

Information Society Policy Link Linking European Policies



Information Society
and Media



European Commission

The Information Society brings important benefits throughout Europe's economy and society. To help ensure this promise is fulfilled, the Information Society Policy Link initiative is linking Information Society projects with European policy-makers across a wide range of policy domains, so improving both the attainment of policy objectives and the take-up of project results.



Where the Information Society meets European Policy

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are of crucial importance for Europeans. They are 'breakthrough technology', similar to the steam engine and electricity, that will have a major impact on how we live and work over the next century. They are therefore fundamental to achieving the EU's 'Lisbon goal' of greater economic growth, sustainable development and social cohesion.

Consequently, the European Union devotes considerable effort to Information Society related actions. For instance, Information Society Technologies (IST) research has been the largest thematic priority in the EU's Fifth (1998-2002) and Sixth (2002-2006) Framework Research Programmes. Together they represent an investment of over €7bn in IST research, and are complemented by programmes such as eContent (€100m) and eTEN (€315m), which focus on digital content and eServices deployment respectively.

The projects funded by these programmes offer benefits to all areas of Europe's economy and society. To fully realise these benefits, the technologies need to be linked closely to European policy-making in the relevant areas.

Information Society Policy Link is an initiative of Information Society & Media DG Programmes to identify and reinforce links between its projects and relevant EU policies. More than 3000 projects from Information Society programmes are being analysed, identifying a wealth of concrete results that support EU policies across all of the principal policy domains.

By exchanging information and experiences, the Information Society Policy Link initiative aims to ensure that results from European ICT research provide greater leverage, both in implementing current policies and shaping priorities for the future.

The Information Society Policy Link series

Information Society activities touch a wide range of policy areas. To help policy-makers understand these impacts, the Information Society Policy Link initiative has produced a series of brochures and factsheets illustrating the linkages between Information Society projects and results and EU policies. The materials cover various policy domains, grouped into six colour-coordinated themes, namely:

European Society

- Culture & Multilingualism
- Education, Training & Youth
- Employment & Social Affairs
- Health
- Inclusion

Competitiveness

- Enterprise Policy
- Industrial Policy
- Single Market

Research & Innovation

- Information Society & Media
- Research & Technology
- Standardisation

Governance

- eGovernment & eDemocracy
- Justice, Freedom & Security
- Regional Policy

Sustainable Development

- Agriculture & Rural Development
- Environment
- Transport & Energy

International Relations

- Development & Humanitarian Aid
- External Relations
- External Trade

These initial presentations will be added to as the Initiative develops.

Policy Relationships

Relations with other Commission Directorates-General

By its very nature, the Information Society cuts across traditional boundaries, requiring Information Society & Media DG to work closely with and contribute to the activities and policies of many other DGs. In particular, the DG maintains close relationships with:

- DG Research on research activities, including: preparation of the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development; implementation of research into nanotechnology; and the preparatory action on security research.
- DG Competition on implementing the regulatory framework on electronic communications, and on competition-related aspects of Internet and international regulatory questions (e.g. Internet naming and addressing issues).

Other DGs with shared interests and issues include, but are not limited to:

- DG Education and Culture: eLearning and culture related issues, eContent and Safer Internet.
- DG Enterprise and Industry: support to sectoral policies, IPR issues, ICT standardisation, business dialogue with third countries, eGovernment, ICT skills.
- DG Environment: environmental protection, air and noise pollution, water quality, natural resource management, and crisis management.
- Europe Aid Co-operation Office: international cooperation programmes for ICT, humanitarian demining, cooperation on research infrastructures.
- Eurostat: eEurope benchmarking.
- DG External Relations: security issues, regulatory dialogue with partner countries, EC participation in international organisations.
- DG Health and Consumer Protection: distance selling, spam, consumer protection related to electronic communications, eHealth and electro-magnetic fields.
- DG Employment and Social Affairs: e-skills, socio-economic impact.
- DG Internal Market and Services: Intellectual Property Rights, privacy and data protection, eMoney and mobile payments.
- DG Justice, Freedom and Security: data retention, ePrivacy directive, cybercrime, biometrics.
- DG Regional Policy: use of Structural Funds for broadband deployment and for building ICT research capacity.
- DG Transport and Energy: intelligent transport systems (ITS) and eSafety, eTen, sustainable development.

There are also frequent policy contacts with the Secretariat General as the body handling all official proceedings and coordinating inter-service consultations.

Relations with Other Institutions

In its role as co-legislator, the European Parliament significantly influences the co-decision processes in the Information Society field, and several of the Parliament's Committees are relevant to the Information Society portfolio. The Council is also a vital institution for the DG's legislative files, in particular those adopted under the co-decision procedure.

The DG also works with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Committee of the Regions (COR), both advisory bodies established by the Treaties which contribute to the EU's decision-making process.



Contributions to Policy

Policy-making in the European Union has both a top-down and a bottom-up character. On the one hand, the main political priorities for the work of the European Commission and related institutions are set externally by Member States in the Council and by the European Parliament. Within this broad political context, however, it is the role of the Commission to devise appropriate regulatory initiatives and action programmes that match these key political objectives; in other words to formulate detailed policies.

From the perspective of Information Society & Media DG, the challenge is to ensure that the results of policy-relevant research are fed into the Commission's policy-making processes, both at the level of general strategies and at the level of specific action programmes. Work undertaken by the DG plays a crucial role in linking the research and policy communities.

Projects funded under Information Society programmes contribute to policy development in a number of ways. Key modes of policy contribution include the following:

- *Policy research and analysis:* This aspect covers a wide variety of activities that aim to inform the policy-making process. It includes: surveys; comparative analyses; prospective analyses; scenarios and forecasting. Activities aim to summarise current knowledge and understanding, as well as identify future information requirements, and may cover both macro- and micro-level effects.
- *Benchmarking and indicators:* Projects have developed a variety of indicators and tools that help us to assess current situations, such as statistical indicators and benchmarking tools. These measures may be qualitative and quantitative.
- *Research roadmaps and future needs:* Projects help to map the path towards the future, through developing "roadmaps" on prospective technological developments and identifying research needs necessary to meet economic and societal goals.
- *Policy forums:* Projects have helped network the policy community, connecting policy-makers both to each other and to researchers, practitioners and others not normally involved in the policy process. Often these networks and forums break across geographical, organisational and thematic boundaries so as to achieve a holistic view on a particular policy issue.
- *Best practice:* In today's world no-one has a monopoly on wisdom and the opportunities to learn from one another are obvious. Projects contribute to spreading good practice in a number of ways: case studies, guidelines, advice, etc. These technology translation activities reflect the importance of adapting solutions to specific circumstances for innovation to be successful.
- *Standards:* Standardisation helps ensure a level playing field for business in the EU and stimulates innovation. In many domains it also underpins the enforcement of legislation and regulatory requirements. Information Society projects contribute both to European and international frameworks and to industrial consensus forums.
- *Policy implementation:* Many projects are concerned with policy "implementation", in the sense that they either fulfil, or progress towards, policy objectives. Often this is through a real-world implementation of research results. Policy monitoring is also greatly facilitated by ICT solutions arising from IS research and deployment projects. Activities here include: demonstrators, trials, pilot actions, or efforts aimed at early adoption.

Any of the above contributions may be the basis for policy recommendations – programmes of action by policy-makers to be pursued at European, national or local levels. Typically, these will lead to strategies, objectives and targets, which in turn provide the basis for the next cycle of policy actions: regulations, standards, further research, deployment programmes etc.

Information Society Policy Link is concerned with this virtuous circle: ensuring research feeds into policy, which in turn feeds into further research and implementation.



Making The Link

Policy-makers and researchers, not surprisingly, tend to live in different worlds. The one group is concerned with economic and societal outcomes, and the other with technological performance and innovation. Their understanding of one another tends to be partial at best. While they may have a general appreciation, policy-makers are often not aware of the full implications of technology or its future potential. Similarly, researchers may have only a general view of policy objectives.

Many Information Society projects already target the policy community. But many more could do so or could do it more effectively. The two sides have much to learn from one another. The issue is not simply awareness – knowing what is available - but impact: being able to utilise that knowledge to influence future policy development and implementation. Much more needs to be done to communicate projects' results and optimise their exploitation in support of various EU policy objectives. To achieve this, Policy Interfaces are now being established between Information Society & Media DG and relevant Commission DGs to improve synergies further.

A virtuous circle should develop, with improved communication between researchers and policy-makers ensuring that:

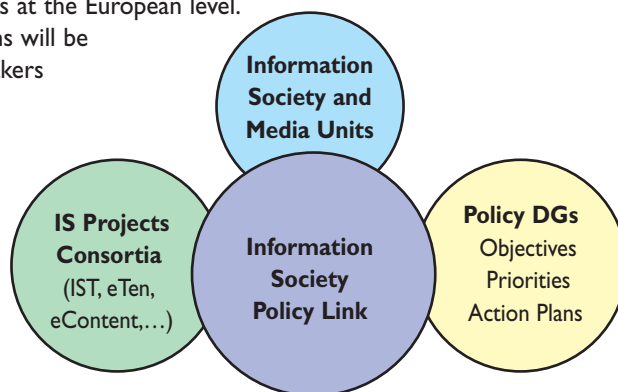
- Information Society and Media programmes better reflect relevant EU policies;
- EU policies better account for Information Society technologies;
- ICTs are better applied to meeting Europe's challenges.

In practical terms, the new policy interfaces will allow:

- Early identification of promising projects, even during the selection stage;
- Improved awareness of project progress and results among Europe's relevant policy community;
- Improved incorporation of relevant EU policies in Information Society & Media activities.

For the time being, the focus is at the European level.

At a later stage, specific actions will be launched addressing policy-makers in national and regional administrations in Member States, other European institutions, in particular European Parliament, and national parliaments.



Next Steps

The Information Society Policy Link initiative aims to leverage the benefits of Information Society and Media projects for European policies. We are here to make the link.

For Project Consortia, we can help you to:

- Organise Policy Workshops and events targeted at the European policy community.
- Make introductions to policy-makers in European institutions and national administrations.
- Make contact with relevant and complementary projects and initiatives funded under other European programmes.
- Identify means to further exploit policy aspects of your results, including through further research, deployment and regulation.

For Policy-makers in the EU institutions and Member States, we can help you to:

- Maintain awareness of Information Society activities relevant to your policy domain.
- Identify promising projects and results within DG Information Society & Media's portfolio.
- Explore ways in which Information Society developments can support the implementation and monitoring of European and national policies.
- Build a dialogue with DG Information Society & Media on future needs and research requirements.

If you wish to utilise these project results, or those of similar activities funded by Information Society and Media Directorate-General, please get in touch.

Further Information

European Commission
Information Society and Media Directorate-General
Unit C2: Strategy for ICT Research and Development

Information Society Policy Link initiative

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Europe's Information Society: Thematic Portal

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