was reviewed (= NKTH), the question was raised whether it was also beneficial to the review organizations.

Eelco Denekamp, who participated as reviewer on behalf of SenterNovem, indicated that it had also been worth while for them. Looking at Hungary's version of grant/voucher scheme, it made them learn more about ins and outs of the Dutch innovation voucher scheme as well. And also question certain design and delivery parameters used for the Dutch case.

As for the review procedures, both the external consultant and the reviewing organizations argued that it is best to have both group sessions with representatives of the host organization and individual interview possibilities with the persons involved in the management and execution of the measure to be reviewed. When keeping them together as a group, there is the risk of consensuated supply of opinions and information, whereas individual approaches help to gather a wider array of opinions and information.

Lucia Seel asked about the time invested in the exercise. The participants and lead consultant explained that the time spent together (pre-review visit, review visit and upcoming synthesis visit) is little, but that most time goes into preparations and dealing with outcomes of meetings. Also, in this pilot all steps are necessarily compressed into a short time frame. In a more full-fledged version of a peer review process, the time invested and the duration of the whole process may well be more substantial.

As for the organizations drawn into the exercise, in the peer review case the managing organization (NKTH) was present together with regional intermediary organization in charge of promotion and evaluation of the scheme (RDAs) and Knowledge providers who provided services to final beneficiaries.. No SMEs were involved. In the good practice exchange case also intermediary organizations have been involved. All parties

agree that ideally also the experiences and opinions of final users of support schemes to be reviewed must be heard.

Reinhard Büscher posited that to be able to judge how a scheme under revision can be improved, one should first shed clarity on relevant points of reference (benchmarks) to be able to draw up useful comparisons. I.e., by referring to a comparable/benchmark scheme and or by referring to critical criteria or design components of such a scheme. That way, both the performance of the reference scheme and the review scheme can be assessed and compared.

The former should be translated into the standard procedure on how to take on a peer review and good practice exchange process, so that a replicable methodology is obtained.

After the peer review slot, chairman Koen de Pater drew the following conclusions:

- 1) It is not an exam in a teacher-student setting
- 2) peer review exercise is a two-way affair in which both types of organizations should learn: the organization under review and the organizations that act as reviewer
- 3) include the final customers of a support scheme into the review exercise.
- 4) participants should be allowed to speak open. Among others, this implies that staff personnel should be interviewed when not in presence of superiors or politically responsible persons.
- 5) peer review has a strong link to good practice exchange activities.

When comparing the two, peer review is more about streamlining an existing activity, whereas good practice exchange is more about the development of an activity in a new place.

Christophe Guichard also stipulated that in the case of good practice exchange, the host commits to support an eventual transfer of their scheme, which is not necessarily the case with the peer review. There, however, the host organization commits to consider seriously following up on the comments received from the reviewing organizations.

Good practice exchange slot:

After the Good Practice exchange presentations of René Wintjes and Irimi Efthimiadiou, Lucia Seel asked VINNOVA about the gain for their organization in having a peer to come over and look into their kitchen. Anne Lindberg replied that the scrutinization of a measure they have up and running by means of an outsider perspective is a valuable exercise in itself. It helps to question things the own organization takes for granted, but which may not be optimal.

Sven Schade highlighted the relevance of contextual differences that may apply between the settings in which the measure operates in the host country and in the country to which a measure is possibly transferred. And this may require a different approach to implementing the measure. This was confirmed by Gecas Kastyris.

Mauro Mallone advocated for a diverse participation in the upcoming peer review and good practice exchange exercises under the INNO Partnering Forum. In order to let as many innovation agencies possible take knowledge of the methodology and to offer as much innovation support actors possibilities to upgrade schemes and to learn from others'. It should be a genuine pan-European project.

Anne Lidgard added that for VINNOVA participating in the pilot exercise was a good test case to prepare for the upcoming INNO Partnering Forum

Alikki Pappa pointed at the fact that beyond an intrinsic and operational interest in a certain measure, there may also be more strategic reasons to participate in a peer review or good practice exchange activity. For instance, geopolitical and influence sphere thinking or overall networking objectives. Gecas Kastyris affirmed that LIC was not only interested in assessing transfer possibilities of the scheme they were now screening at VINNOVA, but that LIC was in general interested in twinning with VINNOVA and this pilot exercise gave them the possibility to make a first step in that regard.

Tom Schamp asked what was the main challenge for the GP exercise (he could not derive this from the report). According to Irimi Efthimiadiou the main challenge that is seen in the GP exercise is the ability of the receiving organisation to overcome existing barriers that are present due to contextual circumstances, so that the most beneficial part of the GP can be transferred in the most efficient way, in order to have positive results.

Wrapping up the GP slot, Koen de Pater concluded that for effective analysis and transfer of a innovation support measure, the following points of attention apply:

- 1) it is not just about know-what (GP features), but also about know-how, and know-why
- 2) GP is not a copy-paste exercise; context matters and it is about making it better and adapt to circumstances and new insights (this also goes for the host organization)
- 3) individual cooperation exercises can form part of more strategic plans: overall twinning between innovation support organizations, getting a stake in an (geographical) area of interest

RAPIDE slot:

After the RAPIDE presentation by Benjamin Kuscher a discussion on reflection groups supporting projects like RAPIDE and INNO Partnering Forum followed.

Reinhard Büscher stated that SMEs should not participate in such reflection groups, which should concentrate on policy discussions. Therefore, funding agencies and the like are more indicated for this. Instead, it is more fruitful if policy makers and public actors have on-site discussions with companies. When the reflection group meets they could include in the programme an on-site visit, such as the visit one to Yes!Delft on Tuesday and the visit to IMEC during the meeting in Leuven.

ERIK slot:

After the ERIK presentation by Hans-Christian Jäger, Koen de Pater asked how it is possible to already have so many transfers after such a short periode. It was explained that the partners of the ERIK network already have been working with each other in a previous project.

When asked to give a concrete good practice scheme that will be transferred, the example of Innovation Assistants was mentioned. Recently graduated students can be hired at reduced cost for the participating SME to assist in innovation activities. Although the terms ‘transfer’ and ‘good-practice schemes’ are still used, it actually involves the design and development of improved schemes based on good practice features coming from several good experiences.

3. Enclosures

- Agenda
- Powerpoint slides corresponding to the different slots