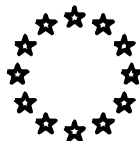


2000

**EXTERNAL MONITORING REPORT
ON THE
SPECIFIC PROGRAMME
FOR
RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGICAL
DEVELOPMENT**



**IN THE FIELD OF
QUALITY OF LIFE AND MANAGEMENT
OF LIVING RESOURCES**

This report is part of the series of the external annual monitoring reports prepared for the EC Framework Programme and the Euratom Framework Programme, and their constituent Specific Programmes.

The Commission has over the years been placing increasing emphasis on the evaluation of Community R&D activities. As part of the process of continuous improvement, a new programme monitoring scheme has been introduced in 1995. The new scheme involves independent external monitoring experts and a timely response by the Commission Services to the recommendations produced by the experts. The new scheme thereby provides the basis of a quick response mechanism to programme developments and should give advice on key issues.

This report is the second covering the Fifth Framework Programme; the report also highlights progress in relation to ongoing activities under the Fourth Framework Programme. The report should help reinforce establishment of best practices, identify and correct weaknesses in programme implementation, and facilitate future multi-annual programme evaluation.

The report consists of three parts:

Part A: *External monitoring report prepared by the following independent external experts:*

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Part B: *Responses of the Programme management to the external monitoring report.*

Part C: *Information provided to the external Monitoring Panel by the Programme Management*

PART A:

Report of the external Monitoring Panel

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2000 Quality of Life and Management of Living Resources (QoL) Programme Monitoring Exercise by a Panel of independent experts is based on Article 4(a) in accordance with Article 5(1) of the fifth framework programme (FP5). It covers the final ongoing projects and activities funded under the fourth framework programme (FP4) and the second year of FP5 implementation.

During 2000, FP5 directors, section heads, scientific officers (SO) and support staff were able to fulfil their management goals:

- Implementation of recommendations by the 1999 Monitoring Panel
- Completion of the majority of FP4 projects with successful dissemination of results, technology implementation plan (TIP) utilisation and active exploitation support for the contractors
- Selection of new projects/clusters under the FP5 by a process generally accepted as fair and transparent
- Contracting of the first FP5 projects including their publication through the CORDIS projects database
- Improvement and intensive use of altogether 15 platforms to co-ordinate industrial needs with certain RTD topics and results
- Identification, selection and focus on FP5 core topics via public conferences
- Definition, launch and initial implementation of the new European research Area (ERA) issue
- Strategic work on the draft concept of the upcoming FP6

The work of the Panel preferentially concentrated on the new FP5 features, i.e. clusters, ERA and the complex of stage 2 criteria. During this exercise various potential problems have been recognised which led to the following key recommendations

Key recommendations by the 2000 QoL Monitoring Panel

- Based on the principles of fairness and equality of treatment, the Commission is encouraged to harmonise ratios for the number of proposals/experts/evaluation time.
- On a strategic basis the panel requests a clear and more precise definition of stage 2 parameters, especially European Added Value criteria for each call for tenders
- The Panel recommends an improvement of the whole evaluation system towards a shorter and more cost-effective process, including considerations for project pre-selection.
- Caution is needed regarding the essential interpretation of ERA as a collection of huge integrated projects, which might endanger appropriate space for brilliant science organised in small European groups.
- The Commission has to take into account the outcomes of clusters when considering the development of integrated projects.

- The Panel recommends the establishment of a new return programme for young and senior European scientists working outside their country.
- A call of interest for the fair selection of topics for clusters within given action lines is recommended. According to the results, specific calls should then be initiated which are only open for clusters.
- Evaluation procedures of clusters might also be reviewed with concentration on their overall value, in addition to a detailed evaluation of individual cluster projects
- The Panel recommends a clarification of priorities, roles and functions of SOs. It has been consistently recognised that the workload of individual SOs is excessive. The proposal to recruit PTAs has been advanced to address this problem. The Panel recommends speedy implementation of this and other appropriate approaches to reduce the workload of individual SOs.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The work of the 2000 external Monitoring Panel is based on Article 4(a) of the Decision 1999/167/EC on the specific RTD programme “Quality of Life and Management of Living Resources” recommending that the Commission “shall monitor, with appropriate assistance from independent external experts, the implementation of the specific programme and, where appropriate, submit proposals to Council for adapting it, in accordance with Article 5(1) of the fifth framework programme....”

For this purpose the Commission conducted an open call for interested European experts and selected from those who applied eight members to constitute the 2000 Monitoring Panel. According to the different lines of action in the QoL programme, the 2000 Panel comprises a broad range of expertise (applied agriculture, economic & social research, genetics, biotechnology, environmental health, basic biomedical science and clinical medicine as well as consumer-related affairs) with individual experience regarding the FP5 and former RTD programmes.

During the kick-off meeting in late November 2000 the panel was introduced to the major focus of the year 2000 exercise comprising (i) management, co-ordination, state of implementation and progress of FP4/FP5 activities, (ii) results/impact of the issues European Added Value and the European Research Area as well as (iii) follow-up of recommendations from the previous monitoring exercises together with recommendations for 2001. However, these topics were clearly identified as the general frame of the whole monitoring process and the Panel was offered the possibility to select other issues for a more detailed and in-depth analysis.

1.2 SPECIFICS OF THE 2000 QOL PROGRAMME - SELECTED ISSUES AND METHOD OF WORKING

Given the relatively short time and the large scope of task, the Panel attempted to identify specific issues best reflecting the year 2000 situation. Representing the second year of FP5 implementation several modifications of the initial work programme/evaluation procedure have been introduced and a substantial number of projects are already under contract. In addition, the former programme FP4 has almost come to an end, as the majority of funded projects were closed down during 2000 and new issues are being launched, especially in the European Research Area which is considered a conceptual precursor for the up-coming FP6. Regarding the basic objectives of the exercise, it was decided to concentrate on the specifics of the FP5, i.e. stage 2 criteria, clusters and contributions, as well as implementation of the ERA concept. In addition, the 1999 Panel recommendations were reviewed and the changes assessed.

The monitoring exercise consisted of face-to-face interviews supported by extensive documentation. Specifically, the Panel undertook interviews with the directors of the QoL programme, the section heads of the different Key Actions (KA), Generic Activities (GA) and the Marie Curie fellowships (MCF) as well as with co-ordinators/SO of selected clusters. Based on their high level expertise, Commission staff provided excellent straightforward information. The Panel is especially grateful for the abundant co-operation and the open-minded character of the discussions throughout the whole exercise.

This report does not reiterate all the information supplied, but attempts to enlighten the Panel's decision process in a transparent and reproducible form. Conclusions presented embrace general suggestions, more long-term strategic considerations and the actual recommendations which are given in italics within the body of the text.

2. FP4 ACTIVITIES

At the end of the year 2000 only 320 (BIOTECH: 26, BIOMED: 94, FAIR: 200) from a total of 1269 FP4 funded projects are still underway. Recommendations from the 1998 and 1999 Monitoring Panel focused on the process of evaluation including a procedure for novelty search, the harmonisation of project monitoring between actions and the consistent dissemination/exploitation of results. General tools to implement these recommendations have been initiated by the Commission Services and considerations of these issues have also been embedded in the design of the FP5.

The remaining FP4 projects continue to receive attention in the form of final assessment of projects, combined with clear dissemination/exploitation strategies such as the standardised overall use of TIP. The Panel appreciates that the Commission is systematically collecting TIP of finished FP4 projects in an electronic manner to disseminate non-confidential information through CORDIS and other services. Moreover, contractors that need exploitation support are guided towards specific help-desk services.

3. FP5 QOL PROGRAMME

In contrast to 1999 when the delay of FP5 approval caused enormous pressure on the Commission staff to successfully launch the programme in time, 2000 was the year of consolidation. The Panel approves the continuous effort by the DG Research to improve FP5's general conditions which led to a high degree of implementation of the new programme philosophy, operated within a satisfactorily adapted Directorate structure.

3.1 STATISTICS

Second fixed call (2000)	Stage 1		Stage 2			
	Total	Not selected	Total	Reserve list	Selected	Proposed EC contribution in €
March 2000	777	583	194	54	140	204,203,227
October 2000	1606	1220	386	141	245	354,374,536
Grand total	2383	1803	580	195	385	558,577,763

3.2 THE APPLICATION PROCESS

3.2.1 Basic structure and description of procedures

The transition between FP4 and FP5, i.e. the change from basic research to product-oriented approaches with a substantial socio-economic impact for Europe also required new rules for the application/evaluation process. These rules are published in the Official Journal and explained in various information packages disseminated via the CORDIS websites. In short, the major innovation is a two-stage panel system in which science and management of proposed studies represent stage 1 criteria. Those proposals that score at least 4 in both blocks are then subjected to a second panel evaluating European Added Value, Socio-economic Impact as well as Economic Development and S&T prospects. In accordance with the basic philosophy of each action line, the importance of the different evaluation parameters is counted in form of a weighting system, which forms the final score for the selection of proposals. Evaluation and selection procedures target at full transparency and protection of confidentiality. In order to fulfil these objectives the Commission hired a building at Frère Orban in which stage 1 and stage 2 evaluations are being performed. Evaluators of all panels represent high-level European experts who applied to perform this exercise and are then selected from a database by the Commission.

3.2.2 Implementation of recommendations by the 1999 Monitoring Panel

- The information pack should be made more understandable and problems with the electronic submission of proposals should be solved
 - In view of the Panel these recommendations have been successfully implemented by the Commission
- Considerations should be given to a trial evaluation in which proposals are sent electronically in full and in confidence to stage 1 evaluators.
 - The Panel understands that substantial changes in the evaluation procedure within an ongoing programme is raising complex legalistic and administrative questions. In this respect, it supports the decision by the Commission to install a small-scale test platform for a peer-review system in GA - area 13 Socio-economic Evaluation of Life Sciences and Health Care Technologies.
- According to the central role socio-economic aspects of research are playing in the FP5, higher numbers of experts specifically covering this field are needed. Thus, the 1999 Panel suggested a more pro-active approach by the Commission in encouraging individuals with the appropriate expertise to contribute to the present programme.
 - In the absence of a history of this close interaction between human disciplines and science, a lot of educational work is needed. The Commission is fully aware of this fact and initiated various seminars, congresses and meetings for the respective target groups. Furthermore, specific calls only open for socio-economic aspects of life sciences and technologies have been created to increase the number of submitted proposals.
- The 1999 Panel recommended a faster and more extensive feedback on the assessment of proposals with a quick yes/no answer followed by a detailed comment later on.
 - Due to specific efforts by the SO during evaluation procedures, the quality of the evaluators' feedback to the applicants (ESR report) has been clearly improved. In addition, a general trend

towards shorter periods between submission of proposals and the respective feedback can be observed. Yet, there is still no procedure that rapidly informs the applicants about the principle outcome of the assessment.

3.2.3 Year 2000 monitoring subjects

- Working conditions:

As compared to the situation in 1999, the overall situation clearly improved. Despite repeated recommendations by various Panels the possibility to access scientific databases, such as Medline has not been implemented. It goes without saying that references related to the expertise of complex applications need to be examined which makes the Medline access so important. The Commission argues that this technology poses potential problems of confidentiality. The Panel follows this argument, but it should be possible to install an exclusive Medline access via the Internet at Frère Orban. Finally, the Panel would like to remind the Service Provider that experts usually work for 10 hours and more at Frère Orban. This should be considered in the co-ordination of general services (refreshments, cleaning of facilities, etc.). The 1999 Panel made similar recommendations and these have been (and are still being) ignored.

⇒ Improving working conditions for evaluators at Frère Orban including access to Medline, in the frame of the Commission's policy of confidentiality.

- New initiatives within the evaluation/selection system:

As compared to 1999, the Commission installed independent observers for the whole evaluation procedures and more clearly defined rules for the important question of anonymity during stage 1 science evaluation. The Panel supports these activities, since they are contributing to the principles of transparency and equality of treatment.

- Equality of treatment within the evaluation and selection procedures:

FP5 rules for evaluation and selection of proposals are only regulating principle aspects and leave a lot of space for the management of individual procedures. Especially with regard to the number of proposals per expert and the overall time given for evaluation, substantial inconsistencies between the different KA/GA have been recognised by the Panel. Without any obvious advantage, such a situation has the potential to raise distrust within the European scientific community.

⇒ *Based on the principles of fairness and equality of treatment, the Commission is encouraged to harmonise ratios for the number of proposals/experts/evaluation time.*

- The problem of stage 2 criteria

Stage 2 criteria (European Added Value, the Socio-economic Impact and Economic Development and S&T prospects) have an important role in FP5 but represent a new philosophy of the whole programme. These topics are without any history in the Commission-funded research and need precise determination. Already in 1999, the Monitoring Panel recommended appropriate guidelines for their implementation and indeed a lot has been done by the Commission to fulfil this goal. In this context the Panel values the newly launched issue of the European Research Area, which is not only the logical evolution of stage 2 criteria, but also intent to introduce an upstream definition and interpretation of the EAV. Efforts are still necessary to clarify the concept of EAV.

⇒ *On a strategic basis the panel requests a clear and more precise definition of stage 2 parameters, especially European Added Value criteria for each call for tenders*

⇒ The SO should encourage evaluators to provide an extensive feedback on the stage 2 assessment.

- The evaluation and selection procedures in general

After two years of experience with the evaluation procedure, conclusions drawn are somehow ambiguous. There is general agreement that the present process of evaluation represents a fair and transparent selection of high quality proposals. The quality of the Evaluators is high, with >75% having more than 10 years experience at the national and international level (see for example Aguilar, Ingemansson, Hogan and Magnien, Research Evaluation 7, 141-146, 1998, and the January 2001 report of the external observer Prof. Graham Gould). Yet, substantial doubts have been raised regarding some procedures leading to that result. In particular, discussions with the SO showed that most of the problems are caused by the long and heavy process of selecting proposals which also requires substantial investment of time and administrative work for Commission representatives to organise and run such panels.

⇒ *The Panel recommends an improvement of the whole evaluation system towards a shorter and more cost-effective process, including consideration for project pre-selection.*

- Submission of duplicate or near identical research proposals

The panel notes the January 2001 report of the external observer Prof. Graham Gould whereby certain groups are submitting identical or near identical research proposals to different calls in different KAs. Professor Gould notes that this is not 'illegal' since there are no definite Commission rules to forbid it. However, one should bear in mind that redundancy increases the workload of the evaluators and generates systematic controls to identify duplicates.

3.3 QOL - THE PROGRAMME

3.3.1 The role of KA/GA within the programme

Following the broad rules of the FP5, each KA/GA activity presents very good initiatives and some groundbreaking projects. However, as already seen with regard to the evaluation system, the implementation and management of the programme objectives within the different activities is quite heterogeneous. On the one hand, Commission staff responsible for certain KA (e.g. KA2) use a proactive approach with organisation of conferences on specific topics, continuous adjustment of calls to newly identified thematic priorities as well as personal invitations of selected scientists/companies to submit relevant proposals. On the other hand, within GA the basic bottom-up idea of the FP5 is widely accepted without major modifying initiatives. Potential problems related to these inconsistencies (identical calls of different KA, competition between KA, loss of integration within the QoL programme as a whole) were discussed. The Directors of the QoL programme justified variances with the freedom of diversity that is creating a lot of important experiences for the present and future programmes. The Panel follows this line of argumentation emphasising the importance of specific actions which ensure detailed analysis and exploitation of the experiences made with regard to varying management approaches.

⇒ The Commission should create a mini-team designated to identify and collect data on divergent procedures among action lines. Listed, compared and evaluated, these data will provide insight into the different pros and cons, thus, becoming a useful knowledge base for future operational decisions.

3.3.2 Programme Committee

The Programme Committee as representative part of the national science politics network has been built to ensure representation of national interests in Brussels. Co-operation between the Programme Committee and the Commission has repeatedly proven its quality. Particularly, the high level of co-operation by the Commission staff, including their substantive contributions, are widely appreciated. The Programme Committee itself is also playing an effective and meaningful part within the QoL programme. In the framework of ERA the Commission must be encouraged to look for a better involvement of member states.

3.3.3 National Contact Points

National Contact Points are seen to afford a direct link between the Commission and the scientific end-users. They are created to support the Commission in the dissemination and realisation of FP5 objectives as well as to provide essential information and active help for the scientists with respect to all FP5-associated questions. Well organised and fully equipped Contact Points (e.g. SENTER or BIT) are not only able to fulfil these crucial goals, but are also able to increase the number of positively evaluated proposals from their homeland. For those countries not yet holding such strong institutional bodies, especially the applicant states, the Panel would like to stress the importance of help by the Commission. In general, allocating enough attention and resources to Contact Points is essential for the successful dissemination of ERA and any investment of this kind certainly will be paid back.

3.3.4 The European Research Area

ERA stands for a real European policy on research, which combines national activities and Union policy to form a coherent whole. The final aim of this communication is to progress towards a better organisation of research in Europe, which should result in a world-leading European role for certain fields of science. In short, the ERA refers to the establishment of huge research facilities dealing with only few topics in form of so-called integrated projects that combine the element research, networking and training/mobility.

Concern was frequently expressed among Panel members that small-scale basic science would continue to exist within Commission funded research in the near future. It is suggested that something similar to the presently existing Generic Activities should be preserved.

The Commission directed the year 2000 towards the initial strategic implementation of the new concept. For this purpose, detailed written information on this issue has been generated and organisational needs to realise initiatives in the context of the ERA have been met. Based on this successful work, the Commission now presents a first reorientation of the 2001 QoL programme, which contributes to the ERA objectives.

⇒ A caution is needed regarding the essential interpretation of ERA as a collection of huge integrated projects, which might endanger appropriate space for brilliant science organised in small European groups.

⇒ The Commission has to take into account the outcomes of clusters when considering the development of integrated projects

⇒ The Commission should consider the fact that applied science depends on prior basic science and that, in the absence of the latter, the former may rapidly become non-competitive.

⇒ The Panel notes concerns within the scientific community about the inconsistency of EU research-funding policies, which seem to change substantially every 4-5 years.

3.3.5 The Marie Curie Fellowships under the QoL programme

The MCF which are part of the FP5 horizontal programme “ Improving Human Research Potential and the Socio-Economic Knowledge Base” are also offered in the fields of the QoL programme. They comprise individual fellowships as well as schemes, which enable organisations to host a number of researchers (host fellowships). In general, MCF cover all the important aspects of training and mobility in Europe. Yet, with regard to return fellowships there are several limitations which make it for the majority of European scientists impossible to ask for appropriate funding. Following the principle of a horizontal activity, all three directorates (B.0, B.I, B.II) are involved in the implementation of the MCF.

Statistics for 2000 for Individual fellowships

Deadline	Number received	Number selected	EC founding
April 2000	205	90 (47.43%)	10 583 000 €
October 2000	150	86 (57.33%)	9 665 352 €

Statistics for 2000 for host fellowships

Deadline	Number received	Number selected	EC founding
February 2000	84	50 (59.52%)	12 644 984 €

The Panel positively noted the effort of SOs to always fund good science including their liberal attitude towards the thematic scope of individual applications. In addition, MCF seem well managed including appropriate application, evaluation, monitoring and dissemination procedures. These conditions, together with the considerable acceptance by the scientific community make MCF an efficient and useful initiative, which should be maintained.

MCFs select the best European scientists for training in another European country. However, the individual Fellows may experience considerable difficulties of reintegration and finding a job on return to their native land after 2 or 3 years absence. It is noted that the Commission has no system of follow up of the fate of returning Fellows. The Panel believes that a returning Fellow who does not obtain a scientific position on return to his country represents an enormous loss of Commission funding, in addition to the loss of his national training and education. At the level of the returning

fellow, it can mean a personal catastrophe and the end of a promising career. The present provisions for return fellowships are largely insufficient.

⇒ *The Panel recommends to set up a new return programme for young and senior European scientists working outside their country.*

3.4 CLUSTERS WITHIN THE QOL PROGRAMME

3.4.1 Basics and statistical data

Clusters are larger units consisting of multiple (2-7) projects specifically linked for a more efficient response to one major socio-economic challenge in Europe. Created to gain extra European Added Value via the problem-targeted focus of strategies and resources, clusters are precursors for the ERA. The cluster evaluation procedure is essentially the same as for regular projects with the exception that after evaluating all cluster-related projects individually, the experts are asked to assess the overall value of the cluster. If any of the projects within the cluster fails to be selected, the evaluators must decide whether the whole cluster is still valid to be funded. To gain insight into this new FP5 instrument, the Panel interviewed co-ordinators, together with the responsible SO, of the following clusters: Muco-Vac/KA2, Euro-Vac/KA2, Myo-Cluster/GA and Coeliac disease/KA1.

3.4.2 Preparation/application/selection process

Co-ordinators must contribute up to one year of work, as well as substantial amounts of money to generate a cluster. Given the present evaluation system with mean selection rates of only 15% for single projects, there is a sharp disparity between the very low chance of getting the cluster funded and the efforts by the co-ordinators. In this respect, the Panel notes that all presently running clusters were selected in 1999. Very few clusters were received and none funded in 2000. The pre-selection phase of clusters is handled in accordance with the overall management approach of the respective sub-programme. Within KA2, clusters were stimulated and encouraged in the starting phase of the FP5 through workshops and conferences (e.g. EuroVacc cluster), while other action lines (GA) received spontaneous submission of clusters. The instrument of a cluster has been created for a strong impact on the European research conditions. Consequently, all (pre-selection and selection) procedures finally leading to the funding of certain clusters become important tools of European science politics. Following this reasoning, the Panel asks for transparent rules, which are equally applied within the whole QoL programme.

⇒ *We are recommending a call of interest for the fair selection of topics for clusters within given action lines. According to the results, specific calls should then be initiated which are only opened for clusters.*

⇒ *Evaluation procedures of clusters might also be reviewed with concentration on their overall value in addition to a detailed evaluation of individual cluster projects*

3.4.3 Management of clusters

All clusters presented to the Panel contained excellent science of high socio-economic value and clear additional European Added Value. Co-ordinators could demonstrate that initial time lines were met due to the presence of strong internal monitoring systems, which also should ensure the positive overall completion of these clusters. With regard to the Commission, we already have been informed that freedom of diversity within the general frame of rules represents one typical management feature of the whole QoL programme. According to this principle, there is no typical way in which clusters are being treated. KA representatives consider clusters as core elements of their sub-programmes. Via the continuous and close contact with the respective co-ordinators, clusters receive extra attention including their presentation to the public by means of specific brochures.

⇒ The Panel encourages minimal standards for the management and follow-up of all clusters by the Commission. Respective roles of co-ordinators of clusters and SO must be clarified.

3.5 MANAGEMENT OF STANDARD PROJECTS UNDER THE QOL PROGRAMME

3.5.1 Implementation of recommendations by the 1999 Monitoring Panel

- All projects funded under the FP5 QoL programme should be subjected to a formal mid-term review that includes at least one external expert in addition to the SO. The review should form part of the commissioning contract.
 - The Commission responded to this recommendation by making the mid-term review a part of the contract. Regarding the form of this mid-term review, Commission guidelines are being implemented in 2001. Whether the new Project Technical Assistants (PTA) will take over the part of the external expert is also not clear.
- ⇒ The 2000 Monitoring Panel supports a harmonised mid-term review including one site visit by an external scientist.
- In support of such project reviews, it was recommended that choke points are created where a failure to achieve would jeopardise all or part of the contracted research.
 - We did not identify any specific action during the year 2000, which would allow the realisation of this recommendation.
- ⇒ The 2000 Monitoring Panel supports the possibility to stop further funding, with regard to projects not delivering crucial results.
- The 1999 Panel recognised differences of approach, which they considered contrary to the philosophy of an integrated QoL programme. Thus, they were asking for more consistency, in that any management plan should be applicable to all KAs.
 - There is no doubt that these 1999 conclusions are still fully applicable for the year 2000. However, the directors of the QoL programme made it clear that they consider differences of approach a valid management feature. At least in part the present Monitoring Panel can follow this argumentation.

3.5.2 Year 2000 monitoring aspects

As already mentioned, mid-term review and TIP have become formal parts of all new commissioning contracts under the FP5. Beginning in 2000, contracting of the first projects has started, so that no results can be expected for the present monitoring exercise. At this early FP5 stage, management needs for regular projects comprised dissemination of detailed information on all new FP5 projects through the CORDIS projects database and, additional publication of project abstracts in the form of written information. The Panel is in agreement with the actions taken by the Commission, especially favouring the new contract conditions as improvement towards a more efficient use of resources.

3.6 WORKLOAD OF SO

Already in 1999, the Monitoring Panel mentioned that SOs were substantially overworked and suggested a review of the human resource needs of the QoL programme, since this situation should not be allowed to continue. In fact, the year 2000 Panel has collected ample evidence that the problem has become more urgent. In detail, SOs are asked to fulfil the following tasks: (i) evaluation process (invitation, contracting and payment of experts, administrative work to perform the evaluation panels as well as moderating these panels); (ii) management of FP4 and FP5 projects (pre-contracting work, dissemination, monitoring, help for scientists, exploitation work); (iii) management of the whole KA/GA (calls, interaction with EAGs, initiation of and participation in Congresses, strategic obligations); (iv) implementation of new FP5 issues, e.g. the ERA; (v) personal scientific education in topics funded under their action line; (vi) strategic work on the FP6, (vii) miscellaneous. This list does not need any further comment and it goes without saying that such a workload can not be performed by one person during regular working hours. At the end of 2000, the Commission opened a call for PTAs to reduce administrative burden for the SO. The Panel is not able to comment on this initiative, since definite plans for the future role of PTAs do not exist at present.

⇒ *The Panel recommends a clarification of priorities, roles and functions of SOs. It has been consistently recognised that the workload of individual SOs is excessive. The proposal to recruit PTAs has been advanced to address this problem. The Panel recommends speedy implementation of this and other appropriate approaches to reduce the workload of individual SO.*

⇒ The Panel is inclined to see the current workload of SOs as a potential occupational health problem, which has to be addressed according to the rules and regulations accepted by the Commission.

4. THE MONITORING EXERCISE

4.1 TIME-FRAME OF THE MONITORING EXERCISE

The Panel feels that the entire monitoring operation was performed in great haste and in a time frame incompatible with the required workload. This reflection may be found in the minutes of the very first meeting.

⇒ The Panel suggests that, in the future, more time be made available to perform the task.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The Panel considers the management of the QoL programme to be professional and efficient. Actions taken were in line with the rules of the FP5. Mainly due to the commitment of the staff, together with their high level of expertise, all major management goals have been met. 2000 was a year of consolidation, where most of the FP4 projects came to an end and new FP5 projects/clusters were selected by a process generally accepted as fair and transparent. Most of the recommendations by the 1999 Monitoring panel were implemented embracing more understandable information packages, additional material on stage 2 criteria, a more detailed and faster feed-back system for the applicants and the incorporation of mandatory mid-term review/TIP procedures in the project contract. In addition, the new ERA issue was defined, launched, and successfully implemented within the stipulated time. Finally, strategic planning on the principle concept of the upcoming FP6 was also completed, so that the first draft on the FP6 could be successfully decreed by early 2001.

The work of the Panel concentrated on the new FP5 features, i.e. clusters, ERA and the complex of stage 2 criteria. During this exercise various potential problems have been recognised which has led to key recommendations of the year 2000 monitoring exercise, as well as strong suggestions for further actions to be taken.

Key recommendations of the Panel

- Based on the principles of fairness and equality of treatment, the Commission is encouraged to harmonise ratios for the number of proposals/experts/evaluation time.
- On a strategic basis the panel requests a clear and more precise definition of stage 2 parameters, especially European Added Value criteria for each call for tenders
- The Panel recommends an improvement of the whole evaluation system towards a shorter and more cost-effective process, including considerations for project pre-selection.
- Caution is needed regarding the essential interpretation of ERA as a collection of huge integrated projects, which might endanger appropriate space for brilliant science organised in small European groups.
- The Commission has to take into account the outcomes of clusters when considering the development of integrated projects

- The Panel recommends the establishment of a new return programme for young and senior European scientists working outside their country.
- A call of interest for the fair selection of topics for clusters within given action lines is recommended. According to the results, specific calls should then be initiated which are only opened for clusters.
- Evaluation procedures of clusters might also be reviewed with concentration on their overall value, in addition to a detailed evaluation of individual cluster projects

The Panel recommends a clarification of priorities, roles and functions of SOs. It has been consistently recognised that the workload of individual SOs is excessive. The proposal to recruit PTAs has been advanced to address this problem. The Panel recommends speedy implementation of this and other appropriate approaches to reduce the workload of individual SOs.

PART B:

**Responses of the Programme Management to the
external Monitoring Report**

Responses of the Programme Management to the recommendations of the Monitoring Panel

The Commission services would like to thank all members of the 2000 Monitoring Panels for their dedicated work and the efforts invested in this complex task. Some of the recommendations included in the monitoring reports address issues of relevance to all specific programmes. Such issues are discussed from the Framework Programme viewpoint in the responses to the recommendations of the Framework Programme.

The following comments represent the responses of the relevant Directorates General to the recommendations regarding the specific programme *Quality of Life and Management of Living Resources*.

	Recommendation	Commission Services' Response	Milestones for implementation / progress
1	Project Evaluation		
1.1	Based on the principles of fairness and equality of treatment, the Commission is encouraged to harmonize ratios for the number of proposals/experts/evaluation time	The evaluation process has been repeatedly and independently recognised as fair and transparent and fully endorsed by the Programme Committee. The variations in the time allocated to each proposal are due to the inevitable differences in the number of proposals seen by each panel of evaluators. The Programme Management does its best to harmonise and ensure that proposals are given equal treatment. In all cases, each proposal is seen by at least four experts and every effort is made to ensure that sufficient time is available for examining each one. It should be pointed out that, due to their restricted availability, evaluators are recruited for a specific period, long before the exact number of proposals is known. Submissions sometimes exceed forecasts.	No specific further action foreseen
1.2	On a strategic basis the panel request a clear and more precise definition of stage 2 parameters, especially European Added Value criteria for each call for tenders	It is not feasible to give exhaustive information in the call text, which should be kept short. However, the Commission has made efforts to improve the quality of the information provided for the applicants. All appropriate documents (vademecum etc.) and questions to be considered by the evaluators are in the public domain (notably available from the internet). However, despite continuous efforts to explain the concept of European Added Value (EAV), it seems to have been only partly understood by the scientific community. For this reason, attention is repeatedly given, especially in the Work-Programmes, to specifying the	No modification of the general evaluation method is planned for the few calls for proposals remaining in this programme.

	Recommendation	Commission Services' Response	Milestones for implementation / progress
		type of activities and modalities, which would provide EAV. Here, it should be noted that the European Research Area (ERA) represents a major step forward in the upstream definition and interpretation of EAV.	
1.3	The Panel recommends an improvement of the whole evaluation system towards a shorter and more cost-effective process, including considerations for project pre-selection.	It is not desirable at this stage in the programme to consider further major changes to the evaluation process. However, it is worth noting that the experimental procedure for supporting a limited number of “integrated projects” in genomics is similarly based on a form of pre-screening, with the selection of the topics inviting actual proposals after a prior call for expressions of interest.	No intent of implementation under the current programme (Apart from calls: QoL-2001-CE18 & DC8)
2	European Research Area		
2.1	Caution is needed regarding the essential interpretation of ERA as a collection of huge integrated projects, which might endanger appropriate space for brilliant science organised in small European groups.	<p>In January 2000, the Commission adopted the Communication “<i>Towards a European Research Area</i>” (COM(2000) 6), which aimed at putting forward suggestions for a better organisation of research in Europe. At the Lisbon European Council in March 2000, the Heads of State and Government fully endorsed this project.</p> <p>While the current programme envisages the funding of number of large projects, small and medium size projects are still extensively supported. Among ERA related initiatives, “Genome Research for Human Health” proposes the creation of up to three integrated projects. The objective is to enable different teams to work together and create synergies within the relevant field: this will require the active participation of small groups of creative researchers as well as larger teams.</p>	Preparation of next Framework Programme second half 2001-2002

	Recommendation	Commission Services' Response	Milestones for implementation / progress
2.2	The Commission has to take into account the outcomes of clusters when considering the development of integrated projects	It is fair to say that the Programme Management has learned from clusters, and will continue to learn by implementing the new integrated projects. One lesson is that the process is valuable in itself. It addresses effectively the multidisciplinary and society-oriented aspects of the programme. Another lesson is that the deliverables encompass the results of all the components, which, besides the overall outcome, may offer openings in unexpected areas.	Ongoing activity
2.3	The Panel recommends the establishment of a new return programme for young and senior European scientists working outside their country.	The Programme Management welcomes the panel suggestion to set up a return programme for European scientists working outside their country. It meets the objectives of ERA and is part of the Commission's proposal for the new Framework Programme.	Next Framework Programme 2002-2006
3	Clusters and integrated projects		
3.1	A call of interest for the fair selection of topics for clusters within given action lines is recommended. According to the results, specific calls should then be initiated which are only opened for clusters.	<p>The purpose of clustering projects is to solve multidisciplinary problems, to maximise European added value, to guarantee complementarity among projects and to establish a critical mass of resources. To date, 11 promising clustered projects, submitted <i>a priori</i>, were selected for funding, involving 223 participants with a total EU contribution adding up to 38.566.305 €.</p> <p>The programme management welcomes the panel's interest in clusters. The panel identified domains where the clustering of projects was particularly stimulated and encouraged with a "strong pro-active spirit". All clusters analysed by the panel were judged scientifically excellent and with a clear EAV.</p>	Ongoing activity (Since 15/11/00 with call QoL-2001-CE18 & 31/05/01 with call QoL-2001-DC8 in the field of Genomics and Human Health)
3.2	Evaluation procedures of clusters might also be reviewed with concentration on their overall value, in addition to a detailed evaluation of individual cluster projects	The panel had reservations about the procedure for selecting clusters and made two recommendations, which the call for expressions of interest for topics in Genome Research for Human Health (November 2000) has already addressed.	Ongoing activity (since 31/05/01 with call QoL-2001-DC8)

	Recommendation	Commission Services' Response	Milestones for implementation / progress
4	Management		
4.1	The Panel recommends a clarification of priorities, roles and functions of SO. It has been consistently recognised that the workload of individual SO's is excessive. The proposal to recruit PTAs has been advanced to address this problem. The Panel recommends speedy implementation of this and other appropriate approaches to reduce the workload of individual SO.	As identified by the panel the tasks of the scientific officer are diverse. The scientific officer acts as a "general practitioner" and stands as a mediator between the different stakeholders. Being both a scientist and a manager, he/she has to integrate scientific, regulatory and policy approaches. In an attempt to reduce the workload, the Commission is considering the possibility of outsourcing certain tasks, through the engagement of Project Technical Assistants (PTAs), without denaturing the key role of the scientific officer.	Under consideration

PART C:

**Information provided to the external Monitoring Panel
by the Programme Management**

**CORE INDICATORS FOR THE QoL PROGRAMME MONITORING
Year 2000**

1. SELECTION OF PROPOSALS

Summary of result of **FP5** selection procedures - Annual data for each key action / activities of a generic nature / infrastructure activities / other.

Activity	Type of financial participation ¹	Number of evaluated proposals in 2000	Proposals selected for finance in 2000	
			Number	Total financial contribution in Mio Euros
Key Action 1	AM	40	16	1132980
	CA	11	3	4609797
	CM	11	1	1982491
	DM	3	1	499182
	RS	298	42	65619845
	TN	8		
	N/A	15		
Key Action 1 Total		386	63	73844295
Key Action 2	AM	16	4	158878
	CA	12	6	3990000
	CM	4		
	DM	10	3	6215000
	RS	186	44	59614282
	TN	3	1	500000
	N/A	15		
Key Action 2 Total		246	58	70478160
Key Action 3	AM	28	15	1106767
	CA	3		
	CM	15	1	1417465
	DM	6	1	884604
	RS	351	55	100129659
	TN	5		
	N/A	1		
Key Action 3 Total		409	72	103538495
Key Action 4	AM	7	2	54086
	CA	7	2	520000
	CM	2		0
	DM			0
	RS	112	23	32930000
	TN	5		0
	N/A	1		0
Key Action 4 Total		134	27	33504086

¹ Type of financial participation can be: shared cost actions / training fellowships / support for research training networks and thematic networks / concerted actions / accompanying measures.

Activity	Type of financial participation ¹	Number of evaluated proposals in 2000	Proposals selected for finance in 2000	
			Number	Total financial contribution in Mio Euros
Key Action 5	AM	54	25	2036699
	CA	19	8	5167216
	CM	19		
	DM	9	1	1138193
	RS	437	76	115933320
	TN	11	2	1745246
	N/A	23		
Key Action 5 Total		572	112	126020674
Key Action 6	AM	29	6	654245
	CA	14	5	2928209
	CM	4	1	2165000
	DM	1		
	RS	118	24	34007887
	TN	11	3	1845486
	N/A			
Key Action 6 Total		177	39	41600827
Generic Activities	AM	71	23	2915909
	CA	26	7	5339942
	CM	8	1	2360012
	DM	3	1	1170200
	RS	426	69	103645907
	TN	10	4	2218820
	N/A	31		
Generic Activities Total		575	105	117650790
Infrastructure	AM	2	1	2415778
	CA	4	1	1000000
	CM			
	DM			
	RS	27	8	12887482
	TN	11	3	2888122
	N/A	1		
Infrastructure Total		45	13	19191382
Total		2544	489	585828709

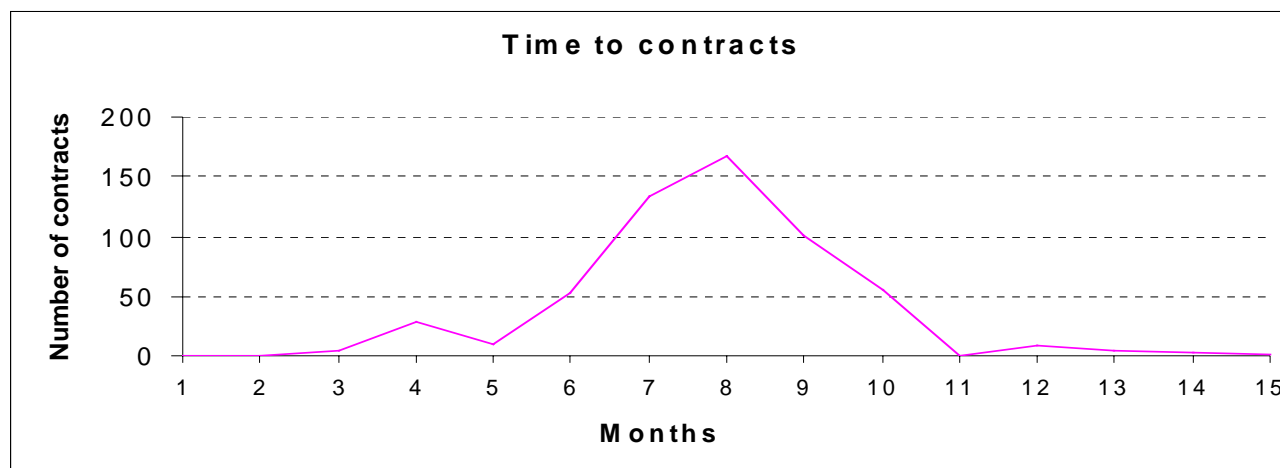
¹ Type of financial participation can be: shared cost actions / training fellowships / support for research training networks and thematic networks / concerted actions / accompanying measures.

2. MANAGEMENT OF PROGRAMME¹

Annual information relating to FP5 and previous FPs where relevant.

2.i FP5 contracts signed in 2000 - time taken from closing date of calls for proposals to contracts' signature

Taken from the database on contracts: difference between the EC signature date of the RTD contracts and the closing date of the corresponding calls.



2.ii FP5 Volume of activity for contracts follow-up

Number of ongoing contracts at 31/12/2000

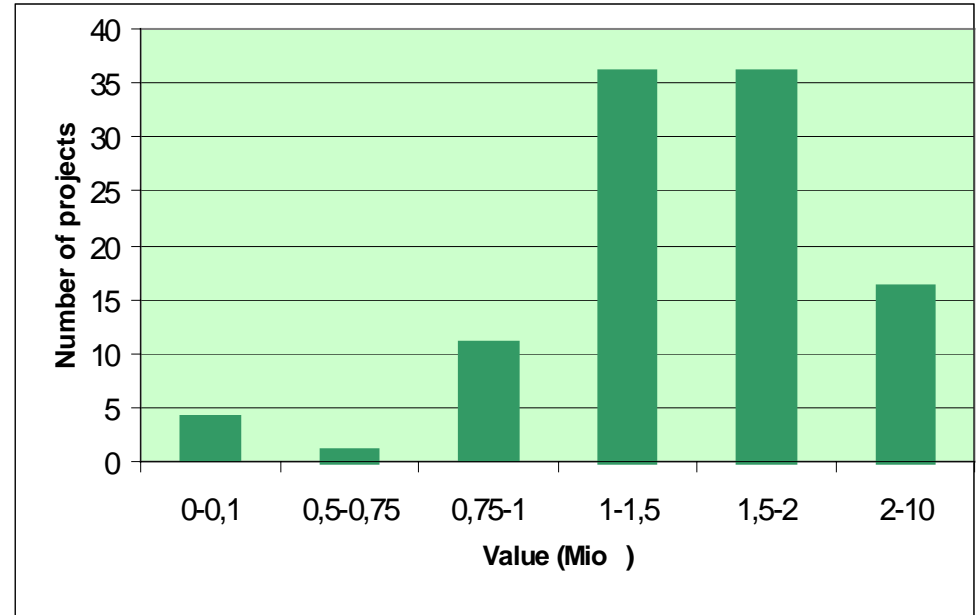
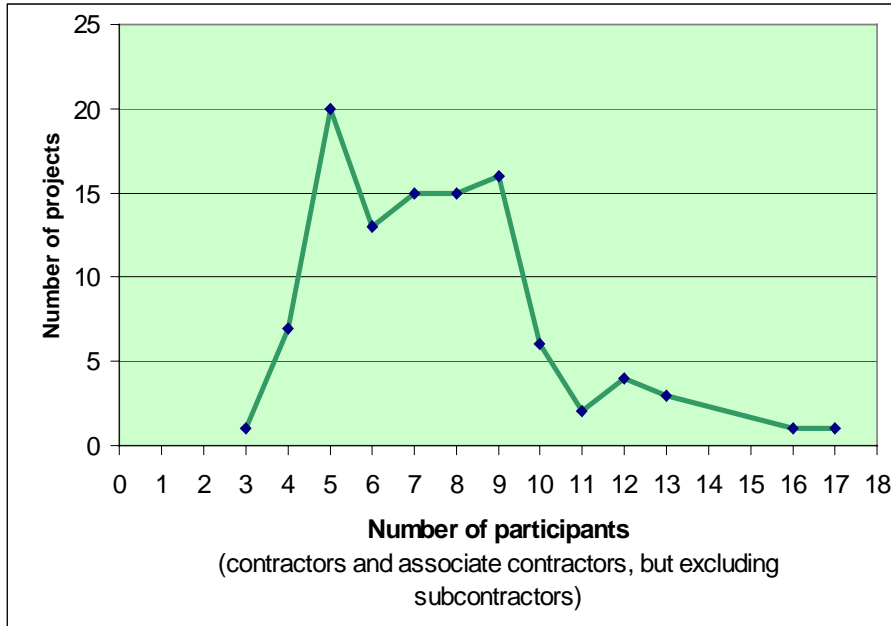
Type of Project	Nr. of ongoing contracts	Total financial contribution Mio €
Concerted Actions	40	22,027
Combined project	1	1,728
Co-operative research project	2	1,106
Demonstration projects	3	1,802
Exploratory awards	113	2,504
Research and technological development project	454	738,492
Thematic networks	18	14,316
Grand Total	631	781,976

¹ A contract is deemed to take effect upon "EC signature" date and is considered to be completed on the "end date" specified in the contract.

3. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PROJECTS SELECTED FOR FUNDING THIS YEAR

Annual information relating to FP5 projects.

3.i FP5 – Shared cost projects characteristics



Average duration of the projects: months.

3.ii FP5 - number of participations by type of organisation and activity in contracts signed in 2000

Activity ²	Enterprise sector	Higher education establishments	Research centres ³	Other*	Total
Key action 1	4	146	191	279	620
Key action 2	7	211	151	131	500
Key action 3	4	251	196	145	596
Key action 4	0	109	114	58	281
Key action 5	8	196	254	291	749
Key action 6	0	117	64	41	222
Actions of generic nature	4	354	259	136	753
Infrastructures	0	27	24	35	86
GRAND TOTAL	27	1411	1253	1116	3807

² Including shared cost actions, training fellowships, support for research training networks and thematic networks, concerted actions and accompanying measures.

³ Research centres include: private commercial research centres,
private not for profit research centres,
public research centres,
EC Joint Research Centre.

3.iii FP5 - participations by country in contracts signed in 2000

COUNTRIES	Number of signed contracts⁴
EU	3393
Belgium	153
Denmark	153
Germany	550
Greece	72
Spain	247
France	436
Ireland	71
Italy	333
Luxembourg	1
The Netherlands	310
Austria	67
Portugal	69
Finland	112
Sweden	207
United Kingdom	612
EEA	59
Iceland	9
Liechtenstein	0
Norway	50
Applicant countries	152
Bulgaria	9
Czech Republic	36
Estonia	10
Cyprus	0
Latvia	3
Lithuania	5
Malta	1
Hungary	26
Poland	41
Rumania	2
Slovakia	6
Slovenia	12
Turkey	1
Other associated countries	156
Israel	60
Switzerland	96
Non associated countries	47
Rest of the World	47
GRAND TOTAL	3807

⁴ Including shared cost actions, training fellowships, support for research training networks and thematic networks, concerted actions and accompanying measures, for all contracts (subcontracts excluded).

3.iv FP5 - participation from "Objective 1 " regions
 (If the projects are classified at NUTS I-III-level⁵)

	Objective 1 regions
Total number of participation ⁶	181
Total EU financial contribution ⁷ in Mio €	27,308

⁵ NUTS of 1998: See "Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics".

⁶ Participation from "Objective 1" regions can be derived from the classification of the EU- regions at NUTS I-III-level (Objective 1 regions are listed on next page):

Contractors and associate contractors, but excluding subcontractors,

Contracts for all types of actions: shared cost actions, training fellowships, support for research training networks and thematic networks, concerted actions and accompanying measures.

⁷ Total EU-contribution to contracts in which there is at least one entity from Objective 1 regions.

<p style="text-align: center;">Objective 1 Regions LESS-FAVOURLED REGIONS OF THE COMMUNITY (2000-2006)</p>

The less-favoured regions of the Community (the Objective 1 regions) are currently the following⁽¹⁾:

* **Austria**

Burgenland

* **Finland**

Itä-Suomi, Väli-Suomi, Pohjois-Suomi

* **France**

Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyane, Réunion

* **Germany**

Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern,
Chemnitz, Dresden, Leipzig, Dessau, Halle,
Magdeburg, Thüringen

* **Greece**

Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki, Kentriki
Makedonia, Dytiki Makedonia, Thessalia, Ipiros,
Ionia Nisia, Dytiki Ellada, Sterea Ellada,
Peloponnisos, Attiki, Vorio Aigaio, Notio Aigaio,
Kriti

* **Ireland**

Border Midlands and Western

* **Italy**

Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Puglia, Sardegna,
Sicilia

* **Portugal**

Norte, Centro, Alentejo, Algarve, Açores,
Madeira

* **Spain**

Andalucía, Asturias, Castilla-Léon, Castilla-La
Mancha, Ceuta y Melilla, Comunidad Valenciana,
Extremadura, Galicia, Islas Canarias, Murcia

* **Sweden**

Norra Mellansverige, Mellersta Norrland, Övre
Norrland

* **The United Kingdom**

South Yorkshire, West Wales and The Valleys,
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, Merseyside

(1) Objective 1 regions in Council Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, OJ n°L 194/42, p. 53, 27.07.99, Annex 1.

5. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS

5.i Qualitative information on dissemination and utilisation plans

Brief statement by the Programme management on how the Programme management will be able to follow-up the dissemination and utilisation of RTD results: (i) for new FP5 projects; and (ii) for FP4 projects terminated in 2000.

i) RTD results as such are not expected from FP5 projects in the near future, as the first projects have only started beginning of 2000. Project abstracts are being disseminated in printed format and on the QoL web site at key action level and detailed information on all new FP5 projects will be made available through the CORDIS PROJECTS database.

A workshop on "Impact Assessment in Life Sciences" took place on 27-28.6.2000. A major goal of this workshop was to discuss possible impact assessment methodologies to be used for FP5.

ii) As a basis for further follow-up of the dissemination and utilisation of FP4 results, all technology implementation plan of finished FP4 shared-cost contracts are being collected in a systematic way in order to store electronically the TIP information and analyse it on a micro- and macro level. Contractors that request exploitation support are guided towards specific help-desks services ("innovation financing", "intellectual property") and non-confidential information contained in the TIP is disseminated through CORDIS and other services.

5.ii Activities in 2000 for dissemination and promotion of exploitation of results

N° EC funded conferences / workshops in 2000:

Ca. 25

Other (specify):

Currently there exist 15 industrial platforms, active in different domains of the life sciences. Such platforms aim at gathering industrial companies around certain RTD topics and industrial needs, with the objective of stimulating the transfer of results and technologies to industry.

A meeting has been organised in Brussels on 31st October 2000, in order to discuss the development of the different platforms and to exchange ideas among them and with the Commission.

In addition, other EC-sponsored workshop and conferences have been held throughout the year. A brief selective list includes workshops on "Progress in the detection and prevention of BSE and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease", "GMO risk dialogue", "Development of European cancer control instruments", and conferences on "Food and nutrition for better health: highlights from EC research programmes" or "Genetic and the Future of Europe".

Press conferences and press releases concerning important results and dissemination activities have been a regular feature of the year.

A new Bio-Society web site has been launched in 2000. It will serve as a platform to collect and disseminate information on socio-economic research in the life sciences and as a forum to stimulate thinking on the emerging bio-society.