

Virtual Environment for Innovation Management Technologies (VERITE)

European Commission - DG ENTERPRISE

Technical meeting minutes

Date: 22 February 2002

Place: Berlin, Hotel Albrechtshof

LIST of participants

Aristotle University - URENIO (leader)	Dimitris Milossis
CMI UK S.A. (subcontractor)	Sophie Mavor
FINAOSTA (Region of Valle d' Aosta)	Giorgio Broglio
FUNDECYT (Region of Extremadura)	Carolina Grau Angel Ruiz
Institute "Jozef Stefan" (Slovenia)	Mirjana Oblac
GIB GmbH (subcontractor)	Carsten Becker Gerti Mager Oliver Charlet
LEIA (Basque Country-Spain)	Sergio Larreina
NCCI (Cyprus)	Andreas Antoniadis
Observatoire des Politiques Publiques en Europe du Sud (University of Montpellier – France)	Mirreille Lacave
Politecnico di Milano (Mantova)	Andrea Tosi
PRO NOVUM Association (Hungary)	Peter Nagy
Province of Mantova (Italy)	Massimiliano Musci Emanuela Medeghini
Region of Lorraine (France)	Pierre Bourgogne
Region of South West Oltenia (Romania)	Marilena Bogheanu Desdemona Popescu
STEINBEIS Europa Zentrum (subcontractor)	Peter Niess
Tech Tirol Technology Centre (Austria)	Armin Partl
University of Thessaly (Greece)	Lina Kyrgiafina
University of Wales	Martin Rhisiart
ZENIT GmbH	Michael Guth
VERITE external evaluator	Alasdair Reid

Welcome address

Carsten Becker (managing director of GIB GmbH) and Dimitris Milossis (URENIO) welcomed the participants in the 2nd meeting of VERITE.

Dimitris Milossis informed members for the progress of VERITE and he proposed an overview for the dissemination activities. He said that throughout the duration of VERITE each member has to include the network actions and activities in the most possible activities and publications such as newsletters, conferences, workshops, web sites, presentations etc. This action will increase the

effect of the network without significant additional cost. He also informed members about the classification of budget payment. He said that all institutions involved (contractor, members and subcontractors) will be funded according to the proportion of the budget paid by the Commission.

Benchmarking conference

Dimitris Milossis and **Prof Peter Niess** (STEINBEIS) presented to partners the plan for the first conference of VERITE, which will take place in 6th-7th June 2002 in Stuttgart. STEINBEIS (subcontractor of URENIO) will host and organise the event. As agreed in the kick-off meeting this conference (as well as all the other VERITE conferences) will last 1,5 day. The second half of the second day will be open for a meeting of the Steering Committee of VERITE. The initial proposal of Prof Niess was to include three parallel sessions in the conference. After proposal of URENIO, the network agreed to eliminate the parallel sessions and keep a complete plenary session due to limited organisational budget. The proposed subjects of discussion in the conference are the following:

- Innovating Regions: Concepts, Projects, Results
- Benchmarking: Theory, State-of-the-Art, Impact to the Economy of the Regions
- Benchmarking: Best Practices of the Regions
- Company Benchmarking
- The Future of Benchmarking: Trend and new concepts
- IT Platform for company Benchmarking
- Benchmarking for Communities and administrations

The speakers for the conferences will be invited from an open call published in the VERITE web site (www.e-innovation.org) the IRE network site (www.innovating-regions.net) and the most possible web sites of the VERITE members. The organisers asked members to help in contacting well known experts in the discussed subject. The speakers will be selected in agreement between the conference organiser (STEINBEIS) and the network co-ordinator (URENIO).

The expected number of presentations in the conference will approximately include 10 external and 10 internal speakers in the above discussion subjects.

The members also agreed that local company managers will be invited through a flyer and a poster produced and printed by the organiser (STEINBEIS). The conference will be announced through the web sites of the members as well as a web site specially developed by STEINBEIS for this conference.

VERITE evaluation

Mr Alasdair Reid the external evaluator of VERITE presented his ideas and expectations for the evaluation of the project.

He initially described the steps of the evaluation and the major matters which will be evaluated:

- The connection of actions to results and impact in the local markets
- The added value of the activities for the members and the SMEs

- The sustainability of the network after the end of the project
- The inclusion of new IMT schemes in the area

He referred that in the next weeks he will prepare and distribute to members a short baseline questionnaire and he will support the conference organisers for a satisfaction/ quality participants survey.

VERITE discussion forum and Database

Carsten Becker and **Oliver Charlet** presented GIB proposal for the VERITE database and the discussion forum. The main points of the presentations were:

The database (DB) will be a library of articles contributed by members and arranged under some main categories (Innovation Management Tools). It will be filled by two kinds of material: (a) articles and papers collected from users and experts and (b) selective discussions from the discussion forum.

The discussion forum (DF) will host discussions arises from members and registered non-members. Each question given will be left open in the DF for some time around a month. After that time the DF supervisor (GIB GmbH) will evaluate the interest of the question and the potential answers and will publish the discussion in the DB.

The DB and the DF users will be collected and administered by a database which will be developed and hosted in the URENIO server. Each registered user will have the option to be included in an interest group. When an article or paper of his interest will be published in the DB or if a discussion of his interest will appear in the DF he will automatically be informed by an e-mail.

The DB and the DF material will be open to the broad public. If a reader would like to publish an article or a raise a discussion to each of these applications, he will have to follow a brief online registration process.

The categories of material for the DB and the DF will initially be the following:

1. Benchmarking
2. New product development
3. Supply Chain Management
4. Technology Clinics and
5. ERP/MRP

Web portal

Dimitris Milossis (URENIO Research unit) gave a presentation on the portal design based on the proposed specifications circulated before the meeting. The main points stressed in the presentation were the following:

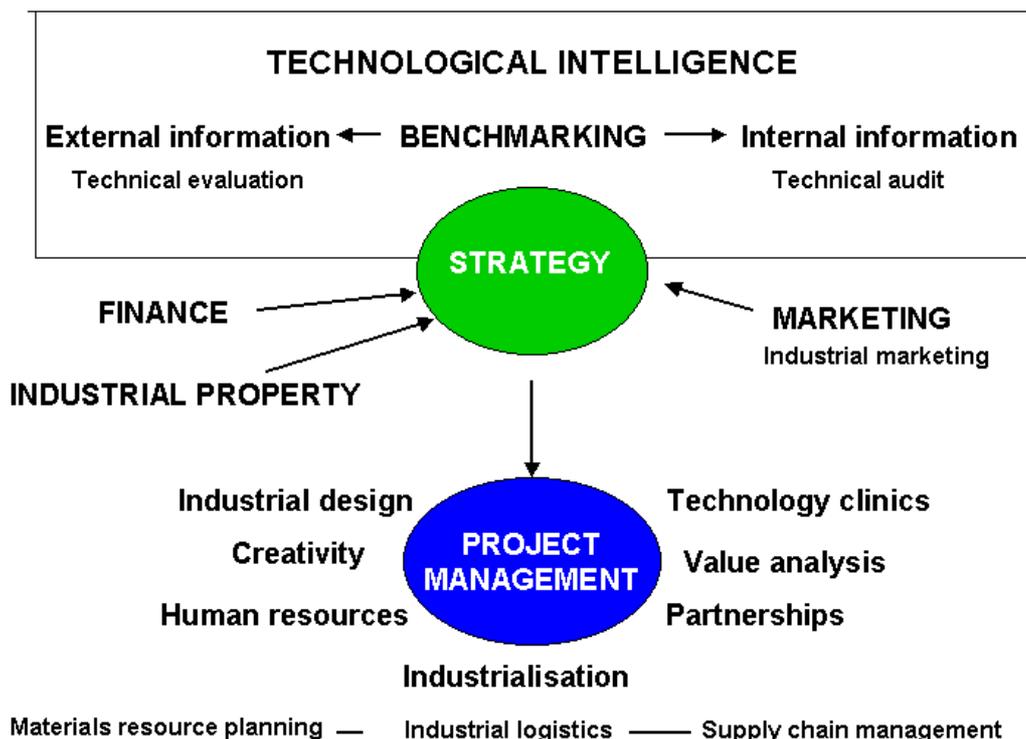
The main purposes of the portal will be:

- (a) Concentration of information about the intermediate steps for Innovation Management Techniques (IMTs) implementation into regions and entrepreneurs.
- (b) Activity and contact information about IMT providers

- (c) Presentation of institutions relevant to IMTs implementation (funding, networks, information sources etc.) and
- (d) Active link to the other VERITE IT applications (DB and DF).

The conclusions from the open discussion that followed the presentation were the following:

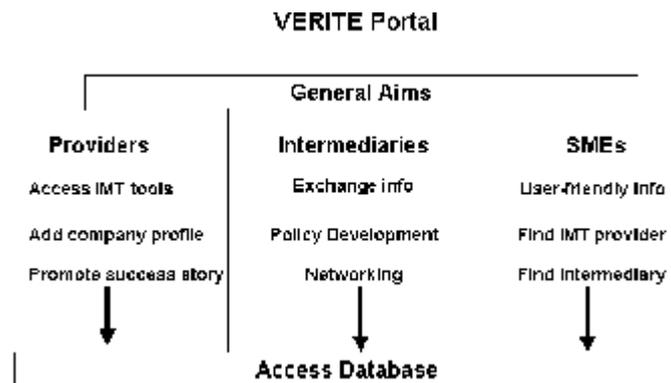
- The presentation of a long list of IMT providers in the portal was not accepted because it is difficult to verify the quality of services. Instead of that URENIO proposed that the portal could include full IMT packages or services provided by selective firms. In this way the portal will avoid the possibility that numerous firms (software houses and consultants) will claim to provide IMT services with no possibility for the VERITE members to evaluate the services. It has been agreed that the portal and the DB will include a disclaimer that the VERITE members are not responsible for the information provided.
- The added value of a large database with IMT providers from many European countries was questioned because SMEs in European area does not usually look for IMT providers away from their area because of difficulty to secure a satisfactory supervision in the adaptation of IMTs in their business environment.
- Due to the limited business and marketing use of internet, entrepreneurs does not usually have internet applications as their main source for business information such as what VERITE aims to provide. Therefore, the main target group for the portal and the DB should be the business intermediaries and these are the organizations that VERITE should influence. It is also necessary to define the purpose of the applications. There are people with problems and difficulties and providers with solutions. This has implications for the design of the applications.
- URENIO (in cooperation with the evaluator Alasdair Reid) will develop a questionnaire to be completed by the regions, based on the “company innovation landscape” model provided by Pierre Bourgogne:



Members responses will help determine the focus of VERITE activities, both in term of content and audiences.

URENIO and GIB will discuss the requirements of the portal and database/discussion forum and present a revised specification in the light of comments from VERITE members.

Emanuela Medeghini (Mantova) presented a basic introduction to the portal (see following graph). The first page of the portal should indicate that there are three distinct audiences, IMT providers, intermediaries and enterprises, and should explain what each type of visitor will get from the site.



After this discussion the portal developer (URENIO) proposed a revised portal architecture which would include:

A. IMT Description and applications. This section will include:

- The **description** of the each IMT (what is the technique, objectives of the technique, structure of the methodology, alternative solutions, expected results and benefit).
- The **application** (where the technique has been applied, type of firms and organisations concerned, implementation costs, conditions for implementation, infrastructures and modifications required, European organisations supporting the implementation), and
- The **implementation procedure** (phases and steps, partial techniques and tools included in each step, related software applications).
- The application will not include IMT providers in general. BUT, there are quite a few providers who propose or sell complete IMT packages. The concept is to change the presentation of IMT provides into **presentation of complete services and tools**. For instance, this could include full ERP packages, existing Benchmarking networks or IT platforms, Technology Clinics expert companies (such as TEKES) etc. Such web application architecture exists in TUCOWS (<http://www.tucows.com>) in its section about software.

This material would be present in web form and will be constantly enriched by any input from users.

B. IMTs database including success stories and best practices. This section will include a search and browsing process to the material of the VERITE database(hosted by GIB throughout the VERITE duration). In the database we will all include information about IMTs implementation in our regions. It's GIB responsibility to do a preliminary check to this material and include it in the database

C. Discussion forum on IMTs. This section will include a link to the VERITE discussion forum (hosted by GIB during VERITE duration). Any registered user will have the chance to raise a discussion on a matter concerning IMT implementation and application or reply to any question arised in the forum.

The final conclusions of the meeting were the following:

1. URENIO and STEINBEIS were authorized to move on the organization of the next VERITE activity which will be the "Conference on Benchmarking" at 6th-7th June 2002.
2. URENIO and GIB will revise the portal and DB architectures taking into account the results of the discussions from the meeting and will propose to members the new architecture before development beginning.
3. URENIO will develop the draft version of the portal based on the material produced from the InnoRegio project and the members will contribute with enrichment material.
4. The next meeting of network members will take place in Stuttgart in the afternoon of 7th June after the end of the conference.