# Linking Information Society Projects to European Policies

*The Information Society promises potentially significant benefits throughout Europe's economy and society. To ensure this promise is fulfilled, the "Information Society Policy Link" initiative is linking Information Society projects with relevant European policies as diverse as environmental protection, security and health, improving the attainment of policy objectives and the take-up of project results.*

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are a '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 by 2010.

Consequently, 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 other EU programmes such as eContent (€100m) and eTEN (€315m), focusing on digital content and e-service deployment, respectively.

The resulting projects offer benefits throughout Europe's economy and society, with the resulting technologies already serving policy goals as diverse as economic growth, education, health and the environment.

These benefits will not be realised completely, however, if the technologies are not linked closely to European policymaking in the relevant areas.

### Making the Link

Hence "Information Society Policy Link", where DG Information Society (see box) identifies and reinforces links between its projects and relevant EU policies.

Connecting these cutting-edge projects to the relevant policies will both help Europe better implement today's policies and ensure that policy development takes the possibilities offered by ICTs into account.

More than 2,500 projects from DG Information Society programmes are being analysed, identifying many with concrete results in areas ranging from the environment to security, employment and regional policy.

### Building Synergies

Identifying the relevance of these projects to different policy areas, however, is only the first step.

Permanent interfaces are now being established between relevant Commission DGs and project consortia to improve synergies further.

*Information Society project consortia will improve the awareness of their projects with European policymakers*

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**A Three-Pronged Approach to the Information Society**

DG Information Society focuses its work around three interrelated pillars:

- **Stimulating Research as a key for future innovation and competitiveness:** the DG manages the EU's Information Society Technologies (IST) research activities – at €3,6bn for 2002-2006, the largest 'thematic priority' of the EU's Sixth Research Framework Programme;

- **eEurope initiative:** eEurope does not make new funds available, but works by helping Members States to learn from each other and by providing a policy framework to focus existing programmes and accelerate legislative development. It also provides the overall policy umbrella for a series of initiatives and programmes, including the DG's **MODINIS, eTEN, eContent** and **Safer Internet Action Plan** programmes, as well as the **European Network and Information Security Agency**;

- **The regulatory framework for the electronic communications sector,** which promotes competition, reinforces the single market and safeguards consumers in the sector. Building on general competition law, it sees regulation as a temporary requirement during the transition from the EU's formerly monopolistic telecommunications industry to a fully functioning market system.

Information Society

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A virtuous circle should develop, with improved communication between researchers and policymakers ensuring that:

- IS programmes better reflect relevant EU policies;
- EU policies take fuller account of the potential of IS technologies;
- IS technologies are better applied to meeting Europe's challenges.

At a later stage, national and regional administrations in member states, European and national parliaments may also be involved.

## Current Focus

In practical terms, the new 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 activities.

Interfaces are currently being established to link Information Society projects to policy areas of interest to the following Directorates-General:

- DG Environment;
- DG Enterprise;
- DG External Relations (particularly security issues);
- DG Regional Policy;
- DG Employment and Social Affairs;
- DG Education & Culture;
- DG Health and Consumer Protection;
- DG Agriculture.

A second stage will see similar actions undertaken with other policy DGs and the Secretariat General of the Commission, in particular regarding eGovernment and eDemocracy projects funded under recent IST and other Information Society programmes.

## Invitation to Project Consortia

**Project consortia will play a critical role in these interfaces.**

Working with DG Information Society and the relevant policy DGs, project consortia will be able to both inform the European policy community about relevant technological developments in different

policy areas and raise awareness of their specific projects' activities and results. New solutions for implementing and monitoring EU policies should result.

Organisations involved in past or present DG Information Society projects which have produced results relevant to the above policies should therefore contact DG Information Society (see 'Further Information', below).

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**See Also:**

- Factsheet 2: A Three-Pronged Approach to the Information Society
- Factsheet 18: Safer Internet & Safer Internet *Plus*
- Factsheet 19: eContent & eContent *Plus*
- Factsheet 26: eTEN
- Factsheet 28: IST Research

All Factsheets and more can be downloaded from "Europe's Information Society: Thematic Portal", below.

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**Further Information**

- **Information Society Policy Link**
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    INFSO-IS_Policy_Link@cec.eu.int
    http://europa.eu.int/information_society/
    activities/policy_link/index_en.htm
- **Europe's Information Society: Thematic Portal**
  http://europa.eu.int/information_society/

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