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SUSPRISE from 2004 till 2008

Looking back at the last five years of SUSPRISE, we can conclude that the project has been quite successful. Since 2004, 16 organisations from nine European countries have started a network of national programmes focussing on the industrial research for sustainability.

At the beginning of the project, SUSPRISE focused on getting to know each other and each other's programmes, building trust and understanding of each other's way of working as an important step towards joint activities. The next phase in the project was to research the possibilities for cooperation between the national programmes. This would lead to more effective national programmes for both the programme owners (governments) and programme beneficiaries (industry and research organisations). The research was put into practise with, amongst others, the publication of the SUSPRISE joint call. In the final stage, SUSPRISE elaborated on the possibilities for joint programming, resulting in a toolbox of instruments. These five project years have resulted in several achievements worth mentioning here. But we can only highlight a few, main results of the project as follows:

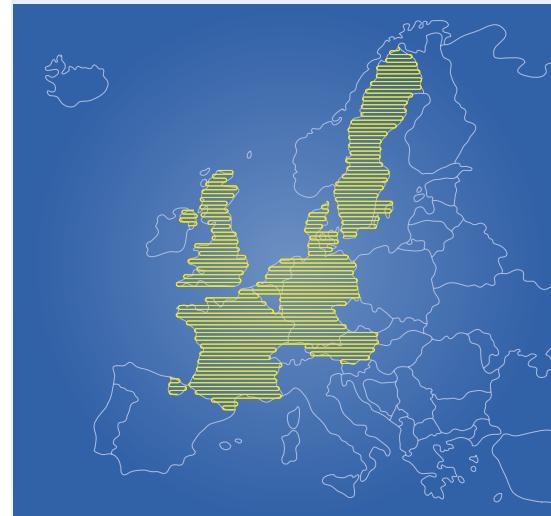
- The development of the SUSPRISE network of national programme managers and programme owners, including the evaluation of the SUSPRISE network by an expert on organisational management.
- The publication of the SUSPRISE Joint Call

in March 2007. Six countries and regions designated a certain part of their national budgets to fund international projects on water technology as well as the efficient use of raw materials.

- The SUSPRISE internet site: www.susprise.net.
- Several international workshops with representatives from government, industry, and other ERAnets and international networks, including the high-level integration conference of March 2007 in Brussels.
- The framework for a joint programme, a toolbox with instruments for joint activities and a selection process on how to choose appropriate instruments.

SUSPRISE took the first steps towards joint activities between national programmes. In order to make Europe more competitive in the field of industrial sustainability, the level of cooperation should be increased in the complete chain for innovation, from research to the first application to the market introduction of new technologies. Transnational networks, like SUSPRISE, can play an important role in this.

SUSPRISE, short for sustainable enterprise, is a European network of nine countries that all carry out sustainable technology programmes for industry. By cooperating and sharing experiences, SUSPRISE wants to be a leading facilitator in the process of making European industry more sustainable. The goal of SUSPRISE is closely related to the Environmental Action Plan (ETAP) of the European Commission.



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External Evaluation of the Network SUSPRISE

In 2008, SUSPRISE asked Wallner & Schauer for an external evaluation of the SUSPRISE network. The goal was to identify strengths and weaknesses in the organisational structure of the network, and to identify lessons learned. Wallner & Schauer compared the SUSPRISE network to the “viable system model” (VSM), an organisation model by Stafford Beer.

The VSM consists of five management systems that should exist in every organisation or network. The five systems are:

- 1: The operational units (in SUSPRISE the ministries and agencies)
- 2: The day-to-day coordination (coordinator, work package leaders, task leaders)
- 3: Project administration (Inside “eye” and guide to more efficiency: daily project management)
- 4: Strategic management (Outside and future “eye”, strategic decision making: steering group)
- 5: Normative management (Mission, vision, values, and governance)

For SUSPRISE, the strong points were identified in the day-to-day coordination and the project administration. The responsibilities of the coordinator, work package and task leaders were clearly defined in these two systems, and were well developed in SUSPRISE. On the other hand, it was determined that the steering group should have less administrative and more strategic tasks.

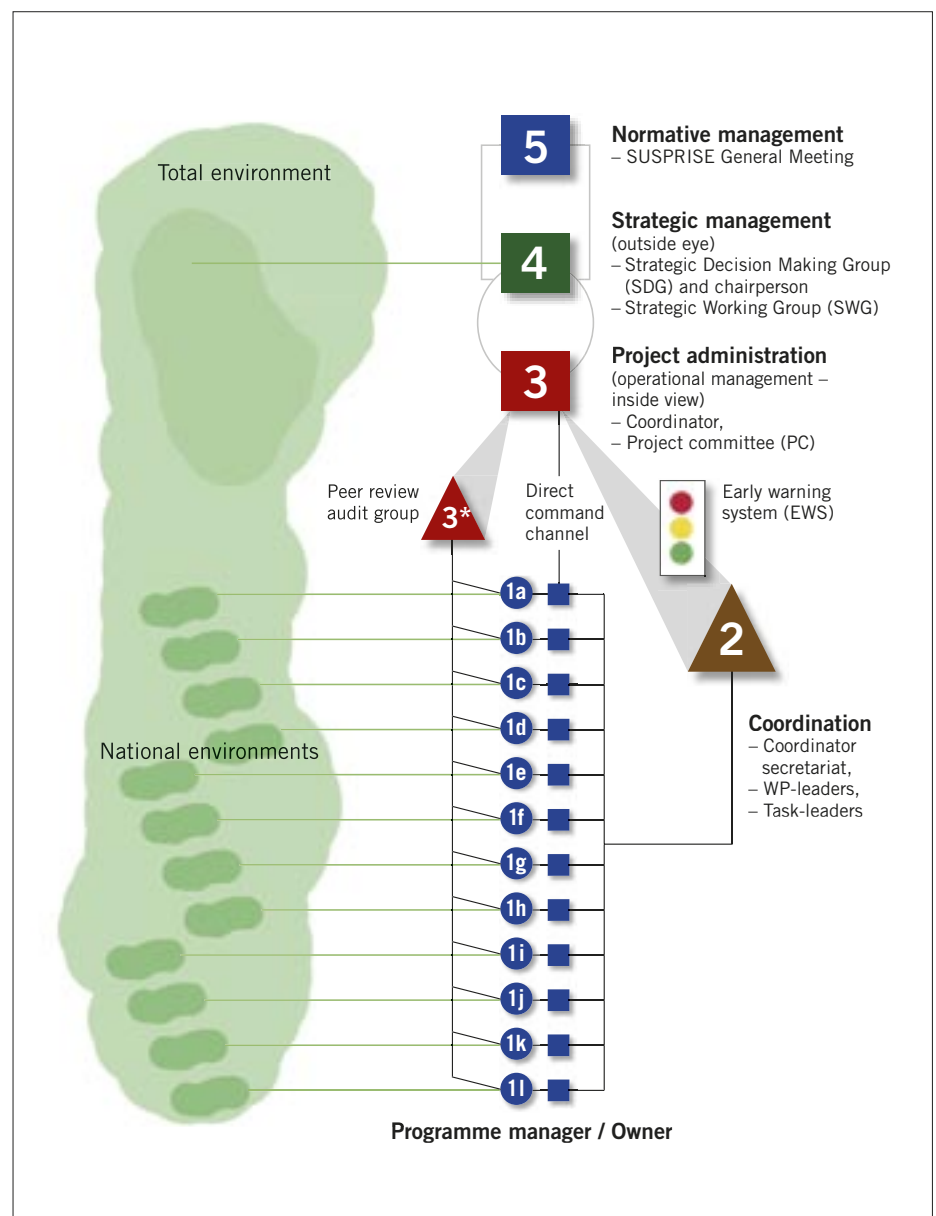
Wallner & Schauer recommended including two subunits in the strategic management of the network: a “strategic working group” for long term planning and strategy development, and a “strategic decision making group”. The chairperson of the steering group should be representing the network to the outside. Although the project administration (system 3) was well-defined, the evaluators suggested

including a peer review group in addition to the project coordinator and the project committee, to reflect the work and performance of all five systems once a year.

Furthermore, an early warning system, an indicator of temporary capacity to work in the ERA-Net was suggested. For normative management, it was proposed to schedule a

general meeting with the entire group once a year, to develop common ground about vision and mission, as well as to approve the goals or to modify rules and values.

More information: www.susprise.net



The Viable System Model – adapted to the SUSPRISE network.



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Paths to Sustainable Transnational Networks

In July 2008, SUSPRIZE initiated a workshop “Paths to Sustainable Transnational Networks” with related networks for transnational research funding in the field of sustainability in industry, SME, eco-innovation or environmental protection.

The goal for the meeting was to share experiences focussing on the organisational aspects of running a (ERA-Net) network, with an emphasis on transnational research funding and sustainability.

The starting point for the workshop was the recommendations of Wallner & Schauer in the evaluation of the SUSPRIZE network. Their findings were discussed and enriched

Inventory of Do's and Don'ts for the organisation of successful networks.



by the experiences from representatives from the ERA-Nets ERA-SME, EUROTRANSBIO, SKEP, WoodWisdom and the EUREKA network (Euroenviron, Eurostars).

It was concluded that networks need several layers to function well, such as a layer for decision making, operational management, or an advisory board with external experts. These layers should not be mixed. ERA-Nets are different from other networks, since they are not only networks, but also projects within the EC framework programme. Steering and running a project differs from steering and running a network. ERA-nets should adapt to that. Continuous reviewing and monitoring of goals allows flexibility to cope with changes in the project (persons, programmes, and political cycles). In addition, the total number of partners influences the network's performance; a variable geometry consisting of main/core partners, joint call partners, and learning/associated partners is appropriate for big consortia.

The workshop listed an inventory of Do's and Don'ts for the set up of a successful network. The topics were grouped into strategy versus operational management, monitoring of goals and results, differences between partners, and the need for communication. Some general



SUSPRIZE and other representatives from other ERA-Nets in Böheimkirchen, July 2008.

lessons learned were “Don't solve potential problems” and “Cherish your successes”.

The workshop concluded with a short outlook to the future. The ways forward for the networks were quite individual. They ranged from continuing the ERA-Net under the FP7, to continuing on bilateral basis after the end of the ERA-Net project, to starting self-sustained features. Concerning future networking and self sustaining of ERA-Nets, EUROSTARS was regarded as a successful example.



SUSPRISE Events

During the project, SUSPRISE has organised several international workshops with researchers, industrial representatives and policy makers. Please refer to the Internet site of SUSPRISE for more information on these interactive meetings.

Workshop “Towards the Sustainable Enterprise” (Berlin 2006)

The SUSPRISE workshop at the 3rd BMBF Forum for Sustainability (FONA) “Down to Earth Research – Partnerships for Global Markets” (October 2006) brought together nationally funded projects and stakeholders from research and industry from SUSPRISE countries. The workshop allowed participants to make new business contacts, build networks, and exchange experiences in European/international collaboration.

Workshop “Crossing Borders between Policy & Industry – Strategies to Make European Industry More Sustainable” (Leipzig 2007)

In May 2007, SUSPRISE hosted a session at the 4th BMBF forum for sustainability (FONA). In an interactive setting, the SUSPRISE network discussed with representatives from industry and policy makers the need for international cooperation between national (subsidy) programmes, resulting in transnational programmes and strategies.

SUSPRISE discussed successes of transnational cooperation with an international audience at the 12th ERSCP in September 2008.



Integration Conference, Brussels 2007.

Integration Conference (Brussels 2007)

The SUSPRISE conference wanted to boost awareness and support for the practical implementation of the eco-innovation agenda. At the conference, the SUSPRISE joint call was launched and discussions took place on joint programming, and the opening up of programmes. Due to its interactive character, it was a great occasion for networking with policy and decision-makers.

Workshop “Crossing Borders in Europe by Transnational Research Funding” (ERSCP, September 2008)

At the 12th European Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production (ERSCP 2008, Berlin), SUSPRISE organised a workshop to discuss the successes in international cooperation between national (subsidy) programmes. At the workshop, four transnational projects funded through the SUSPRISE joint call reported on their first project results, and commented on the benefits of transnational funding.

The coordinators of the projects concluded that transnational calls, such as in SUSPRISE, fill the gap between national programmes and the FP7 programmes. They emphasised the short, straightforward, and flexible procedures from application of the project proposal to the start of the projects. The template for proposal application was well-suited for SME partners. Through the SUSPRISE programme, partners from industry and research organisations were able to enter new markets, enlarge their personal networks, and collaborate with technological leaders abroad.





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Evaluation of the SUSPRISE Joint Call

The SUSPRISE Joint Call – that had been launched in spring 2007 and in which ten transnational projects got funded – was evaluated from two perspectives: the programme manager’s perspective and the applicant’s perspective. The evaluation concluded in September 2008 in Berlin with a workshop with the project coordinators of the funded projects and SUSPRISE partners.

From a programme manager’s perspective, the launch and the results of the joint call was a success. The process towards a joint call and the difficulties encountered was regarded a valuable experience and a learning process. The common evaluation of the proposals with an international jury of experts was very effective, especially because no additional national evaluations were made afterwards.

The evaluation by the applicants demonstrated that the joint call was well-received by industry, since the proposal form and the submission procedure was very short and straightforward. In comparison to FP7, the SUSPRISE call was quite non-bureaucratic. In particular, SMEs benefit from this simple structure. They appreciated the flexibility for building project consortia (2 partners from 2 countries). Some

project coordinators also highlighted the short time between submission of the proposal and the start of the project. The joint call project coordinators also made some recommendations for future calls. The contract procedures need to be more harmonized and, a specific role for the call secretariat was suggested. Participants also indicated that a one-stop-shop application process is preferred, that would make it possible to submit the national forms and the common SUSPRISE proposal form together to



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the joint call secretariat. The participants emphasized that transnational calls are a great benefit to industry and research organisations, because they enable the development of customer-oriented projects that follow the need of industry. In this way, transnational calls fill the gap between national programmes and FP 7 programmes.

More information on the evaluation of the joint call can be found on the Internet at www.susprise.net.

Mutual Opening up of Programmes

In 2009, IWT and SenterNovem will start with a pilot case for mutual opening up of the Dutch Environment and Technology Programme and the Flemish SME-programme for projects contributing to sustainable technological development.

One way to enhance European collaboration between National/Regional Research Programmes is to open up these programmes for foreign participants. By "opening up of programmes", a foreign partner is allowed to participate (funded or non-funded, contractor or non-contractor) in nationally or regionally funded projects. "Mutual opening up" means that rules and procedures for acceptance and support of activities from foreign partners are compared and aligned between countries or regions.

Many national and regional programmes take a rather cautious approach vis-à-vis "opening-up". Foreign participation in a national programme is often possible, but not actively promoted. On a political level, research and innovation programmes generally want to spend scarce resources in their own country.

However, programme participants are looking for easy access to new knowledge, infrastructure, and markets abroad. Opening up would allow industry to also find the best possible expertise for their project ideas abroad.

As a result of the preparatory work in SUSPRISE, Flanders and The Netherlands will also stimulate transnational projects within their national (regional) programme in 2009. This will need some (minor) changes in the programmes involved. Proposals with Dutch and Flemish partners will be able to apply for a subsidy in the country of the main partner, taking national (regional) rules into account. Please refer to www.susprise.net for more information on the opening up activities in SUSPRISE in general, and Flanders and The Netherlands in particular.

Outlook to the Future

This is the final newsletter of SUSPRISE. As a project in FP6, SUSPRISE will end in December 2008. However, the network is currently preparing a new ERA-Net proposal in FP 7, building on the lessons learned in SUSPRISE.

Most SUSPRISE partners intend to join this new initiative that will focus on research and innovation for sustainability in general, and eco-innovation in particular. New partners will join the network, e.g. from Eastern and Southern Europe.

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