

THEME [ENV.2012.6.3-&]
Innovative resource efficient technologies, processes and services



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ZEPHYR project – Deliverable D7.9

Policy brief with a synthesis of policy relevant results from the project

Funding scheme: **Collaborative Project**

Project Acronym: **ZEPHYR**

Project Coordinator: **TUSCIA UNIVERSITY**

Proposal full title: **Zero-impact innovative technology in forest plant production**

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Summary: **Policy brief advocating the adoption of an “European Distributed Company”**

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Project start: October 2012

Duration: 36 Months

1. Executive summary

The Zephyr project has developed a new, zero-impact growth chamber for forest regeneration material: a sustainable controlled environment where forest plants can grow, starting from the seeds, in a robotized nursery assistant.

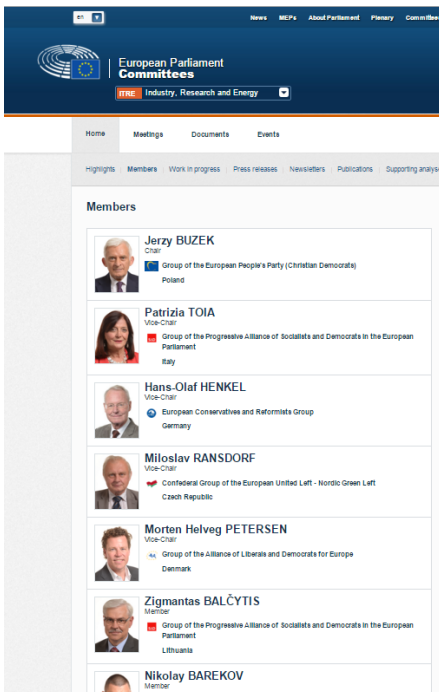
As reported in the deliverable D7.2 “Market analysis”, there are noticeable advantages of the Zephyr system respect to the ordinary greenhouses and growth chambers: therefore the project results can be successfully exploited.

The model of the distributed company, based on an adaptation of the existing Italian rules for a network of SMEs is the most suitable solution for the industrialization phase: an adaptation of the model to the concerned Zephyr partner has been provided during the project and is currently discussed between the participating SMEs.

The discussions occurred between the partners, and particularly the need of having an instrument for going to the market with a shared IPR better than the existing E.E.I.G (European Economic Interest Grouping) have been synthesized in the attached policy brief.

The attached document has been sent on 30/11/2015 to:

- The MEPs member of the ITRE (Industry, Research and Energy) Committee of the European Parliament
- The Directorate General “Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROWTH) of the European Commission – Assistant to the director general and the Task Force “Collaborative Economy, New Business Models and SMEs”





November 2015

“There are still barriers to the market exploitation of the Research & Innovation results coming from Horizon 2020”

“A new instrument should allow a faster go-to-market time for the innovation produced”

European Distributed Company: a step beyond E.E.I.G.

Background

Research and innovation are increasingly interlinked internationally in a landscape that has been changing rapidly. The Europe’s innovation strategy is focused in making industry, and notably SMEs, more competitive in the international market by linking research firmly to innovation, leading to better products and services.

Horizon 2020 is supporting business R&I and bringing together the public and private sectors: efforts are concentrated on key enabling technologies – such as advanced manufacturing, microelectronics, nanotechnology and biotechnology – that underpin innovation across many industries and sectors.

However, there are still barriers (different member states rules) jeopardizing an actual and fast exploitation of R&I results

Several exploitable results of R&I projects are complex products, coming from the collaborative work of different subjects established in different European countries. The issue of the IPR’s joint ownership is well regulated by the legal point of view, but still lacks of practical applications allowing such joint IPRs to quickly go to the mar-

ket, overcoming all the bureaucratic barriers. The only available European instrument is the European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG): a legal entity created on 1985 under European Community (EC) Council Regulation 2137/85, based on the pre-existing French *groupeement d’intérêt économique* (G.i.e.). After 30 years, EEIG appears not adequate to the new challenges the EU industries, particularly SMEs, are facing in a fast moving global market.

Key findings

There is a need of a new instrument allowing a fast go-to-market time for the innovation produced together by several European companies, without establishing a new legal entity

Such an instrument is identified as “European Distributed Company”, based on the Italian “Contratto di Rete” [www.rm.camcom.it/reteimpresa]. Even if the distributed model may appear strange to business people who are

E.E.I.G. in a nutshell

A European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG) is a type of legal entity created on 1985 under European Community (EC) Council Regulation 2137/85.

Its activities must be ancillary to those of its members and cannot be primarily formed in order to make a profit - although if in carrying out its activities it makes a profit, this is acceptable.

used to the traditional, centralized way of running a company, it might even work a lot better than the traditional model for many innovation-related businesses: distributed systems tend to work well in general and the internet itself is a prime example.

In a distributed company, each partner continues in doing his specific business and/or research activity in his location: a robust “network contract” will define how they will contribute to create a competitive advantage, through a set of inter-related activities of the Primary Value Chain: Inbound Logistics > Operations > Outbound Logistics > Marketing & Sales > Service.



Europe’s research and innovation performance needs to be boosted to master the many challenges ahead and keep its place in a fast changing world. (source: www.ec.europa.eu/innovation-union)

we lack an internal market for innovation

we must ensure territorial and social cohesion throughout Europe

we must pool resources in research and innovation



Like the EEIG was established on the basis of the existing French “groupement d’intérêt économique,” the Italian “Contratto di Rete” could be the basis of the European Distributed Company

According to the classic definition, the goal of the Primary Value Chain Activities is to create value that exceeds the cost of providing the product or service, thus generating a profit margin.

The envisaged European Distributed Company should be defined by a specific scope: it generally comprises actions which would be beyond the capacity of the single enterprises, due to the need of exploiting a shared IPR, lack of resources and/or capability, and may include:

- ⇒ Realisation of complex products/services;
- ⇒ A single catalogue containing the various products/services offered by the partners;
- ⇒ A seamless, turnkey (all inclusive) product;
- ⇒ Joint actions to access and manage international markets;

Distributed Companies: lists and concepts

- <https://www.lullabot.com/articles/what-is-a-distributed-company>
- <http://toni.org/2010/03/08/15-reasons-why-your-company-should-be-distributed/>
- <http://workingremote.ly/leaders/distributed-companies/>

- ⇒ Commercialisation of products/services under one brand and on a single website;
- ⇒ Market research;
- ⇒ Marketing to international markets;
- ⇒ Shared logistics, transport and fiscal, legal and financial services;

Policy implications

The basic policy implications regarding the support of the new cooperative instrument lay in the adoption of a new decision based on a model already existing in a Member State: like the EEIG was established on the basis of the already existing French *groupement d’intérêt économique*, the European Distributed Company can easily be based on the Italian “Contratto di rete”.

Conclusion

A new model of agreement dealing with the “European Distributed Company” should be defined under common European rules, based on the existing model already running in Italy, in order to allow innovative products/services created by several subjects coming from different Member States to go faster in the global market.

The Zephyr Project

This Policy Brief is the Deliverable D7.9 of the Zephyr project “Policy brief with a synthesis of policy relevant results from the Project”.

The Zephyr (Zero-Impact Innovative Technology In Forest Plant Production) project, co-financed by the European Union under the 7th programme, has been carried out by a Consortium of 14 partners (of which 7 SMEs) from October 2012 to November 2015.

The project has developed a prototype a new, zero-impact growth chamber for forest regeneration material: a sustainable controlled environment where forest plants can grow, starting from the seeds, in a robotized nursery assistant.

Since there are noticeable advantages of the Zephyr system respect to the ordinary greenhouses and growth chambers, the project results can be successfully exploited and the model of the distributed company, is the most suitable solution for the industrialization phase.

The concerned project partners, jointly owning the IPRs of different parts of the system, are now discussing the practical application of such a model.

www.zephyr-project.eu

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Scheme of the ZEPHYR prototype

