

Messages from the Forward looking session 2.4

- Forward looking activities should underpin EU and national policies.
- Research and innovation policy making, ERA strategy, Joint Programming, etc. need forward looking activities to ensure that priority setting is well taking into account long term trends of society and its main global drivers such as interdependencies between economic development, scarcity of natural resources, climate change and the intensification of communication.
- Forward looking activities do not start from scratch: concepts, methods and tools exist and have been subject to several applications in the past by the Commission (cf. Barcelona objectives, FP7 Impact Assessment, energy and climate change policies). Forward looking activities have also been applied at different levels to better inform programme planning and to support structural changes within the member states.
- The new challenges are:
 - the application of forward looking concepts, methods and tools to global contexts and drivers ("The World in 2025" is a good example);
 - the purposeful use of forward looking activities for developing visions and articulating targets in research and innovation priorities within the ERA (cf. ERA 2020 Vision and Lund declaration).
 - the deep engagement of the relevant stakeholders and users in such forward looking activities and priority-setting processes.
 - the stability and long-term funding of resource demanding modelling and databases of importance to ERA forward looking activities.
 - the joint investments in common forward looking infrastructures and projects of key importance to underpin ERA priority-settings.
- European forward looking activities should be strengthened. Policy-makers, industry, civil society organisations, including citizen's representatives, should be involved in the forward looking exercises ("shared visions and targets") to become genuine owners of the results. The European frame of forward looking activities should be provided by the European Commission in collaboration with Member States, stakeholders and citizens.
- As forward looking activities are heavily context-dependent, there should be a good balance between bottom-up and top-down in European, national and regional exercises, as well as between expert-based and user-based exercises.

Next steps:

- A common EU platform or infrastructure for forward looking activities, including modelling, should be developed.
- The relevant stakeholders should be involved as active participants in forward looking activities, as this is key for having the results implemented (cf. Joint Programming).
- Designing the appropriate platforms or infrastructures, as well as the appropriate processes of particular relevance for ERA priority-setting should be a major focus.
- The responsibilities in this should be shared by the Commission and the Member States, which calls for more ambitious and targeted joint actions.