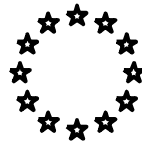


**2002 SPECIFIC MONITORING REPORT ON THE
SPECIFIC PROGRAMME FOR
RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGICAL
DEVELOPMENT**



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

2002

2002 SPECIFIC 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 annual monitoring reports prepared relating the EC Framework Programme and the Euratom Framework Programme, and their constituent Specific Programmes as well as to the European Research Area (ERA) area related activities (ERA).

The Commission has over the years given increasing emphasis on the evaluation of Community RTD activities. Furthermore, with the overall Reform of the Commission, evaluation activities placed in the heart of the decision making process.

In line with this continuous effort for improvement, a revised programme monitoring scheme was introduced in 2001, based on the system launched in 1995 which involved independent external experts in the monitoring activities. The new mechanism aims at a better synergy between the monitoring of ERA and specific programmes and of the Framework Programme.

The timely response by the Programme management to the recommendations produced by the experts will be enhanced, providing the basis for a quick response mechanism to programme developments, as the follow up of experts recommendations will be receiving still more attention.

This report is the fourth covering the Fifth Framework Programme; the report also highlights progress in relation to implementation of ERA to the launch of the Sixth Framework Programme and results and impact of previous Framework Programmes. The report should help reinforce establishment of best practices and identify the scope for further improvements in implementation of policy and the programmes.

The report consists of two parts:

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

Prof. Ana Pelacho (chair)

Prof. Elisabeth Hooghe-Peters (rapporteur)

Prof. Manfred Schwab

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

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2001 Specific Monitoring Report On The Specific Programme for Research and Technological Development in the Field of Quality of Life and Management of Living Resources

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

PART A: REPORT OF THE 2002 FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME MONITORING PANEL

1 – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the report on the Quality of Life (QoL) Specific Programme (SP) of the 5FP for the year 2002 and on the preparation of the FP6. The report covers the follow up of monitoring-recommendations made since 1999. Since FP6 is starting in 2003, it is the last report of a series of 4 reports made for this SP within FP5. The aim of the report is to assist the Commission in its task to continuously improve the European Research and its management, pursuing the leadership and competitiveness of the European Research in the world.

Three independent experts have elaborated the report between November 2002 and April 2003:

Ana M. Pelacho (Chair)
Elisabeth L. Hooghe-Peters (Rapporteur)
Manfred Schwab (Expert)

Directors, Head-of-Units, Scientific Officers and supporting staff effectively met management targets in 2002, including

- Positive reaction to general and specific recommendations of the 2001 monitoring experts,
- Closing of FP5 projects and dissemination of results,
- Effective support of strategies to build European Research Area (ERA),
- Successful launching of FP6.

The report includes a number of recommendations:

- **Consider the use of Technological Implementation Plan (TIP) as an important parameter in standardising impact studies.**
- **Determine the usefulness of 2-stage evaluation before extending this approach to Priorities 1 and 5.**
- **Find new ways in overcoming the proposers' problems in understanding the objectives of Expressions of Interest (EoI) and the characteristics of the new instruments.**
- **Consider monitoring the impact of National Contact Points (NCP).**
- **Analyse the impact of SMEs on project outcomes.**
- **Introduce temporary measures to stimulate the participation of Associated Candidate Countries (ACC) by launching dedicated calls for bi-national projects involving one Member State (MS) and one ACC.**
- **Evaluate the impact of the provisions that have been taken to address gender issues.**

2 – PANEL METHODOLOGY

The three experts met regularly in Brussels where, with the valuable assistance of Jean-Luc Sanne as a member of the Commission, they had the opportunity to extensively interview QoL staff members. Among others, the experts interviewed the Directors of the QoL Programme, the Head-of Units of the different Key Actions, of the Generic Activities, and the co-ordinator of SME activities.

Besides interviews, this report is also based on a careful analysis of the informative documentation made available by the Head-of Units during the face-to-face interviews, the consultation of data available on CORDIS and CIRCA, the previous FP5 Monitoring reports for 1999, 2000 and 2001, and the self-assessment report also received at the beginning of this exercise. The self-assessment was especially useful and helped with the interpretation of the data provided by the interviewed staff.

The panel has reviewed the recommendations made by the 3 previous monitoring exercises of the QoL SP and analysed the responses given by the Commission. On the other hand, since in 2002 FP5 was coming to an end while FP6 was being launched, the panel has concentrated most of its attention to

- Questions linked to the transition phase between FP5 and FP6 (FP5 projects and follow-up of results, output and outcomes).
- Preparation of the implementation of FP6, in particular aspects related to the changes introduced by the new FP.

This report summarises the experts' opinions and presents considerations and recommendations they have formulated during this exercise.

3 – INTRODUCTION

During 2002, the last year for FP5 and the first one for FP6, the main activities related with FP5 Quality of Life Specific Programme were:

- Two specific calls within FP5 to better integrate the Newly Associated States (NAS), the first one to integrate NAS into already running projects (NAS1) and the second one to support NAS outstanding research centres (NAS2). All NAS were represented in the proposals (NAS1 and 2), although not equally in NAS2, where Poland accounted for 75% of the submitted proposals.
- The last calls for some KA (KA1, KA4, KA5, KA6), Generic Activities and Support for Research Infrastructures. Action lines are now covered by the selected proposals and contracts have been signed. Since it was the last FP5 call, the number of re-submissions was higher than in previous calls. There was also a call for accompanying measures and one call for Marie Curie fellowships.
- In the context of preparation of FP6, an “Invitation to submit Expressions of Interest” (**EoI**) was published in March 2002. The objectives of the invitation were to consult the research community on its readiness to prepare research actions using the new instruments: **Integrated Projects (IP)** and **Networks of Excellence (NoE)** and to identify priority topics to better focus the forthcoming calls. The Thematic Priorities that best include the former QoL are the priority 1 “Genomic and Biotechnology for Health” and the priority 5 “Food quality and safety”, which received 1997 and 1156 EoI respectively. The EoI for IP were about twice more numerous than those for NoE. A poor understanding of the new instruments was perceived in many cases.
- Conferences, workshops, seminars related to FP5 and FP6 turned out to be excellent instruments for the exchange of information. Among them, a three-day conference at the “Heysel” (Brussels) (November, 2003) presenting the objectives and priorities marked the launching of FP6.
- The first FP6 call was published in December 2002, with a closing date on 25th March and 24th April 2003 for Priorities 1 and 5, respectively.
- In addition, activities related to FP5 running projects continued: contracts were signed and mid-term reviews performed.

4 – ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 – ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND THEIR FOLLOW UP FROM THE 1999 TO 2001 MONITORING EXERCISES

4.1.1 Strategy-Objectives

The analysis of recommendations from the 1999-2001 monitoring exercises must be viewed against the background of general EC strategic objectives and policies. The underlying rationale for these activities is the fact that currently there is a revolution taking place in the knowledge base of life sciences and biotechnology. These two disciplines, after information technology, have been recognised to provide the structural basis for the next wave of the knowledge-based economy that will create new opportunities for EC societies and economies. The EC has fully recognised the social and economic potential of life sciences and biotechnology for the benefit of the European citizen, and has early on turned its visions and objectives into calls for proposals. Given the subsidiary principle, there is a dispersed responsibility of European partners, in which the Commission can take a lead as a policy provider. The strategic priorities developed to a large extent during the monitoring period 1999-2001 revolving mainly around three central issues:

- a. Life sciences and biotechnology address many of the needs relating to health, ageing, food, environment and sustainable development. EC strategies have addressed the question of how Europe can best attract the human, industrial and financial resources to develop and apply this knowledge to meet society's needs and increase its competitiveness.
- b. It is essential to pursue these activities while strongly integrating ethical and social implications and concerns thereby attracting the confidence and support of the citizen.
- c. Europe must be competitively positioned to be able to respond to global challenges. EC integrated strategy is designed to respond to these demands by a science-based and citizen-centred policy on an ethical basis.

The Monitoring exercises 1999 through 2001 have carefully addressed the progress that the implementation of EC-policies has made towards achieving ambitious goals, among which are:

- mastering the knowledge base through effective and innovative research
- fostering research to meet society's needs
- transforming science into applications
- balancing benefits against disadvantages
- giving consumers and economic operators informed choice
- nurturing public confidence in science and regulation
- reconciling ethical and science needs in the regulation of life sciences

The monitoring panels 1999, 2000 and 2001 after careful consideration, have each made a number of constructive and meaningful recommendations, fitting within the framework of strategies and objectives of the QoL Programme. The Commission has been highly appreciative of these recommendations, which can be regarded as input from the scientific community, and has provided constructive and considerate responses. A number of the recommendations could not be adopted and implemented within FP5, which ended in 2002. As much as possible, these have been adopted for FP6, which underlines the readiness of the EC to incorporate recommendations made by the scientific community. These include:

- structural modifications for organising the ERA into FP6 instruments (IP and NoE).
- the setting up of a return programme for European scientists working outside their country (FP6); the inclusion into this programme of scientists working in the US, Japan, and other overseas countries, seems an excellent idea as it is likely to attract particularly well trained researchers into the European Community
- a more accurate assessment of projects final outcomes by performing project impact studies,
- the establishment of a patenting advice and encouragement system through the IPR help desk (continued in FP6).
- the acquisition of full gender data from project proposers and collaborators.

Collectively, this Monitoring Panel feels that the Commission has made every possible effort to successfully meet the recommendations of the 1999-2001 Monitoring Panels in adopting and implementing these, as much as possible in active (FP5), and to a large extent in future (FP6) programmes. In particular, this Monitoring Panel is pleased to see that **Commission Management actively and with great energy is seriously seeking the advice of the European scientific community through the involvement of high-level experts in evaluation, advisory and monitoring panels.**

4.1.2 Management and processes (including evaluation and monitoring).

Central to the success of strategic Commission objectives is a fair and fully transparent evaluation of proposals submitted by European scientists. In pursuit of this scholarly goal, the Commission has developed an evaluation culture that is prominently described by an independent observer:

“The evaluation procedure put in place can be considered as a high level reference in such practice. There is no doubt that the evaluators adhere to its modalities on the overall. When discussing informally with them, they compare this experience with their own nation evaluation protocols and their appreciation is in favour of the European ones. As Head of National Technological Research Networks for Health Technologies at the Ministry of Research in France (1998-2001), I must say that this evaluation is much more elaborated than ours and that we could benefit of such experience. Its cost may be high but it offers serious guarantees of quality. Their suggestions for improvement are related to details and most of them have been already debated in the Commission. I have been personally involved in the evaluation of proposals submitted in the Biomed Programme about 10 years ago, and I can testify

that significant improvements have been brought. I have not detected any critical points that are not related to the simple human limitations.”

Jean Louis Coatrieux’s Report on the Evaluation Procedures as Independent Observer: Sessions of March 4-8, 2002

The following actions were examined:

- Key Actions 1,4,5,6
- Generic Action 12

Previous monitoring panels 1999-2001 have addressed evaluation procedures; in no case has the fairness and transparency of evaluation been in question. Invariably, the management of the QoL programme has been considered to be professional and efficient. Mainly due to the commitment of the staff, together with their high level of expertise, the major management goals have been met. Most importantly, not a single funded proposal has been identified that had not been short-listed by the independent scientific review panel or that had been “politically” re-ranked after the scientific peer review. **This Monitoring panel strongly encourages the Commission to vigorously continue the scholarly policy of adhering to the established evaluation principles of fairness and transparency.**

An important element of the FP5 evaluation process is the ethical review. All proposals were examined for possible ethical implications and transmitted to panels of ethical reviewers, as appropriate. This aspect of proposal evaluation should help raising the profile and quality of the ethical debate between the scientific community, shareholders in research and policymakers. Thus, the process of evaluation can be regarded as being professionally carried out in a democratic and transparent manner in the best tradition of European science and culture. In this regard, the 1999-2001 monitoring panels have expressed concerns about the excessive workload of staff responsible for QoL. In contrast, the integration among horizontal programmes, provided by the involvement of staff from all their Directorates was felt as a strength of the FP5 Management structure.

Both 2000 and 2001 Monitoring Panels have made recommendations concerning a shorter and cost effective improvement of the evaluation system. These could include a two-stage or pre-selection approach. Commission management welcomes and praises the QoL Programme initiatives for improving and possibly facilitating the evaluation of proposals. In a dedicated call in FP5 on Genomics and Human Health, proposals have been subjected to an evaluation, in which the first stage is an assessment as to whether the individual proposal is in line with the scientific scope of the Programme. Only those proposals meeting this requirement will proceed to stage two, at which the scientific merit is evaluated in greater detail according to a block of evaluation criteria. For FP6, Priority 3 (Nanotechnologies and Nanosciences) has volunteered to implement a similar two-stage evaluation procedure.

Monitoring exercises on an annual basis play a key role in EC management planning. The 1999 Monitoring panel thought that some parts of the remit were inappropriate for a small group given very limited time in which to report. It was also felt that the collection and analysis of statistical information, including the identification of trends, was better done internally and the results made available to the Monitoring Panel. The Commission has responded favourably to this recommendation and has prepared “Self-Assessment” documents for the Monitoring Panel. This Monitoring panel feels that this

is excellent activity documentation and a useful point of departure for the actual monitoring exercise.

The “Generic RTD activities and infrastructures” unit has successfully continued the implementation of FP5 and also has undertaken additional activities that not only underpin the programme but also provide a basis for stronger co-operation at the European level. The Unit has been proactive in exploring which new activities needed to be undertaken to enhance the progression of new developments in health-related research. These activities have culminated in 2002 with several highlights, including the establishment of three large “Integrated Projects” in **functional genomic related to human health**, co-ordination of a **European database** for investigating genetic susceptibility to disease, activities of the **Cancer Research Forum**, and the support for a “**European network for biodiversity information**” by the Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development and the QoL programmes thus demonstrating **inter-programme collaboration**. Additionally, the unit has hosted a number of high-profile meetings.

EoI

In FP5, the QoL programme has launched a new type of project, the QoL IP, to stimulate progress in functional genomic relating to human health. QoL IPs has been selected by a new procedure that involved first a call for expression of interest for topics from which five topics of strategic importance were selected. This was followed by a dedicated call for proposals from which the QoL IPs were selected by an evaluation panel. This procedure in two separate steps, mixing both **bottom-up** (topics proposed by the researchers) and **top-down** (selection of topics of strategic importance) approaches was designed to select the very best QoL IPs. In addition, this procedure avoided an excessive over-subscription in the second step, which might have acted as a deterrent to applicants. For the second step, **new evaluation features** were applied, including sending out each proposal in non-anonymized form to 4 external reviewers (“remote evaluation”) followed by a panel evaluation. Thus, the **QoL programme is actively seeking to improve and facilitate evaluation procedures**.

This successful approach is being implemented for the whole FP6 programme. The call for EoI has elicited a tremendous activity and awareness among European researchers as it has provided an opportunity for the European research community to help preparing the first call of FP6. The early-on involvement of the European Science community in shaping the scientific structure of major research perspectives is likely to **nurture the development of a European Science Culture**.

All in all, Commission evaluation and monitoring management have been designed and executed to enhance the reputation of the QoL Programme as a successful and highly visible instrument for developing a European Science Culture. Commission management, as an interface between political and science domains, should be lauded for its spirited and successful efforts to complete a huge amount of complex tasks and to achieve this goal in spite of limited personnel resources.

4.1.3 Impact of previous research FP's and SP's

The 1999 to 2001 monitoring panels have made principally two key recommendations that relate to impact of previous research.

a. *For all project funded under the QoL programme there should be a minimum requirement for a formal mid-term review that includes at least one external expert in addition to the Scientific Officer (1999 Panel).*

In response, the Commission has started formal mid-term review exercises. This panel feels, that mid-term review is an excellent instrument for providing feedback to the co-ordinators, and giving an opportunity to take remedial action where appropriate.

b. *More accurate assessment of project's final outputs and outcomes (2001 Panel).*

This recommendation directly relates to the impact that individual projects and, in extension, FP's and SP's have. It is clear that to this panel, and to previous panels as well, that "impact" is difficult to determine, as it means different things to different people. Commission activities very sensibly have employed different approaches for impact measurement. Impact measurements mainly have been completed for the 1994-1998 Agri-Food sector within FAIR and the BIOMED2 programmes.

The FAIR Agri-Food study has been evaluated by a workshop methodology with over 400 co-ordinators, partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Soundings were also made of peers, both within and outside Europe, who could comment authoritatively on the impact of the FAIR programme. Two comments may serve to highlight the consensus opinion.

"DG Research can be justly proud of the IMPACT made via its research programme"

(Sir Geoffrey Allen, formerly R&D Director, Unilever plc. and Chairman UK Science and Engineering Research Council, and Chancellor, University of East Anglia, UK)

"We would welcome very much the opportunity to interact with the networks of excellence that make up the European Food R&D research programs".

(Dr. Ruxton Villet, International Program Leader, Office of International Research Programmes, US Department of Agriculture)

BIOMED2 has been evaluated by a Programme Review Board consisting of 12 independent experts. Their mandate was to identify and assess the Programme's impact on the research community and on the users and potential beneficiaries of the research as well as to assess the European added value of the programme and to suggest lessons to be learned for the future Programmes. BIOMED2 included a total of 602 funded projects. The Programme Review Board felt that BIOMED2 has made a major contribution in creating a European Research Culture. The Review concludes that

"BIOMED2 served an important transitional phase for introducing European medical research as an additional model to national research. It has contributed well in generating the required critical mass of knowledge both in clinical and basic research to improve the quality of European research. Lastly, it has served

well as a preparation for the concept of a European Research Area which is currently being discussed in the context of further research programmes”.

This panel thinks that both methodologies represent justified approaches towards impact assessment. It has been discussed that the “panel approach” may be slightly advantageous, as a panel can be put together more specifically according to requirements for particular expertise. However, impact assessment is a rather new evaluation instrument, and advantages of individual approaches for particular programmes should be closely monitored. This Monitoring Panel welcomes impact measurements as an important instrument for evaluating programme success/outcome and strongly recommends that the culture of impact assessment be continued and flexibly emphasized in FP6 through appropriate measures (accompanying measures, call for tenders, workshops, professional agencies, etc.). Where appropriate, TIPs should be considered in impact assessment.

4.1.4 other aspects proper to SP

A number of additional issues have been raised by the 1999-2001 Monitoring Panel, to which the EC has provided sensible and appropriate responses. These include:

a. *Actions to improve SME involvement in some countries (2001 panel).*

SMEs play a crucial role in European competitiveness and job creation. Commission has favourably responded and taken measures being considered to facilitate the participation of SMEs in the Priority Thematic Areas via the new instruments of IP and NoE or already working instruments as Cooperative Research Projects and Collective Research Projects, Specific Targeted Research Projects and Specific Support Actions. The QoL programme has planned to have workshops with representatives of QoL-related TIP and accompanying measures in the QoL programme focusing on SME participation, as well as NCPs. The objective will be to co-ordinate actions to increase SME participation in the new thematic priorities (1 and 5) covering the life sciences (15% budget allocation). A particular focus will be on medium to high tech companies in these areas. The Commission Services believes that stimulating mutual intensive training of NCPs and the exchange of best practice will be raising effectiveness thereby supporting potential participants (in particular SMEs) in the 6th Framework Programme. The Commission is currently analysing the new principles, structure and training of new NCP for FP6.

b. *Improvement of information flows through the involvement of scientific societies, their News Letters and Journals where appropriate.*

Commission has favourably responded to this recommendation. DG RTD has set out a policy for electronic publication of project-centred documents. Publications are listed on its website. This Monitoring Panel has also discussed that large and central electronic communication strategies should not exceed an information volume at which they become inflexible and difficult to manage and update. The development of independent, but linked, websites at the level of Directorate or Unit is viewed by this Monitoring Panel as an additional and useful information provider.

- c. An issue not addressed by the 1999-2001 Monitoring Panels concerns the establishment of a major European Science Award, the **Descartes Prize**, for which the EC has set aside a substantial amount of financial resources. So far, from the Life Sciences three projects have been awarded. The Descartes Prize recognises outstanding co-operative European Research, and its establishment once more identifies the desire of the EC not only for funding but also for recognizing and honouring high impact research.
- d. This Monitoring Panel also welcomes the establishment of new **Marie-Curie** actions to be implemented in FP6. These consist mainly of actions that highlight, and honour, personal achievements of European Researchers with a view to supporting their further development and international recognition, while also promoting the diffusion of their work for the benefit of the scientific community. These actions include **Marie Curie Excellence Grants**, **Marie Curie Chairs**, and the **Marie Curie Excellence Award**. It can be expected that all these instruments will strongly affect European science, which should be closely monitored against the “innovation impact” than the more voluminous instruments of “IPs” and “NoE” will have.

4.2 – MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION IN 2002

4.2.1 Follow-up of 2001 recommendations

In order to allow an efficient monitoring of the 2002 QoL programme, various tools were given to the panel members. The Monitoring Panel has appreciated to receive in time, at the beginning of the monitoring exercise, the self-assessment document as well as informative documentation summarising the efforts of the Key Action Officials. These documents, in addition to data gathered during detailed lectures given by Key Action Chiefs-of-Unit, were carefully analysed. The Chiefs-of-Unit provided all requested information and the discussion was open and transparent. The panel appreciated the spirited assistance of Jean-Luc Sanne.

The recommendations of the 2001 Monitoring Report were considered by the Commission Officers and implemented when possible.

- a) More accurate prediction and assessment of project results and impact.

The QoL programme has undertaken impact assessment studies on FP4 project outcomes. As a technical instrument, TIPs are considered a useful source of information, since they describe the results of the projects and the exploitation plans. The development of databases and the electronic submission of the TIPs should allow a better use of the TIPs in FP5. A pilot study involving the TIPs of 30 FP4 projects should ascertain whether this instrument allows meeting the expectations.

Mid- terms reviews give feedback on the implementation of the work plan of the project and thus contribute to the prediction of the project results. **This panel recommends that Mid-Term Reviews should be continued.**

b) Make a better use of intranets to aid project management.

Intranets have been good management tools in FP5. Operational databases have been created to help project management within QoL programme.

A central informatics system comprising a set of linked management modules is being developed in FP6. When the system is fully operative it should improve the computer-assisted management.

c) Take initiatives to improve “pre-emptivity”.

Groups of experts judiciously advise the Commission when new problems arise. In FP6, within the “Activities Covering a Wider Field of Research” an especial budget covers the possibility of exploring new and emerging scientific and technological areas and will allow anticipating future science and technology needs.

d) EoI.

EoI has provided an opportunity for European Researcher Community to help preparing the first FP6 call. The EoI concept represents a revolutionary strategy in the sense that it corresponds to a bottom-up approach where the Scientific Community becomes involved from the very beginning in designing and planning the research priorities. This Panel supports this initiative.

e) Take actions to improve SMEs’ involvement.

In FP5 the participation of SMEs, all Key Actions taken together, was around 10%, so the goal to involve SMEs was reached. SMEs’ participated mainly through Key Actions 1 and 5. In FP6, the objective is to increase SMEs participation up to 15%. Briefing and training NCPs through the organisation of workshops with EC representatives might contribute to the achievement of this objective. Here too, the panel is satisfied to see that the Commission has positively taken action to respond to the recommendation.

4.2.2 Attainment of objectives in terms of implementation as set out in the work programme for 2002.

The last work-programme of the QoL Programme was implemented in 2002. Key Actions 2, 3, and Generic Activities (areas 7 to 10) were not open for RTD projects, demonstration projects, concerted actions and thematic networks. In addition, two specific calls were opened to better integrate the NAS.

In Key Action 6, the Panel identified a lack of proposals in the field of “depression and end-of-life care”. However, the Panel has not identified major problems in reaching the objectives of the work programme.

Without the NAS dedicated calls, the participation of NAS would not have been satisfactory. Therefore, the Panel recommends additional actions in FP6 to facilitate ACCs’ participation.

4.2.3 Transition aspects linked to the final phase of the projects, in particular the follow-up and closure of current contracts.

The panel would like to acknowledge the fact that the management of the QoL programme was found competent and effective, largely due to the commitment of the Head-of-units. In 2002 many projects have been monitored, results identified and disseminated. The last call was completed before the launch of FP6. A fair and transparent process selected the projects in FP5 and the contracts have been signed in time allowing the research to begin on schedule.

The changes arising from the combination of the FP5 with the evolvement of FP6 and the re-organization of the responsibilities of directorates E (Biotechnology, Agriculture and Food) and F (Health) introduced many difficulties for the staff involved. A new organisation chart was adopted in July 2002, which allowed the directorates to adapt themselves to their new activities whilst bringing to a good end the actions initiated under FP5. The panel notes that there was no delay in launching the last FP5, the EoIs and the first FP6 call.

The panel also appreciates the effort made by the staff to create bridges, through revision of the work programme for the last FP5 call (KA6) with activities foreseen in the next Framework Programme.

The panel thinks that a weak point of the transition period is the reduced number of staff from the two Directorates, that are responsible for the management of FP5 projects carried out in the transition period between FP5 and FP6. The panel is concerned about the excessive work-load (and thus lack of time for a proper follow-up) of the Commission staff responsible for the follow up of the QoL projects and the consequences of this for the management of FP5 projects in the near future (impact studies). The panel would like to ensure that a maximum benefit is gained from the programme and that research produced will have high impact.

The panel appreciates the combination of follow-up procedures, with procedures for dissemination of research results, organisation of workshops, the publication of reports aimed at larger audiences and the creation of websites. These efforts have to be continued.

4.2.4 Legacy aspects, in particular the follow up of finished contracts of successive FPs (incl. the TIPs - where relevant for the SPs)

The 2002 panel recognises that the QoL Programme directors are aware of the fact that impact assessment is essential. Therefore impact studies are sought to be performed in due time (2003-2004) using the TIPs collected at the end of the current FP5 projects.

- A number of tasks linked to the termination of FP5 have still to be conducted. Mid-term reviews have to be successfully completed to analyse whether projects will meet the objectives as stated in the contracts within the time frame indicated, results analysed in terms of scientific achievements, transfer of technologies and impact on policies. In FP5-KA2 for example, a restricted number of professionals (2-3 experts) will follow during a limited time (2-3 years) a number of projects in terms of exploitation and dissemination of results and TIPs.

- Aspects of policy development and linkage to research are benefiting health and environment. FP5 has strong implications for the establishment of EU policy/interface not only during 2002 but also in the future, particularly in relation to environmental policy (Clean Air For Europe initiative, Community strategy on Endocrine Disrupters, Chemicals strategy, etc...) and health policy (EMF, public health indicators, etc...).

- Examples of KA deliverables were provided such as the creation of European population databases (e.g. APHENA project, databases for the investigation of genetic susceptibility to disease, of new methods for risk assessment -exposure to chemicals- support to decision-making -policy interface to DG environment: reduction of causes and environmental factors harmful to health-).

The activities launched to harmonise different programmes in various areas of research (cancer, clinical trials...) are of great importance for the advancement of science through collaboration between scientists and for the progression of new developments in health related research.

- Studies were undertaken to detect whether European projects have an integrated output, (for example for Diabetes Research) or whether it is simply a way to get extra funding besides that of national resources. Drawbacks of such studies are that for projects started in 1998 and ending in 2001 time may be too short to ascertain integration. Shortcomings are explained in part by insufficient use of available databases (such as Pubmed).

Altogether, the panel recognises that great efforts were done to improve the analysis of the management of the projects and the impact of the scientific results.

4.2.5 Preparation of the implementation of the specific programme under the Sixth Framework Programme (advisory structure, work programme...)

In the context of the preparation of the sixth framework programme for research and technological development (2003-2006), a call was launched in March 2002 inviting the research community to submit EoI using two new instruments: NoE and IP. The objective was to consult the research community as widely as possible to help identify new leading topics and so prepare the work programmes of the thematic priorities. An important objective of FP6 was to reduce the number of projects and to concentrate

them in large and strong cohesive projects of strategic importance for Europe. The new approach used by the EC and *the interaction between researchers and EC was widely appreciated* and was a success as demonstrated by the high number of EoIs received. These EoIs have been analysed with the assistance of experts to prepare FP6 and research topics grouped according to the action lines of a specific programme were published. Information on the budget and content of all FP6 activity areas and insights on the new instruments is available on CORDIS.

A problem arose due to probable poor understanding by the applicants of the new instruments (NoE and IP) leading to the preferred use of IP by the scientific community. This was interpreted in two ways: either the preferred use of IP because of a better understanding of this instrument, or the strict requirements and objectives of NoE limiting the number of possible use of this instrument. *Some efforts are thus necessary in the future to explain to the scientific community the difference between the two kinds of instruments.*

5 - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 – GENERAL CONCLUSIONS/MAJOR TRENDS/MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESS ENCOUNTERED

The 2002 Panel qualifies the management of the QoL programme as professional and efficient. The Commission has been highly appreciative of the recommendations made during the past monitoring exercises (1999-2002); many of them were implemented whenever possible in FP5 and in FP6.

Impact studies

Impact studies have become an important instrument to evaluate the outcomes of proposals and the efficacy of EC research programmes. Different approaches have been used to determine “impact”, including workshop and panels. Technically, **the use of the TIPs might be viewed as an important parameter in impact studies.**

Proposal preparation and evaluation procedure

The panel appreciates the efforts of the EC to improve and facilitate the evaluation procedures by the gradual implementation of two-step evaluation procedures. However, **the usefulness of 2-stage evaluations should be determined** before extending this approach to Priorities 1 and 5.

EoI and new instruments

In building ERA, FP6 has introduced a number of new instruments that should result in an increased awareness of European scientists as members of a European Science Community with the consequence of an even stronger involvement in science, both in planning and interactive proposal design. It appears to this Panel, that a large proportion

of the members of the scientific community so far have an incomplete understanding of the objectives of the new instruments. The reasons for this obvious deficiency are not clear to this panel. However, it is recommended that the Commission Management, (possibly with the help of the scientific community) through a certain number of surveys, finds new ways to overcome this problem.

NCPs

NCPs could be an important instrument for bridging EC with research organisations, in particular for helping NAS to integrate into the ERA.

Existing information sessions are an efficient tool to train NCP representatives and create professional contacts. Nevertheless, monitoring **the impact of NCPs' activity should also be considered.**

SME participation

FP5 did not have any budgetary target for SME participation. In contrast, in FP6, the goal is to reach 15% of SME participation with respect to the global budget. The Panel feels that it would be useful to **conduct an analysis of SMEs' role on project outcomes.** The results of this analysis could offer a basis of information on the effective level of SMEs' involvement in individual projects, on which subsequent Calls could possibly be redesigned and specified.

International cooperation

International co-operation in FP6 allows the integration of scientists from third countries in the projects funded by the Thematic Priorities. Participation of INCO-targeted countries in FP6-funding is appreciated.

ACC

At least many of the ACC have an inherent disadvantage in competing for participation or coordination compared to MS, in part due to insufficiently developed research structures, even more due to the lack of relevant experience of individual scientists. It was felt by this Panel that one way of overcoming these problems is to assist individual scientists to get in contact with each other for performing joint bi-national projects. This individual personal contact could be an excellent instrument for the development of very specific projects, which at some point could reach a level at which they might become sufficiently competitive to be attractive partners in the larger new instruments, NoE or IP. The recommendation therefore is to introduce temporary measures to **stimulate the participation of ACC by launching dedicated calls for bi-national projects involving one MS and one ACC.**

Information and dissemination

This Monitoring Panel acknowledges the Commission for the continuous efforts for producing and disseminating information. In addition to CORDIS, the creation of

thematic websites linked to CORDIS (e.g. AGRI-NET) represents flexible tools to rapidly disseminate emerging new developments.

The **transfer of information and outcomes from particular programmes into the public domain** is viewed as an important activity that should be expanded.

Promotion of women participation in FP6

The Commission is wary of the low participation of women in the programmes. Collecting data should provide an informed basis in order to find remedies for rectifying this unfavourable situation. At this point it appears too early to evaluate the impact of the provisions that have been taken to address gender issues.

Monitoring exercises

Monitoring is a useful exercise that can be done by a number of different approaches. The Commission should discuss and decide which approach best serves the objectives of the monitoring exercise.

5.2 – RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Consider the use of TIPs as an important parameter in standardising impact studies.**
- **Determine the usefulness of 2-stage evaluation before extending this approach to Priorities 1 and 5.**
- **Find new ways in overcoming the proposers' problems in understanding the objectives of EoIs and the characteristics of the new instruments.**
- **Consider monitoring the impact of NCPs' activity.**
- **Analyse the impact of SMEs on project outcomes.**
- **Introduce temporary measures to stimulate the participation of ACC by launching dedicated calls for bi-national projects involving one MS and one ACC.**
- **Evaluate the impact of the provisions that have been taken to address gender issues.**

6 ANNEXES

6.1 - ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Associated Candidate Countries
AM	Accompanying Measure
BIOMED II	Biomedical and Health Research Programme (FP4)
BIOTECH II	Biotechnology Programme (FP4)
CA	Concerted Action
CIRCA	Communication & Information Resource Centre Administrator
CORDIS	Community Research and Development Information System
CRAFT	Co-operative Research Action for Technology Stimulation Measures for SMEs
DG	Directorate General
EC	European Commission
EoI	Expressions of Interest
ERA	European Research Area
EU	European Union
FAIR	Fisheries, Agriculture and agro-Industrial Research (FP4)
FP	Framework Programme
FP5	Fifth Framework Programme
FP6	Sixth Framework Programme
GA	Generic Activities
INCO	The International Role of Community Research Programme
IP	Integrated Project
IPR	Intellectual Property Right
KA	Key Action
MS	Member States
NAS	Newly associated State
NCP	National Contact Points
QoL	Quality of Life & Management of Living Resources (FP5)
RTD	Research and Technological Development
SME	Small and Medium-size Enterprise
TIP	Technological Implementation Plan

6.2 – LIST OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS (and follow-up)

ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS		
	1999	2000	2001
1. STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVE			
Overall strategy and objectives	No recommendation	<p>A clear and precise definition of stage 2 parameters, especially EAV.</p> <p><i>Continuous efforts for improvement.</i></p>	<p>More accurate prediction /assessments of projects output. More initiatives to improve “pre-emptivity”.</p> <p><i>Impact studies using TIPs from FP5 are planned in 2003-2004. Flexibility is foreseen in reacting and anticipating problems in FP6</i></p>
ERA	No recommendation	<p>Caution should be exercised to interpret ERA only as a collection of huge integrated projects. Might endanger brilliant science in small European groups.</p> <p><i>Small and medium sized projects are still supported.</i></p>	No recommendation
Policy/intervention instruments	No recommendation	No recommendation	No recommendation
Candidate countries	No recommendation	No recommendation	No recommendation

ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS		
	1999	2000	2001
International cooperation	<p>The strategic goals of international cooperation should be reviewed both internally and externally and the results obtained assessed against objectives</p> <p><i>The goals have been addressed case by case, the entire FP5 is open to world-wide participation under restricted conditions.</i></p>	No recommendation	Promote contacts with non-European Countries
SME's	<p>Role played by industrial partners should be evaluated.</p> <p><i>Both quantitative and qualitative indicators are available</i></p>	No recommendation	<p>Undertake actions to improve SME involvement in some countries.</p> <p><i>Commission is taking action to try to improve participation of SME by briefing NCP, organizing workshops...</i></p>
Innovation (including patenting)	No recommendation	No recommendation	<p>Establishment of SME sort of patenting advice and encouragement system</p> <p><i>Ongoing activities with the "IPR help-desk.</i></p>
Gender awareness	No recommendation	No recommendation	<p>Acquisition of full gender data from project proposers and collaborators</p> <p><i>A new informatic system will record information on gender in FP6.</i></p>

ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS		
	1999	2000	2001
Public awareness	<p>More attention should be given to communicate the significance of the programme and results to the general public.</p> <p><i>Communication receives a high priority.</i></p>	No recommendation	No recommendation
Socio-economic aspects	<p>The common interest of the three Directorates (DG VI, XII, XIV) relating to the consumer sustainable development and exploitation of research should be developed.</p> <p><i>Such interests are intrinsic to FP5.</i></p>	No recommendation	No recommendation
2. IMPLEMENTATION , MANAGEMENT AND PROCESSES			
Procedures and tools in general	<p>Each project should be subjected to mid-term review.</p> <p><i>Retain current review form during 1999 to 2000. Introduce revised review forms in FP5.</i></p>	No recommendation	<p>Substantial simplification of all procedures involved in the management of the Programme.</p> <p><i>Standard procedure available. Simplification may be considered in the frame of FP6</i></p>

ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS		
	1999	2000	2001
Launch of activities (calls for proposals, information to proposers, application tools...)	Make information more understandable <i>Clear statements will be made in new calls</i>	No recommendation	No recommendation
Evaluation and selection of proposals (evaluation manual, time to contract...)	Make international scientific databases available to evaluators <i>Medline Service was offered to FP5 evaluators in 1999. Technology needs to be further developed.</i>	Commission is encouraged to harmonise ratios for the number of proposals/experts/evaluation time. <i>Continuous efforts for improvement.</i>	Use of two-step selection and call for expression of interest. Use of scientific societies to advise in selection of projects <i>Implemented in the context of ERA and new framework programme. Trial to establish lists of suitable experts taking recommendations of Research Institutions.</i>
Management Information System/ Internal IT system	No recommendation	No recommendation	Wider use of intranets to aid project management. <i>Ongoing exchange of experience since 2001.</i>
Specific cases /programmes	No recommendation	Evaluation procedures of clusters might also be reviewed with concentration on their overall value, in addition to a detailed evaluation of individual cluster projects. <i>Ongoing activity.</i>	No recommendation

ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS		
	1999	2000	2001
Dissemination of information and results	No recommendation	No recommendation	Invitation to improve information flow through the involvement of scientific Societies, Newsletters, Journals... <i>Continuous effort for improvement. Appropriated resources will be allocated in FP6.</i>
Evaluation and monitoring	Avoid gaps in monitoring between FP4 to FP5 <i>Commission adopted all necessary measures</i>	A shorter and more cost-effective evaluation system, including pre-selection. <i>No changes in current programme</i>	Simplification of all procedures in the evaluation of the projects. <i>Procedures are "standard" Simplification procedures might be approached at the level of FP.</i>
Human resources	No recommendation		Support for more workshops, demonstration-type projects (staff time-permitting?° Clarification of PC role and PC-EC interface. Role is well defined
3. IMPACT OF POLICY AND PROGRAMMES			
Impact assessment (incl.TIP)	No recommendation	No recommendation	More accurate prediction/assessment of project final outputs and outcomes. <i>Ongoing: QoL plans to perform impact studies using TIP's collected at the end of FP5projects.</i>

ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS		
	1999	2000	2001
4. OTHERS			
	None	Commission has to take into account the outcomes of clusters when considering the development of integrated projects. <i>Ongoing activity.</i>	Establishment of patenting advice and encouragement system. <i>Ongoing activities with the "IPR-Help-Desk"</i>

6.3 – STATISTICS

Total per Action Line in 2002 (all project types)

Action line	2002				
	Received	Selected for funding	Success rates (%)	EU Requested contribution	EU Proposed Contribution
1	229	44	19,21%	302.520.209	79.986.892
2	36	18	50,00%	11.624.233	3.637.037
3	79	27	34,18%	27.288.082	6.123.196
4	145	29	20,00%	212.640.590	45.094.061
5	195	39	20,00%	196.370.055	25.058.091
6	182	51	28,02%	266.085.599	46.099.398
GA	178	41	23,03%	72.408.661	16.720.649
INFR	47	14	29,79%	56.998.859	14.631.349
Total	1.091	263	24,11%	1.145.936.288	237.350.673

1st Open Call

Action line	1st Open call (1999/C 64/13)									
	Deadline 8/02/2002 (Infrastructures)					Deadline 8/02/2002 (Accompanying Measures)				
	Received	Selected for funding	Success rates	EU Requested contribution (Received)	EU Contribution (Selected)	Received	Selected for funding	Success rates	EU Requested contribution (Received)	EU Contribution (Selected)
1	0	0	0,00%	0	0	27	7	25,93%	4.917.554	776.171
2	0	0	0,00%	0	0	14	9	64,29%	3.882.189	1.328.396
3	1	0	0,00%	1.093.920	0	21	5	23,81%	3.377.283	277.594
4	0	0	0,00%	0	0	9	2	22,22%	1.316.721	122.500
5	2	0	0,00%	2.543.120	0	40	8	20,00%	9.967.808	1.461.092
6	0	0	0,00%	0	0	12	3	25,00%	2.519.121	505.920
GA	1	0	0,00%	2.993.716	0	81	18	22,22%	18.914.216	2.603.319
INFR	29	5	17,24%	50.282.349	13.333.346	7	3	42,86%	1.627.850	297.100
Total	33	5	15,15%	56.913.105	13.333.346	211	55	26,07%	46.522.742	7.372.092

4th Fixed call

Action line	4th Fixed call (Q oL -2001/4)				
	Deadline 31/01/2002				
	Received	Selected for funding	Success rates	EU Requested contribution (Received)	EU Contribution (Selected)
1	173	26	15,03%	286.797.045	42.126.585
2	0	0	0,00%	0	0
3	0	0	0,00%	0	0
4	110	19	17,27%	202.306.698	29.500.000
5	102	13	12,75%	165.169.095	14.500.730
6	149	32	21,48%	256.843.303	40.388.192
GA	28	5	17,86%	29.139.422	7.027.296
INFR	0	0	0,00%	0	0
Total	562	95	16,90%	940.255.563	133.542.803

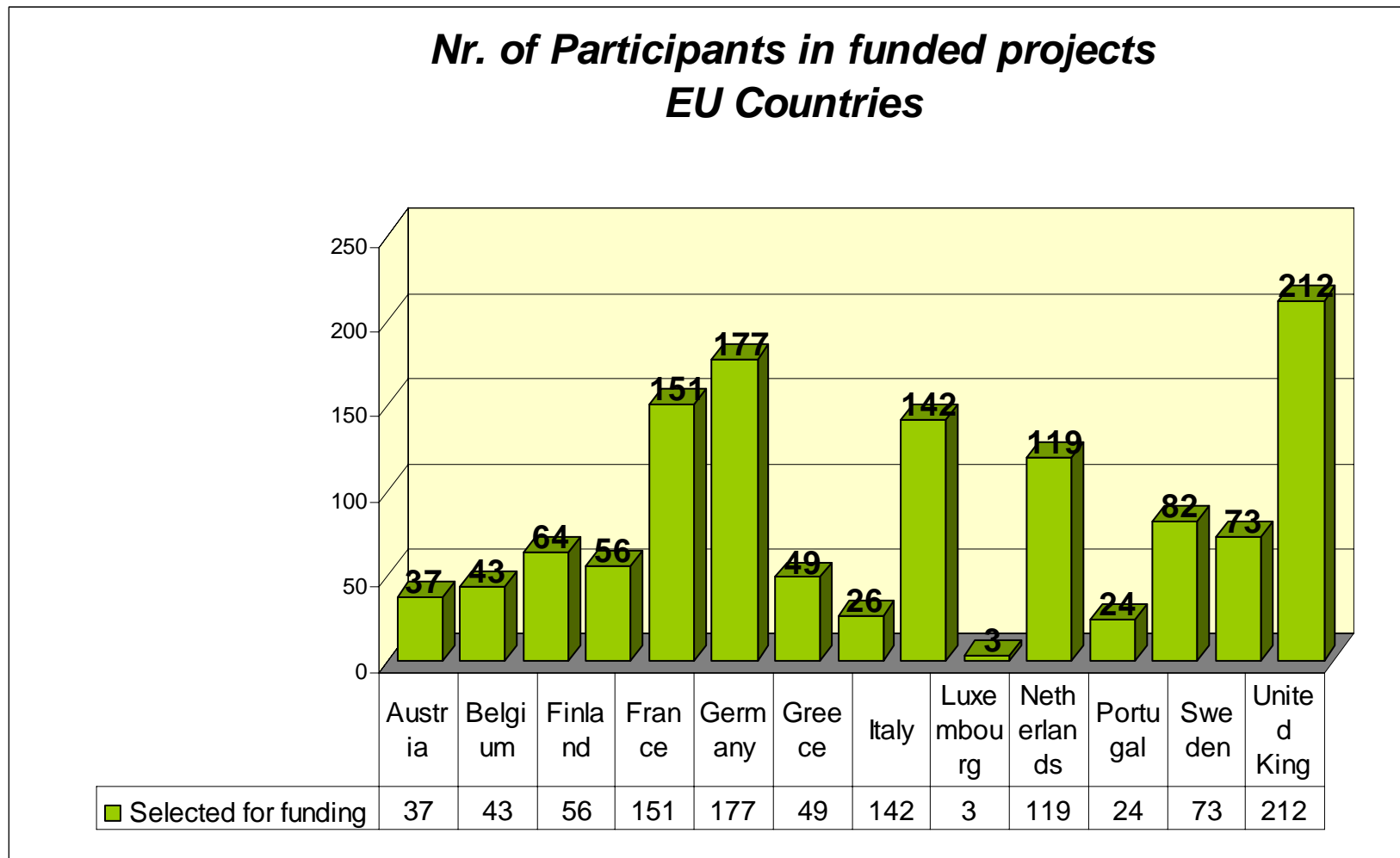
Dedicated Calls for Newly Associated States

Action line	Joint Call NAS-2 (QOL/Growth/EESD-2001-INTEGR)				
	Deadline 31/01/2002				
	Received	Selected for funding	Success rates	EU Requested contribution (Received)	EU Contribution (Selected)
1	16	3	18,75%	8.129.392	79.986.892
2	5	3	60,00%	2.791.630	3.637.037
3	20	4	20,00%	11.986.857	6.123.196
4	9	2	22,22%	4.172.915	45.094.061
5	19	6	31,58%	9.314.458	25.058.091
6	6	3	50,00%	3.078.533	46.099.398
GA	31	7	22,58%	15.035.576	16.720.649
INFR	2	1	50,00%	1.021.710	14.631.349
Total	108	29	26,85%	55.531.071	237.350.673

Action line	General Call NAS (QOL-2002-NAS)				
	Deadline 15/02/2002				
	Received	Selected for funding	Success rates	EU Requested contribution (Received)	EU Contribution (Selected)
1	13	8	61,54%	2.676.218	801.425
2	17	6	35,29%	4.950.414	927.218
3	37	18	48,65%	10.830.022	1.721.482
4	17	6	35,29%	4.844.256	694.411
5	32	12	37,50%	9.375.574	1.436.247
6	15	13	86,67%	3.644.642	1.101.186
GA	37	11	29,73%	6.325.731	2.056.771
INFR	9	5	55,56%	4.066.950	700.903
Total	177	79	44,63%	46.713.807	9.439.643

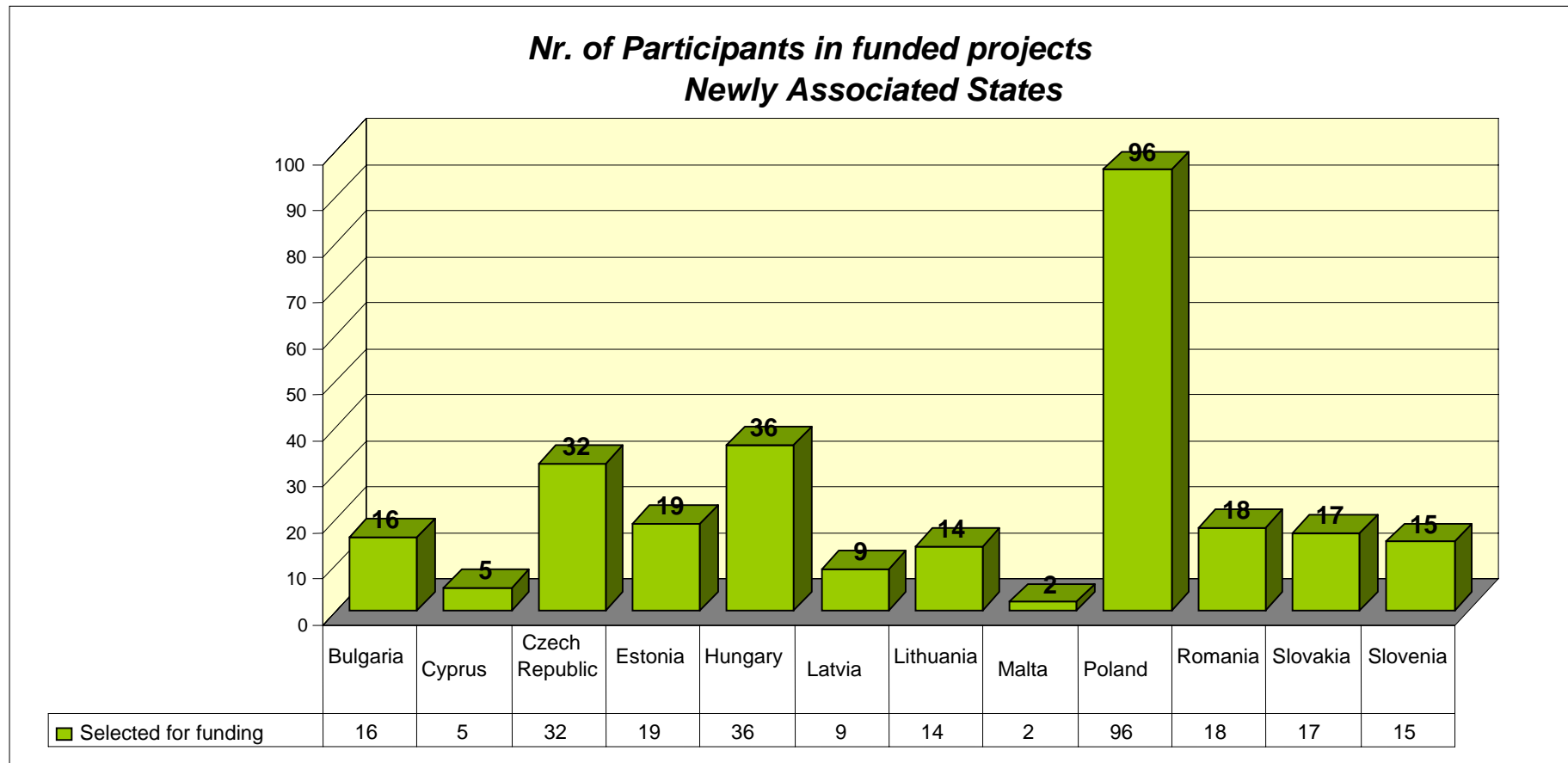
Participation per Member State (MS) in 2002

(One participant is equivalent to one legal entity. There are several participants per project)



Participation per Newly Associated State (NAS) as in 2002

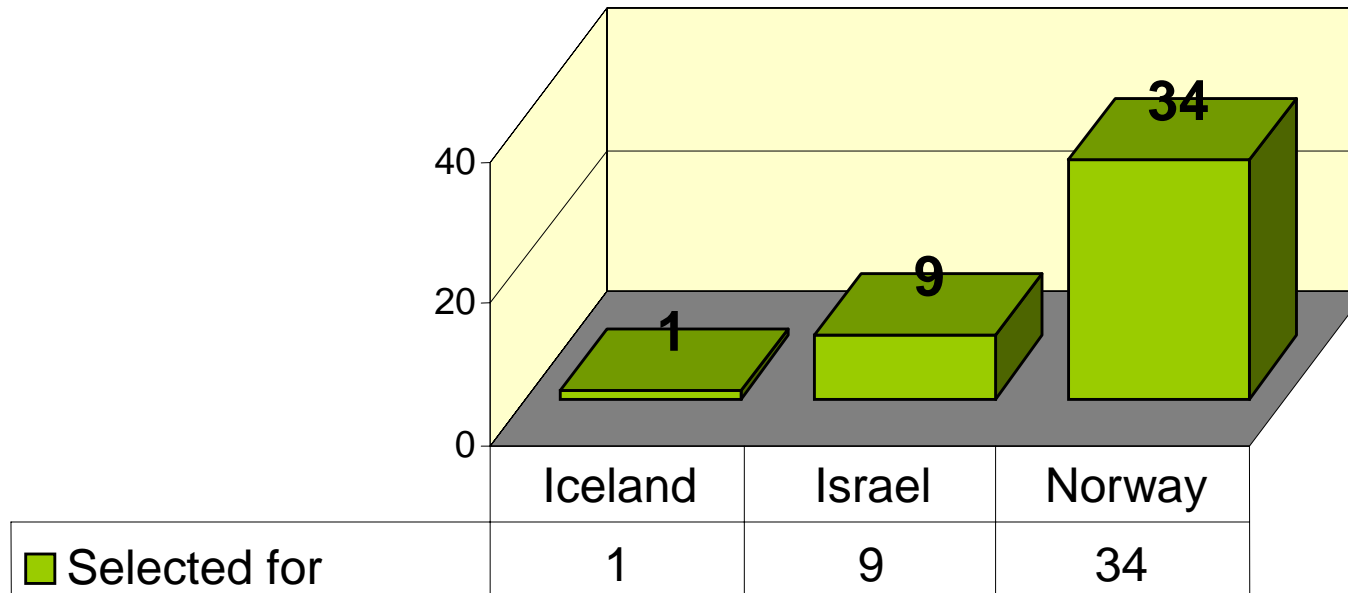
(Bulgaria, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia)



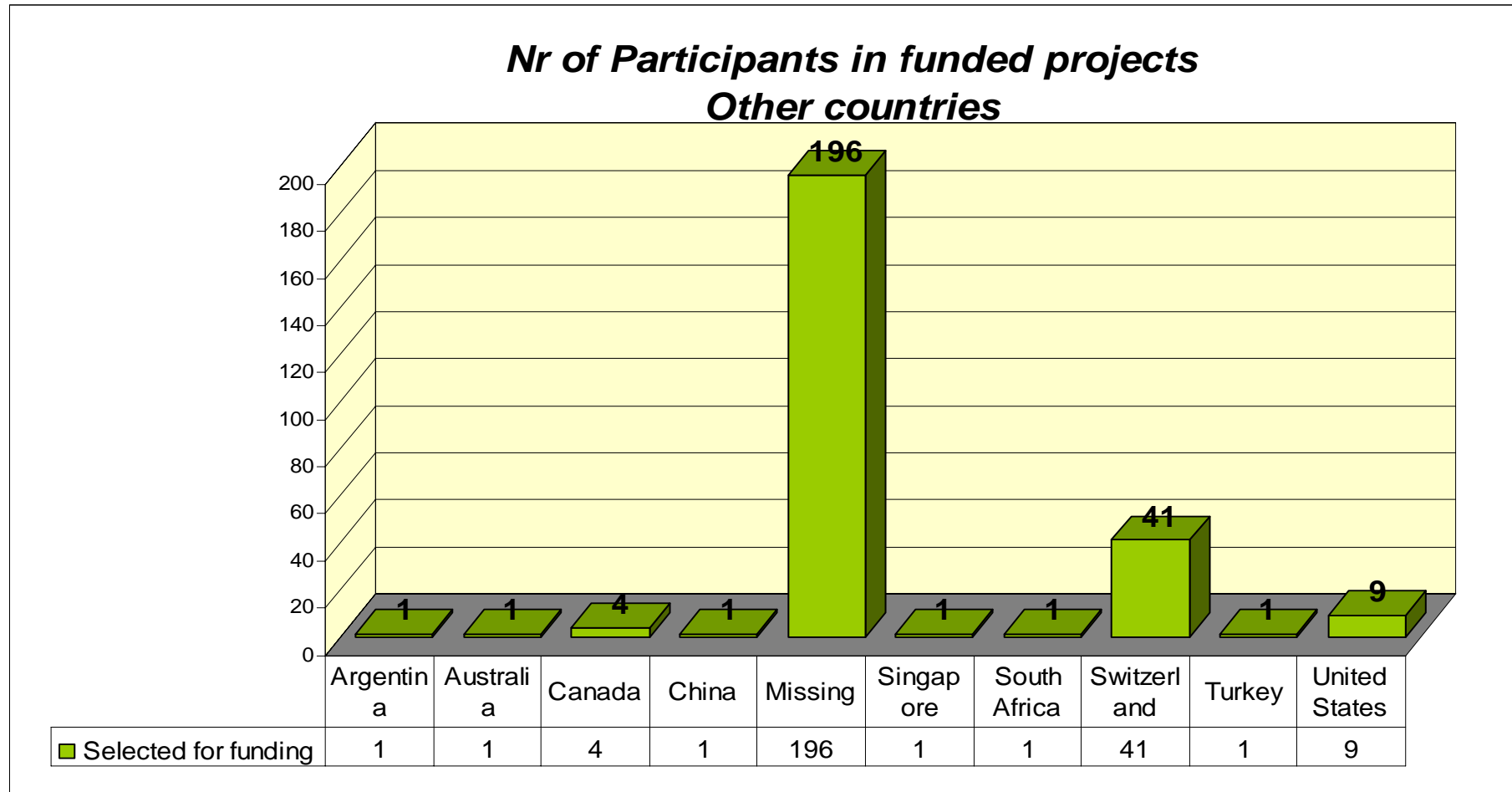
Participation per Associated State (AS) other than NAS as in 2002

(Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Israel)

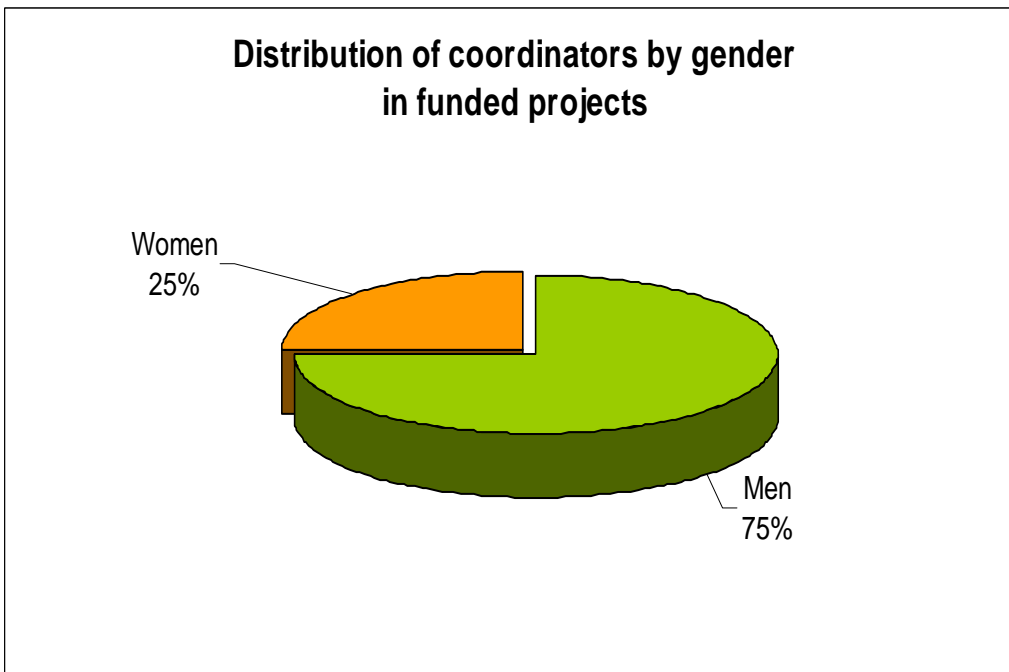
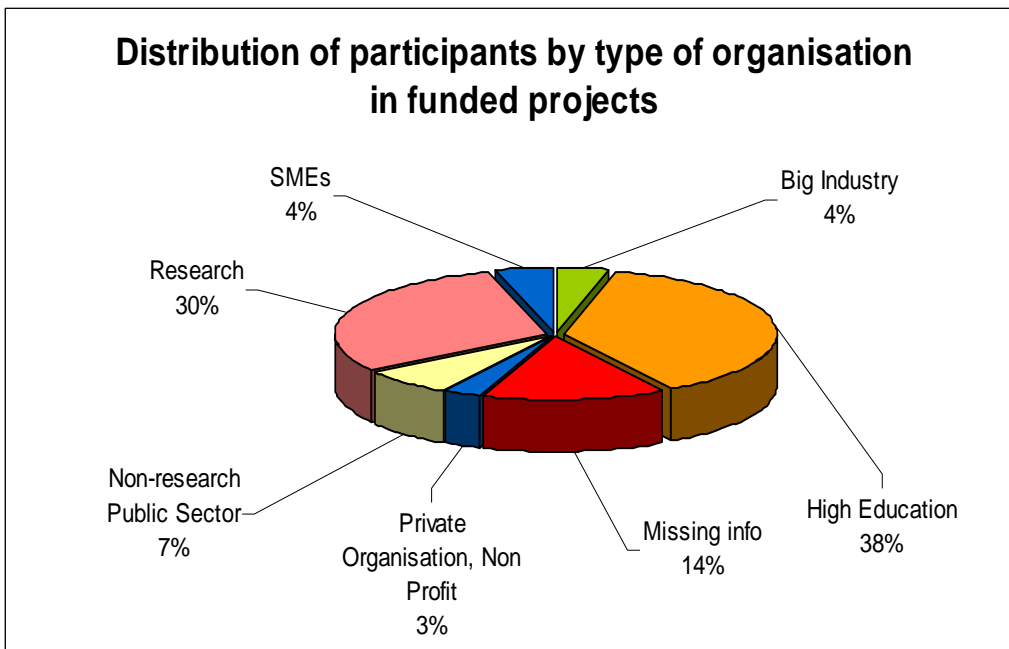
*Nr. of Participants in funded projects
Other associated Countries*



Participation per Third Country (other than MS, AS and NAS) as in 2002



All calls considered in 2002



PART B:

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

Experts Recommendations	Commission Services' Responses	Services' Commitments (if any)	Deadline
<p>1. Consider the use of Technological Implementation Plan (TIP) as an important parameter in standardising impact studies.</p>	<p>The request for a Technology Implementation Plan (TIP) at the end of each project aims at improving exploitation and dissemination of results. The programme management has devoted continuous efforts to the creation of a common database at the level of the Fifth Framework Programme. The database is now effective and TIPs are being submitted electronically via Cordis.</p> <p>A study 'Methodological analysis of TIP as a tool for impact assessment and evaluation' has been commissioned by Commission services to see to what extent it could be used for ex-post assessment. One of the outcomes of this study (which is based on rather heterogeneous completed TIPs), was that the TIP in its present form is not the best suited tool for impact and evaluation studies. However, TIPs have a good range of uses related to exploitation of results (its original purpose) and may contribute to impact studies as one amongst other inputs. To enhance the overall use of this tool, it is recommended that operational guidelines are established to help Fifth Framework Programme project co-ordinators in filling in the TIPs in a more efficient and standardised way.</p>	<p>Study: 'Methodological analysis of TIPs as a tool for impact assessment and evaluation' Final report June 2003</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>2. Determine the usefulness of 2-stage evaluation before extending this approach to Priorities 1 and 5.</p>	<p>In the Sixth Framework Programme the Commission may have recourse to a 2-stage submission procedure where in a first stage a summary proposal will be evaluated. This evaluation procedure is being tested in Thematic Priority 3 since the first call for proposals, including a detailed monitoring by independent observers.</p> <p>The Commission services will learn from this pilot exercise. According to the conclusions it may be decided to extend the 2-stage evaluation to other priorities.</p>	<p>Assessment of pilot 2-stage evaluation procedure</p>	<p>Summer 2003</p>

Experts Recommendations	Commission Services' Responses	Services' Commitments (if any)	Deadline
<p>3. Find new ways in overcoming the proposers' problems in understanding the objectives of Expressions of Interest (EoI) and the characteristics of the new instruments.</p>	<p>The Commission initiated an invitation to submit Expression of Interest in order to consult the research community on its readiness to prepare research actions using the new instruments for funding and to prepare the work programmes of the specific programmes.</p> <p>The Commission services have highly appreciated the outcome of the Expression of Interest exercise, which contributed to the preparation of the work programmes. However, only 15 - 20% of the submissions were seen as fully meeting the requirements of the new instruments. The Sixth Framework Programme Conference in November 2002 offered an opportunity for sending clear messages to potential participants and overcome any misinterpretation. The experience gained in the first step of the Sixth Framework Programme will help to identify whether further efforts should be made to improve the information available. An Interservices Task Force has also been set up to ensure consistency in the implementation of the new instruments and ensure that coherent information is provided to outside stakeholders</p> <p>(see also replies to recommendation 1 of the Framework Programme report).</p>	<p>Achieved</p>	
<p>4. Consider monitoring the impact of National Contact Points (NCP).</p>	<p>Under the Quality of Life (QoL) programme, the National Contact Points (NCPs) met twice a year and this frequency will be maintained under the Sixth Framework Programme. In addition, whenever needed, specific training actions are centrally organised to introduce the NCPs to new mechanisms (i.e. the new instruments which were covered in the 'Training the Trainers' Course 21-23 October 2002). Of course the local realities and levels of awareness are very different from country to country. Optimally what should be measured is the 'progression' and</p>	<p>Dedicated actions in 2nd and 3rd calls of priority 1</p>	<p>2003-2004</p>

Experts Recommendations	Commission Services' Responses	Services' Commitments (if any)	Deadline
	<p>how the national NCPs have contributed to the process.</p> <p>It should be noted that TRAIN-NET, a project launched under QoL with the aim to share expertise and exchange information among NCPs was also surveying the research landscape in participating countries. Similar activities could also be funded under the Sixth Framework Programme, which would provide a suitable mechanism for evaluating the performance and progression specifically in each country. There is scope in the work programme for this type of work but, if needed, additional emphasis could be put on impact studies in this field.</p>		
<p>5. Analyse the impact of SMEs on project outcomes.</p>	<p>The Commission is interested in analysing project consortia to see if SME participation will have an impact on the project outcome. Both thematic priorities 5 & 1 consider the possibilities for supporting Specific Support Actions or studies with this purpose. This will be reflected in future versions of the work programme.</p>	<p>Dedicated actions in 3rd call in Priority 1 and 2nd call in Priority 5</p>	<p>2003-2004</p>
<p>6. Introduce temporary measures to stimulate the participation of Associated Candidate Countries (ACC) by launching dedicated calls for bi-national projects involving one Member State (MS) and one ACC.</p>	<p>Based on an overall Action Plan for supporting Candidate Countries, the Commission introduced Specific Support Actions to stimulate, encourage and facilitate the participation of the Associated Candidate Countries in the first call for proposals. Priorities 1 and 5 are also participating to a general call, which aims at networking National Contact Points and assisting SMEs in partner search. In addition, they will fund actions to address awareness and partner search events plus other tools to promote Candidate Countries participation in the Sixth Framework Programme. To reinforce these initiatives, Priority 5 launched a specific call in April and Priority 1 made similar provisions for the second call for proposals in July. According to the impact of these measures on the participation of Candidate</p>	<p>Measures to stimulate the participation of Associated Candidate Countries already in current calls</p>	<p>First contracts for suitable projects by the end of 2003</p>

Experts Recommendations	Commission Services' Responses	Services' Commitments (if any)	Deadline
	<p>Countries, the Commission services may consider supporting additional actions. In this case, the suggestion of the monitoring experts would be closely considered as an alternative to current incentives (see also replies to recommendation 7 of the Framework Programme Monitoring report).</p>		
<p>7. Evaluate the impact of the provisions that have been taken to address gender issues.</p>	<p>Since 1999, the Commission has adopted a gender mainstreaming strategy to promote gender equality in scientific research, in all its forms. This approach is embedded in the Sixth Framework Programme decision documents and in the rules for participation. It has been given particular attention in life sciences further to the high proportion of female scientists in the field and the relevance of gender issues and aspects in health related questions. The Guide for Proposers for the new instruments asks for an action plan indicating actions and activities that will be developed to promote the role and participation of women in the project. An annex on integrating the gender dimension into the Sixth Framework Programme projects is also included in the guides for all instruments. In 'Life sciences, Genomics and Biotechnology for Health', additional instructions are given on how to describe the specific gender approach of the proposal. A questionnaire on women participation and gender aspects in research is also included as part of the proposal description. These provisions allow for an assessment by the evaluation experts, at project level. At Programme level, in order to monitor the progress of women scientists' participation in the Sixth Framework Programme, statistics on gender distribution are systematically collected.</p>	<p>Data collection</p> <p>First assessment of impact of gender issues addressed in view of possible corrective actions</p>	<p>2003</p>