



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
RESEARCH DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Directorate G - Industrial technologies
Products, Processes, Organisations

CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORKSHOP

“The *Manufuture* Platform: A new way of governance for research in manufacturing”, Milano, 20 October 2004

The work carried out under the *Manufuture* initiative has progressed towards the finalisation of a Vision 2020 document, accompanied by a draft Strategic Research Agenda for discussion. There is an emerging consensus of the need to speed-up the transformation of European manufacturing from a resource-based to a knowledge-based industrial environment.

An issue that has been left open thus far is whether a horizontal platform on manufacturing technologies should be set-up and, in case of a favourable response, what type of role, form and composition would it take.

Thus, the purpose of the workshop organised by ITIA-CNR was to discuss with key stakeholders the most appropriate approach of structuring such a European Technology Platform for Manufacturing in view of the upcoming conference “*Manufuture 2004*” in Enschede, in December 2004.

The conclusions of the workshop are presented in the following six points:

1. There was wide support for the potential usefulness and necessity in setting up a technology platform within *Manufuture*.
2. However, compared with other European Technology Platform (ETP) initiatives, the *Manufuture* platform should have more of an “umbrella” nature. The main role of the platform would be to govern research, technological development and innovation (RTDI) efforts aimed at the transformation of the European manufacturing industry at two levels:
 - 1) At policy level aimed at continuous development of the *Manufuture* vision, promoting the Lisbon objectives;
 - 2) At operational level employing a technological approach exploiting all possible synergies created by the converging nature of science and technologies;

while integrating all key stakeholders and their needs.

3. The technological approach should (initially) focus on common problems or bottlenecks faced by the ETPs currently in operation or under development (such as Textiles and Clothing, Renewable Forestry Resources, Sustainable Chemistry, Maritime and Rail platforms).

4. Concerning the structure of the platform:
 - 1) A High Level Group should be formed to oversee the implementation of the *Manufuture* vision, composed of key stakeholders (including the Chairpersons of the relevant sectoral platforms as well as members of public bodies representing national schemes);
 - 2) The *Manufuture* vision needs to be supported by similar public “manufacturing platforms” and thus the HLG should be “mirrored” at national and regional levels;
 - 3) An industrial mirror group should ensure the soundness of the technological approach, supported by a steering group of research actors;
 - 4) Task forces or ad-hoc working groups should be formed as needed to identify detailed research requirements;
 - 5) Commission staff would provide support for the above activities.
5. Following the December *Manufuture* 2004 conference, work should start on mapping the synergies between the *Manufuture* documents (vision document and draft SRA) and the requirements from the sectoral ETPs and turn the synergies into a plan of action. The industrial transformation process is a complex one, requiring action on several fields (innovation environment, societal issues, knowledge generation, education and infrastructure). Initially, the implementation should focus on the “three pillars” of research, education and infrastructure while influencing the societal issues and innovation environment are seen as longer term objectives.
6. *Manufuture* vision is by necessity a long term vision. Nevertheless, short and medium term issues should also be taken into account, but they should be primarily be tackled at national or regional level, while ensuring a consistent transition strategy towards the long term *Manufuture* objectives.

Other notable points from the discussions:

DG ENTR expressed strong support for the “Manufacturing enabling technologies” ETP proposed and presented by ORGALIME and CECIMO. DG ENTR also mentioned that *Manufuture* is expected to have a significant role in the action plan for the mechanical engineering industry which is currently in preparation.

Recalling the ambitious goals presented in the draft vision document, a point was made that the outcome of the *Manufuture* initiative should not be “just another ETP”. Similarly, *Manufuture* can not be driven by DG RTD only. Realisation of the goals requires co-operation across several DGs as well as between the Commission and the Member States.