

Summary Ptries Boekholt

The presentation by Ptries Boekholt will give an overview of Competence Research Centres (CRC) Policies in Europe, discuss some CRC related trends and focus on a study on international collaboration by CRCs.

Competence centres have been evolving internationally over the past 20 years or so. While they share common characteristics of long-term commitment by industry and academic to common R&D programmes, interdisciplinary problem focus, engagement with postgraduate education and doing more fundamental types of R&D than is usual for the partners involved, they are implemented in a range of ways that should be context dependent. Generally, they should be one component in a more comprehensive policy mix that tackles both researcher-driven research and the needs of lower-capability clusters in industry that would benefit less from the relatively advanced work done in competence centres.

The stimulation of international co-operation in research and innovation receives more and more policy support in the EU countries. Nine partners from the COMPERA ERA-NET have commissioned a Technopolis study on the needs and opportunities of the individual Competence Research Centres (CRCs) in relation to international co-operation. The study also looks at barriers that exist at the level of the funding agencies and Ministries. The presentation will present the key findings of this study.

For CRCs the drivers to engage cross-border collaborations come from the centre's stakeholders facing various international challenges, from developments within science and technology that ask for critical mass and excellence and from the European, national and regional policy making bodies that see the potential for opening up to international partnerships. The study shows that a majority of CRCs engage in some sort of international collaboration but mostly in an ad-hoc manner. It takes time to build up a more strategic partnership with foreign research and industry partners

CRCs will need to develop better capacities to develop their governance and IPR models to cater for increased participation of (international) partners. More synergies will be sought with European initiatives such as the KICs and the trends to forms networks between competence centres across borders and across disciplinary boundaries. The jump to global partnerships is still to come for most CRCs, despite the opening up of programmes such as NSF's Engineering Research Centres in the United States.

The presentation will conclude with summing up the CRC related trends.