

## Evaluation briefing and the evaluators' tasks

### Objectives of the evaluation

The overall objective of this evaluation is to inform decision makers on possible options for the future development of ERAWATCH, for the purpose of the negotiations of the new contract. The Commission document establishing the Evaluation is attached as ANNEX I. The purpose of this paper is, for clarity, to resume the key points and identify key actions by each member of the Evaluation Team.

The evaluation has to examine four current activity fields of ERAWATCH and it shall conclude on the ERA dimension as follows:

- To assess the problems and efforts of establishing the *information inventory* including the functioning of the ERAWATCH network as an information gathering infrastructure;
- To assess the results of the *intelligence service*;
- To examine the design and use of the *website*;
- To assess the *cooperation between ERAWATCH and TrendChart*
- provide views on how to include the ERA dimension in ERAWATCH.

The evaluation should present options for improvements for each of these objectives.

### Specific tasks for the Evaluation Committee members

#### TG (Chair)

- assess the appropriateness and performance of the intelligence service including the links with the information inventory;
- contribute to develop options for improvements for each of the four tasks for the evaluation as well as provide views on how to include the ERA dimension in ERAWATCH.

#### CW (Rapporteur)

- assess the problems and efforts of establishing the *information inventory* including the functioning of the ERAWATCH network as an information gathering infrastructure as well as the management of country correspondents;
- assess the cooperation with the INNO Policy TrendChart
- contribute to develop options for improvements for each of the four tasks for the evaluation as well as provide views on how to include the ERA dimension in ERAWATCH.

#### CS (Evaluator)

This Member shall review ERAWATCH from the perspective of Member States represented in CREST and contribute to the work by:

- surveying by contacting CREST members on the accessibility, value, appropriateness and user friendliness of the web-site;

- reporting on the results of this survey;
- suggesting improvements as well as provide views on the innovation policy link to TrendChart and how to include the ERA dimension in ERAWATCH

### **TK (Evaluator)**

This Member shall cover the technical aspects related to the web site publishing and knowledge management of the operation. In this context he shall:

- examine the design and usability of the Website;
- assess the construction of the information inventory and its knowledge management including the construction and use of templates;
- assess the technical aspects of the links with TrendChart;
- suggest options for improvement;
- provide a written contribution to the above mentioned tasks.

### **PL (Evaluator)**

This Member shall review ERAWATCH from the perspective of the information ERWATCH provides on research systems en the global research and innovation policies. In particular he shall:

- assess the information provided on impacts, strength and weakness of research systems and governance
- contribute to the assessment of the information and intelligence service in view of the internationalisation of national research systems including ERA aspects.
- contribute to assess the efforts of establishing the *information inventory* including the functioning of the ERAWATCH network as well as the management of country correspondents;

### **Deliverables**

The main deliverable is a report with recommendations, which should be finished before the end of July 2008. The report should be not longer than 50 pages and be written in an analytical language, suitable for policy administrators.

The report should address the four tasks outlined above. On the basis of the analysis, the report should outline possible options for the development of ERAWATCH, including how better to develop the ERA dimensions from the Green Paper in ERAWATCH. It should contain operational recommendations that can be implemented by DG RTD.

### Key points from 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting with DG-RTD

April 21-22

The Commission needs:

- a clear report that hits the key issues;
- some clear views on how it has worked so far;
- recommendations that can be implemented from 2009;
- proposals for the medium term development of ERAWATCH and the collaboration among the actors involved.

Apart from RTD Directorate C, other Commission staff interviewed by the evaluators reported that, so far, ERAWATCH has only been marginally useful for their policy related tasks, but that they expected improved value added content in the future as a result of a series of on-going dialogues and collaborations.

The results of the survey carried out by CORDIS revealed, among other matters that:

- the average length of time that visitors are on the site is very brief, less than 3 minutes;
- there is no clear indication that ERAWATCH is in answer to, or meets, any identified need of an important community of users outside DG-RTD.

Other key points raised by the Commission staff included:

- the need to achieve a Flexible, adaptive, management structure for ERAWATCH;
- a greater involvement of DG-RTD in the management than in the past;
- that although it was easy to vision what was wanted, the real challenges involve identifying why this has not yet been achieved and how achieve it.

**Key points from the Meeting with JRC-IPTS**

May, 26

Among the key issues discussed in regard to the “user communities” were:

- How can the “real” users of ERAWATCH be identified, classified and satisfied?
- To what extent do their needs, expectations and methods of delivery differ?
- Could there be a gap between what ERAWATCH provides already, intends to provide in the future and what the users need?

The development of the relationship and collaboration between the services of DG-RTD and ENTR was discussed in terms of topics such as:

- In the future should the same Network be collecting the info for both services?
- There is a clearly identified official, or unit, in the MS with the responsibility to respond to the TrendChart data; could the same be achieved for ERAWATCH?

Other key issues discussed included:

- The need to specify the end use of information before developing an encyclopaedic baseload or information inventory.
- What is the right level of expertise based coverage per country in EWN and how could their work become more connected with the relevant governmental bodies of the country?
- How much emphasis should be placed on the “up-to-datedness” of the information available via the web site?
- What criteria should be established in the future for “stocking” the information inventory? How should new ERA relevant initiatives be addressed (e.g. the indicators that are being established for which the Commission wants to have MS provide data)?
- The need to change the emphasis between information gathering and production of intelligence reports.
- The difficulty of comparing information across different parts of the ERAWATCH website.
- To what extent should the outcomes of national Foresight exercises be included.
- The difficulty of carrying out well-designed impact studies, complemented by implementation of the intelligence that is produced was noted.
- The efforts to bring ERAWATCH to the attention of potential users outside of DG-RTD have had limited success. It was noted that this could be one of the deliverables in the new contract.
- The value of the analytical country reports was noted.

- The administrative restrictions on the kind of contracts and outsourcing that could be used had imposed important limitations on the flexibility in the relationship with the external service providers and resulted in financial overheads.
- The IPTS vision of the development of ERAWATCH was presented.
- The availability of the window of opportunity with the current staff in positions of responsibility (Heads of Unit) in each DG and the overlap of Framework contracts should be explored.
- There is a challenge in addressing the ongoing quality control if the contractual arrangement with the contractor is not via IPTS and therefore it is not providing the country desk check of the EWN products.
- The need to reduce the administrative burden on IPTS was discussed as well as who would be best placed to carry this and why.

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### Key points from Meetings with other DGs

During the evaluation process, the members of the team established individually and jointly a series of contacts, e-mail exchanges, telephone conversations and interviews with a wide variety of Commission staff members within DG-RTD and JRC-IPTS as well as with DG-ENTR & DG-REGIO. This Annex address these last two categories.

Among the views expressed by **DG-ENTR** are the following:

- Trend-Chart offers a superior service to its users than ERAWATCH
- The staff of DG-ENTR are in a better position when preparing a mission to a MS, or Associated State, than their colleagues in other DGs (e.g. REGIO, AGRICULTURE, etc) because they have available the country file with an up-to-date presentation ( $\cong$  80 pages) prepared by an independent expert in the country, who was in contact with the country's government.
- At present TrendChart is being fine-tuned to respond to the revised Lisbon Agenda.

#### **Indicators & impacts**

The Innovation Scoreboard has been prepared for about 10 years, so DG-ENTR has been looking very carefully at the issues of indicators and effectiveness or impact of policies and measures. It has recognised the very real difficulty of establishing an ideal list of them, "It is practically impossible to link policies to indicators; you can point to correlations but you cannot establish causalities – the system is too complex with time lags and economic cycles." However the effort has to be made, therefore the Innovation Scoreboard covers 25 indicators and the focus is adjusted annually in collaboration with academics at the Un of Maastricht.

Who are the **users** of TrendChart and how satisfied are they?

- DG-ENTR has not yet carried out any major mapping or user survey.

Among the views expressed by **DG-REGIO** is the following:

ERAWATCH could be very useful in the current implementation of the revised Lisbon Agenda and other policy developments; as Regional policy will support the development of RDI. However at present the level of information and analysis available does not support this.

**Key points from 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting with DG-RTD & JRC-IPTS**

June, 25

The Chair of the Evaluation team invited the Rapporteur to present the Draft Conclusions of the ERAWATCH Evaluation under the following headings:

- The *information inventory* (including EWN);
- The *intelligence service*;
- The *cooperation between ERAWATCH and TrendChart*
- The *ERA Dimension* in ERAWATCH

The member of the team responsible for the technical evaluation of the design and use of the *website* and related technologies presented the draft results and provisional recommendations for its development.

During the meeting several issues were discussed, including the following:

- EW is to be seen as a platform with more products than those of today.
- Commission is in a phase of reflection. The question is where they will focus in the future.
- The lines between inventory and intelligence are blurred and may not meet future requirements; the distinction might have only an analytical usefulness.
- There is a need of a realistic plan to develop EW in different phases since inputs will be spread over time.
- IPTS is a partner of the Commission and not an intermediate contractor. IPTS and not DG RTD should have the direct interaction with the contractors.
- The increasing demands for Thematic Analysis have to face the limited resources.
- It has not yet been possible to formulate a clear idea about the role of EW in the indicators issue.
- The Commission will continue to need a good information base for analyses on various occasions.
- There will be a decrease of financial resources for ERAWATCH by about 25% (“growing by shrinking”).
- In the future the needs of the analysis should define the inventory work.

In the future, the **focus** of ERAWATCH should be:

- research policy-mixes in Member States (funding instruments,
- articulation between research - education - innovation,
- governance (including evaluation and foresight),
- public investment to attract private investment in RTD,
- role of regions (trends),
- reform of public organisations,
- industry - university link,
- overall evolution of internationalisation,
- research-driven clusters of excellence.

**EWN management:**

DG RTD is willing to play a stronger role in the interface with EWN over the next two years. After that period of time, a new management arrangement could be considered.

In regard to the **ERA-dimension**:

- National level (governance to embed ERA, monitoring of actions), Cross-border links (emerging open research system, realistic development in different phases) at Institutional level (landscape of universities, impact, public research organisations, monitoring of changes in about 300 universities in Europe (e.g. governance, funding, recruitment, autonomy).
- The templates need to be reconsidered and decisions taken as to what level of details are needed.
- At the regional level, it seems that a very detailed inventory is not needed.
- A broader picture of basic trends in research at regional level would be appropriate.
- Monitoring of research driven clusters and of poles of excellence

The evaluators were also invited to include in their reports comments on:

- the rhythm of updating information,
- the type of governance improvements that that should be proposed,
- the role of foresight,
- the development of knowledge management, rather than pure data collection.

## **Governance issues**

Competitiveness Council Meeting in Brussels 29-30.6.2008: " Improved governance of ERA should ... involve all Member states and associated countries including regional authorities, as well as stakeholders such as universities and research organisations, civil society and business which should be actively engaged in ERA governance".

It was noted that this could be addressed by answering the following questions (balance of inventory/intelligence):

- How is this active engagement encouraged (measures, incentives) and organized?
- How foresight exercises are used in improving active interactions between actors?
- Are there any domestic/international evaluations of research/innovation system from the point of view of governance ( efficiency, effectiveness, participation etc.)?

## **Impact evaluations; Questions:**

Which are the most central evaluations implemented to improve the socioeconomic impact of research/innovation funding?

How are issues of socio-economic impact considered when dealing with the governance issues?

## **Internationalisation; Questions:**

- Are the demands of internationalisation considered in the official S&T policy programmes and guidelines?
- Which are the most central instruments to enhance internationalisation of the national research system?
- What is the role of European cooperation/interactions and what is the role of other/global considerations?
- Have you developed any indicator system for internationalisation and thus defined internationalisation policy priorities and how to measure progress there?

## Further comments on the ERAWATCH user survey

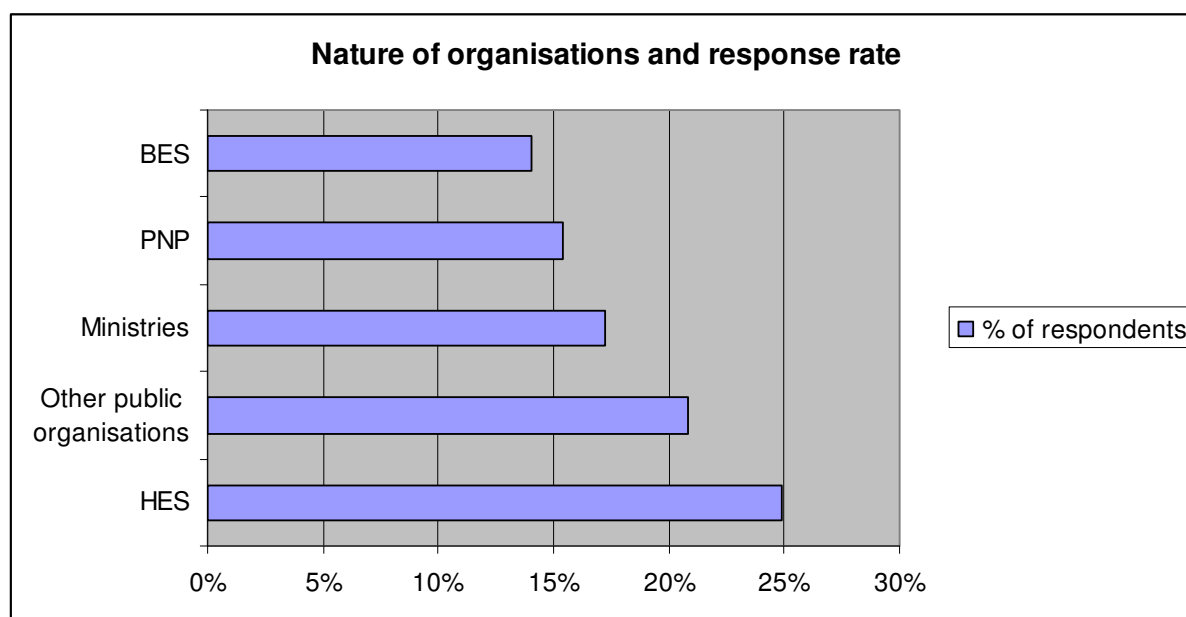
The CORDIS survey of ERAWATCH users aimed at assessing the level of user satisfaction with ERAWATCH and to gather user input for the future direction of the service. The CORDIS report on the survey provided statistics on the types of users and the types of use. However, no correlation between these two groups of data was provided in this report.

This document therefore sets out the results derived by IPTS analysis on the survey data. In particular, the profile of the survey respondents was correlated with the purpose of use (Question 2) and their rating of the ERAWATCH relevance (Question 4).

### 1/ Respondents' profile

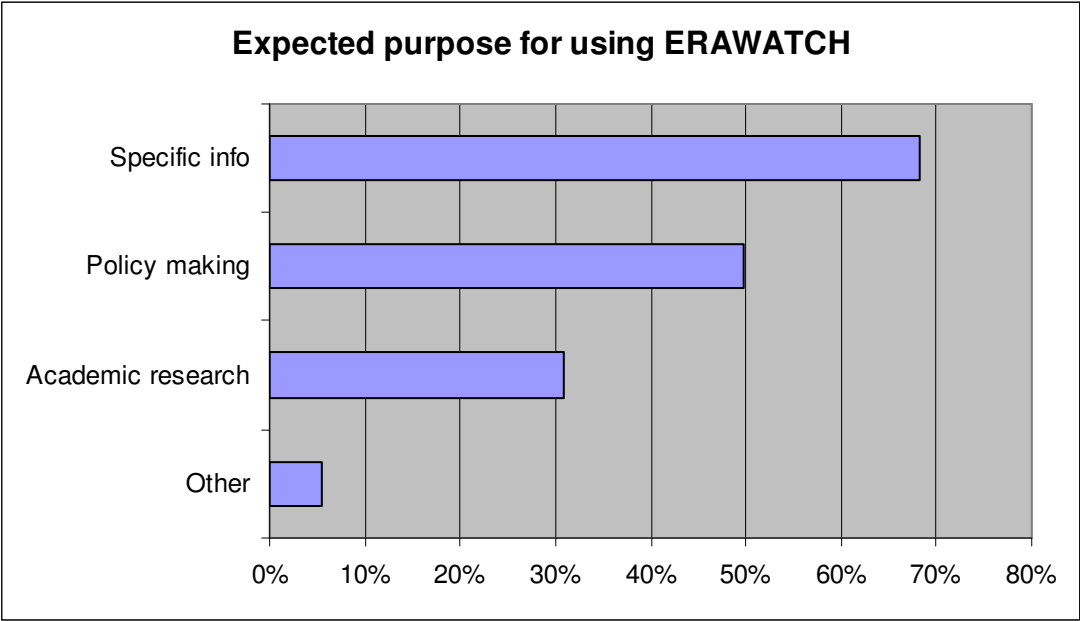
The stated organisational affiliation of respondents is, by response rate in decreasing order:

1. Higher education (HES) (55 respondents, ie. 24.9%)
2. Other public organisation (46, ie. 20.8%)
3. Government ministry (38, ie. 17.2%)
4. Private Non Profit (PNP) (34, ie. 15.4%)
5. Private enterprise (BES) (31, ie. 14%)



Beyond the fact that HES respondents are dominating, we can also see that the main groups belong to the public sector, and the lowest response rate is from the private sector. This gives an indication about the possible under-representation of the private sector among the users of the ERAWATCH service.

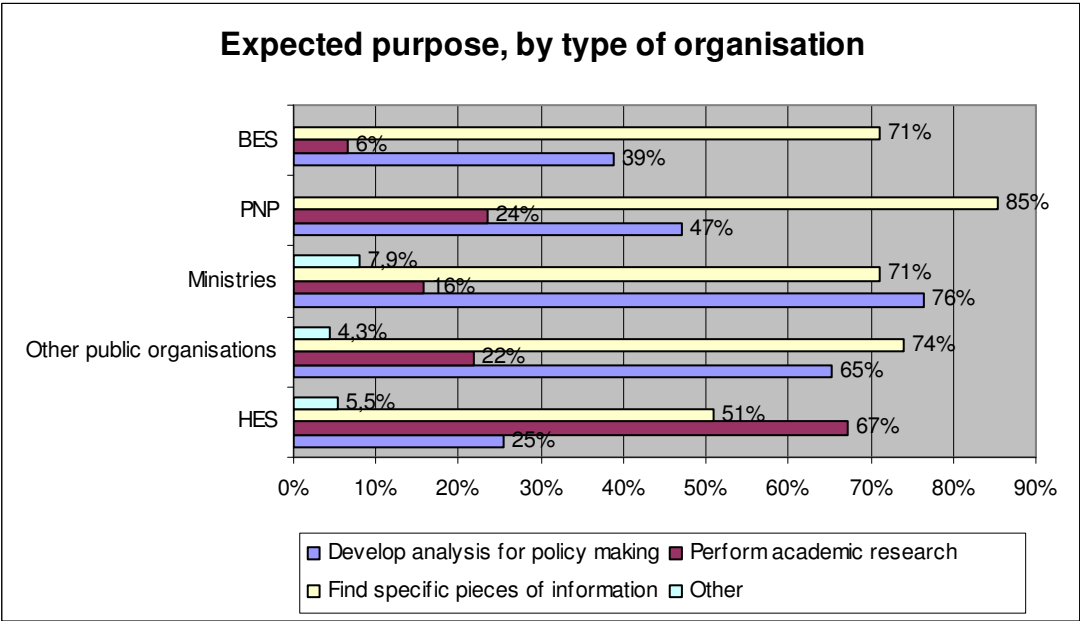
## 2/ Correlation between respondents profile and the purpose of their use of ERAWATCH



As mentioned in the CORDIS report, the main purposes to use ERAWATCH are, by decreasing order,

- (i) to find specific pieces of information,
- (ii) to develop analysis for policy making,
- (iii) to perform academic research
- (iv) other

When we segment this information according to the profile of the respondent, we derive more detailed information.

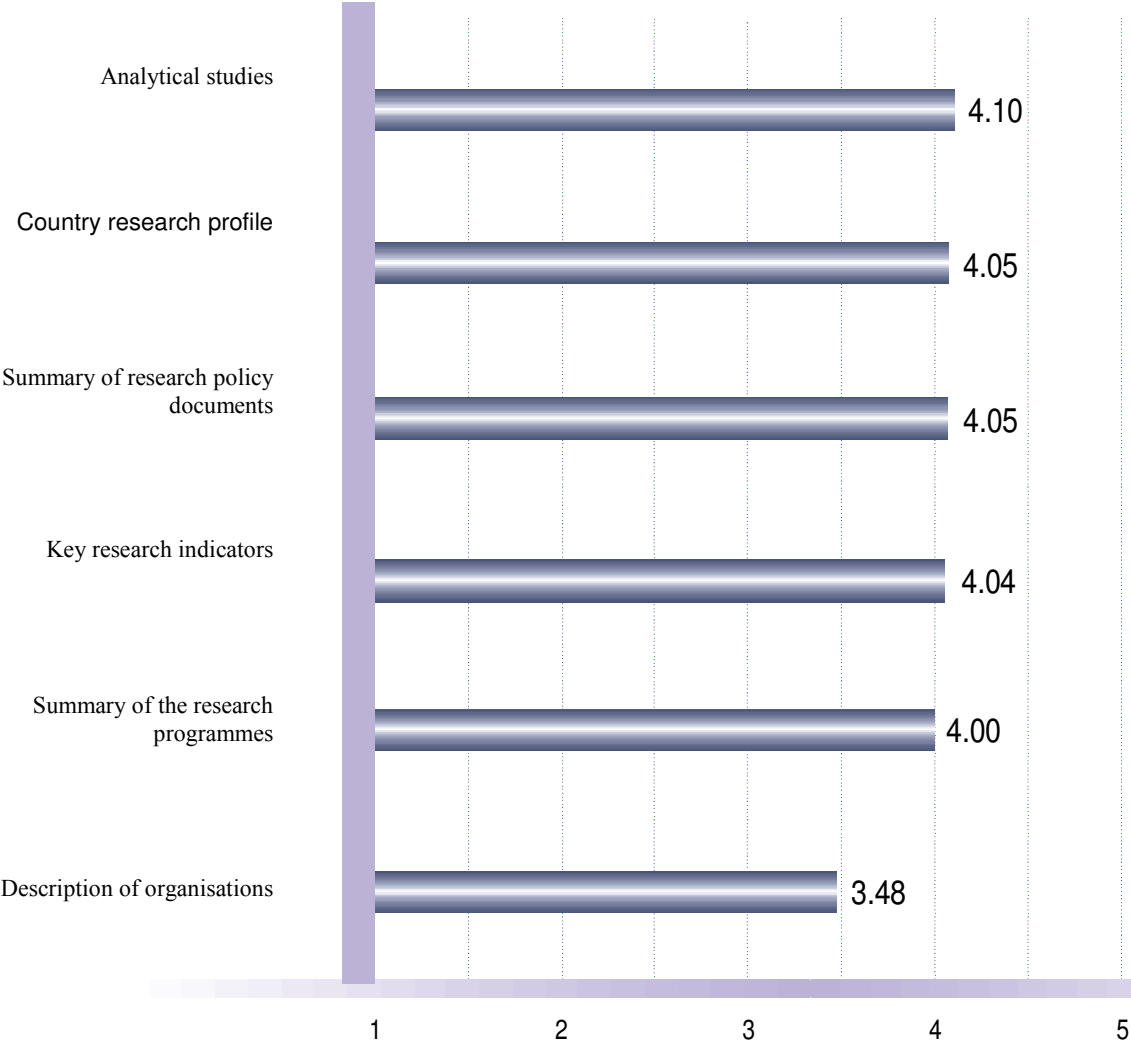


- The academic research goal ("perform academic research") is, logically, the leading type of use cited by respondents in the HES sector, while it is the least expected purpose in the business sector. This usage pattern makes sense, given that the business sector is less likely to engage into academic research.
- Similarly, policy-making ("develop analysis for policy making") is the dominant objective within ministries, followed by public organisations. These two types of organisation are, as could be expected, leading protagonists when it comes to policy-making or policy-implementation.
- The third purpose ("to find specific pieces of information") is the least contrasted, given that it is less driven by the type of organisation, and more "objective-driven".

### 3/ Relevance of ERAWATCH services

Respondents were offered the possibility to rate the level of relevance from 1 “Low relevance” to 5 “High relevance”.

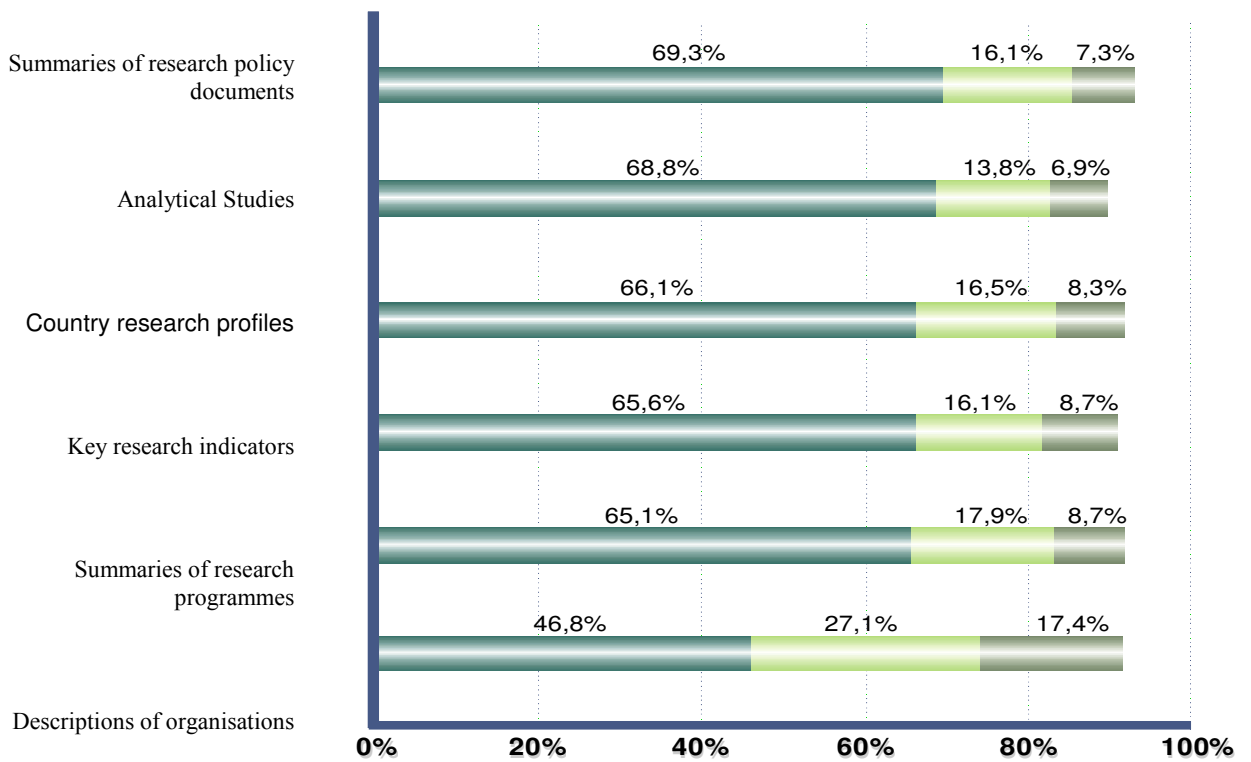
The CORDIS report provides, by decreasing order, the average rating for each ERAWATCH service, based on the number of responses:



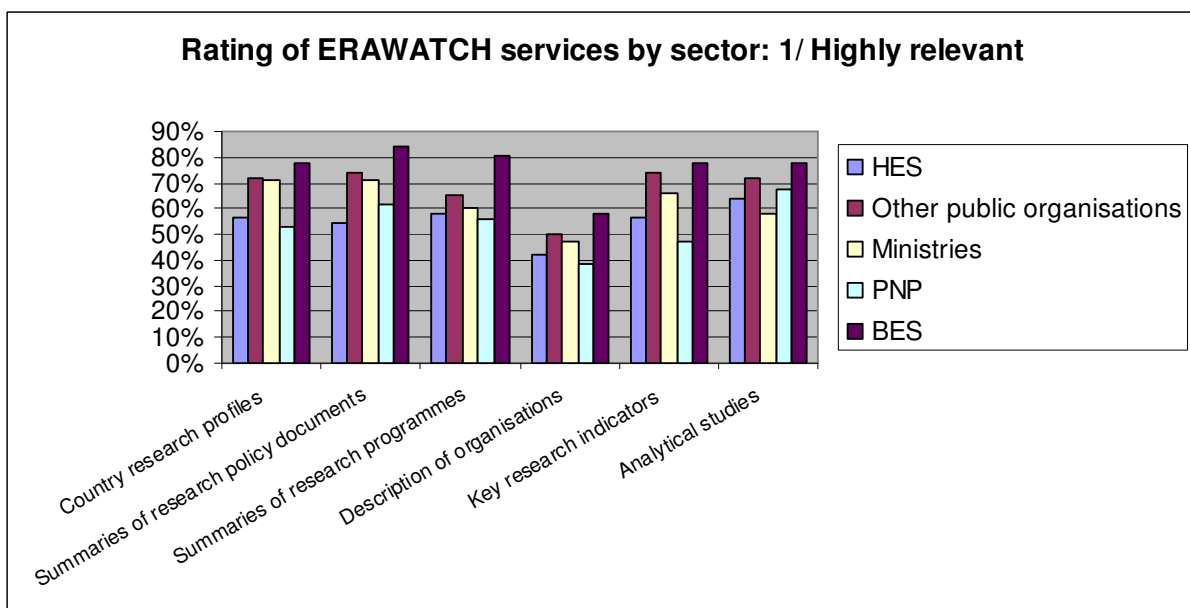
For a more "visual" result the relevance rating was simplified in three categories which are, by decreasing order,

- (i) high relevance
- (ii) some relevance
- (iii) low relevance

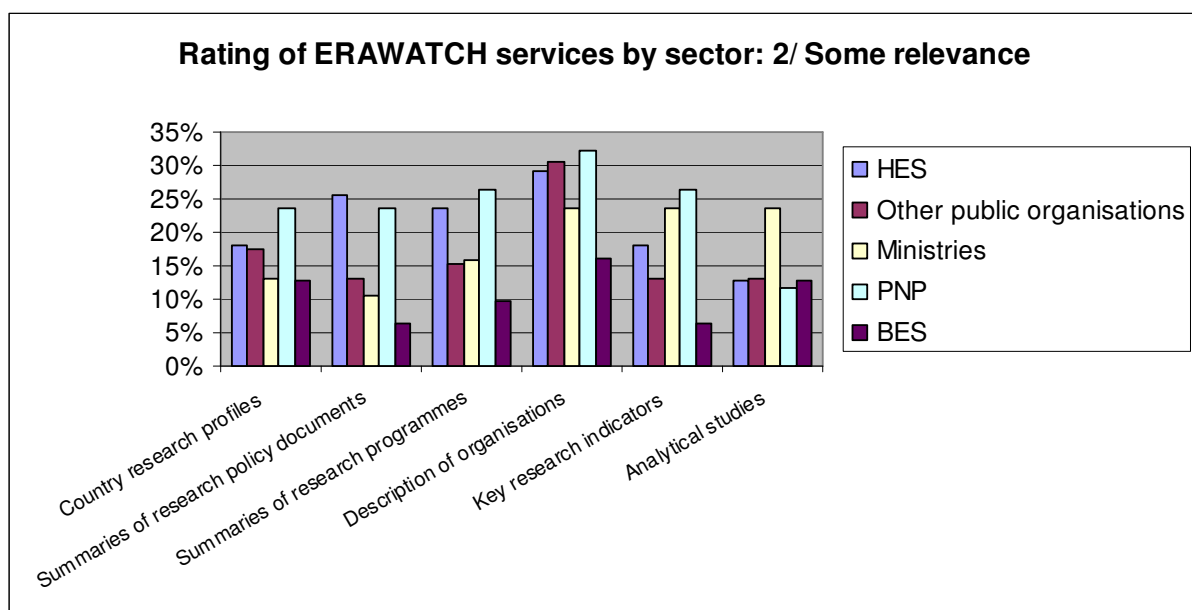
Translating this by response rate, the result shows as follows:



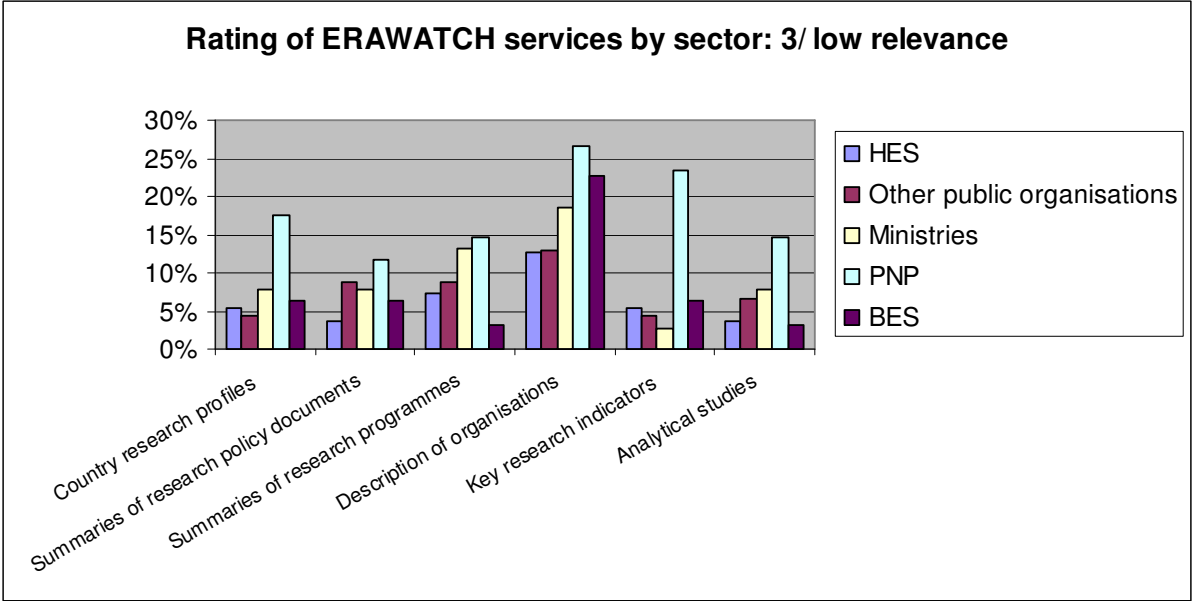
It is striking to see that, apart from the last ERAWATCH Service ("description of organisations"), most ERAWATCH services are positively rated in a homogeneous way. However, breaking down this data by the type of organisation of the respondents, the results are less homogeneous.



- We noted at the start of the report that the lowest response rate is from the private sector. This is also the sector that has the largest proportion of respondents considering ERAWATCH services as highly relevant. Drawing conclusions can be dangerous given the small number of survey respondents (228), but it could be hypothesised that although business users are using ERAWATCH services less often than other users, they are the most satisfied with the product relevance.
- The largest contrast between the BES sector and the others sectors relates to summary of research programmes. We have neither explanation nor hypothesis for this.
- The second block of respondents considering ERAWATCH services as highly relevant are from the public sector. With the exception of *analytical studies* where users from ministries and HES are overtaken by a higher proportion of respondents from PNP, and *summaries of research policy documents* where the proportion of HES respondents is smaller than PNP.



- Among the smaller group of respondents considering ERAWATCH services have some relevance, those from PNP are usually leading for all ERAWATCH services, except analytical studies.
- The public sector has no specific clear-cut pattern
- The private sector is logically less dominant (except for *analytical studies*) given that respondents were mostly considering ERAWATCH as highly relevant.



- Among the smallest population of respondents considering that ERAWATCH services have low relevance, PNP respondents have the largest relative weight, for all ERAWATCH services.
- The less appreciated ERAWATCH service (i.e. the service meeting the highest proportion of respondents considering it as having low relevance) is *description of organisations*. This last observation is worth keeping in mind if it were decided to streamline the number of ERAWATCH services.

**Questionnaire for the users of ERAWATCH**

- 1. What is your working context?**
  - a. Do you do research?**
  - b. Do you consume research results?**
  - c. Have you participated in the preparation of policy, or briefings for policy makers, in the field of RTD?**
  
- 2. Have you ever used the ERAWATCH Website?**
  - a. If so, how many times?**
  - b. Were you on the website for more than a few minutes?**
  
- 3. How easy to use is the ERAWATCH website?**
  
- 4. Have you ever used the ERAWATCH search engine?**
  - a. If so, how many times?**
  
- 5. Were you satisfied with the results?**
  - a. If not, why not? Because of technical difficulties, of quality problems with regard to the content?**
  - b. trying to find the information you need?**
  - c. which kind of documents is causing dissatisfaction: analytical studies, country research profiles, etc.**
  
- 6. Do you know the ERAWATCH document base is organized by information templates that allow for data comparison over countries, organisations, policy documents, research inventories and research programmes?**
  - a. Did you ever perform a comparison using the templates?**
  - b. Does the ERAWATCH website support your work w.r.t. analytic and monitoring tasks?**

- 7. Did you ever use the TrendChart database?**
  - a. If you have used both, have you any preference or comments on the usefulness to you, or the easiness to use, of either site in comparison with the other?**
  
- 8. Do you see ERAWATCH and TrendChart as complementary services?**
  - a. If not, why not?**
  - b. If yes, in what way?**
  - c. Would you like to integrate the ERAWATCH document base with other information sources such as TrendChart?**
  - d. If so, why?**
  - e. How could this best be done?**
  
- 9. What other content resources do you use to fulfil your tasks?**
  - a. Consults you hire?**
  - b. Your own research (e.g. through academic literature or talking to people “who know”)?**
  - c. Other CORDIS based sources?**
  
- 10. What is the specific service the ERAWATCH website should offer to support your work in the future?**
  
- 11. How can the ERAWATCH website itself be improved?**
  
- 12. What kind of information and/or analysis would you like to have provided by ERAWATCH?**
  
- 13. Other comments!**

