

Proposal of EUREC and ETPs on the structure and work of energy ETIPs¹

Introduction

Since April 2015 EUREC has facilitated discussions on the governance of the SET Plan between today's European Technology Platforms dealing directly in renewable energy supply technologies and in the architecture and requirements of Europe's future energy system (EBTP, RHC-Platform, EU PV TP, ETP Smartgrids). Following a meeting between these ETPs and the European Commission on 8 June, these ETPs sent the 'Main messages' below to the EC for it to consider before finalisation of the Communication on an integrated SET Plan, scheduled for adoption in September.

This paper expands on and complements those 'Main messages' as a further contribution to the debate.

EUREC stands ready and willing to continue to facilitate dialogue between the current ETPs / future ETIPs on those topics where it is of mutual benefit to speak with one voice.

Main messages

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- 1) The governance of the new SET Plan must be streamlined. One stakeholder platform per category of renewable energy technology is sufficient. The platforms' members should have different backgrounds. The combination of their backgrounds should give the platform the capacity to cover the full scope of R&I activity in a sector. Their recommendations on research priorities should balance short- and long-term considerations. Today's ETPs (embedding corresponding EILs where they exist) can be the stakeholder platforms of the new SET Plan.
- 2) ETPs acknowledge that the policies and actions of Member States will be crucial to keeping the SET Plan on track and are willing to help the Member States structure their funding in a way that gets optimal results at EU level.
- 3) The EC has substantial resources of its own that it can dedicate to the SET Plan, notably from Horizon 2020. The EC should formally request ETIPs' input to H2020 Work Programmes as the Work Programmes begin to be prepared. The EC should formally respond to this input. Furthermore the ETIPs should be formally consulted on the Work Programme when it is in draft form (much like the Advisory Group on Energy is already).
- 4) The work of ETPs needs continuous financial support from the EC. The EC's financial support will be modulated according to the number, nature and difficulty of the tasks demanded.
- 5) The annual State of the Energy Union Communication should be used to structure and formalise interactions between stakeholders, the Member States and the EC on Energy Union's R&I dimension. We would like this interaction to include an annual conference linked to the Work Programme definition process where:

¹ ETIPs – 'European Technology and Innovation Platforms'. This is the new term used by the EC for reincarnated European Technology Platforms. We are happy to adopt it.

- stakeholders present matters that are of strategic importance to them, which it is within the EC and Member States' power to fix, including priority research topics;
- the EC and Member States report on progress in mobilising funds to meet R&I targets

Principles for fruitful dialogue between stakeholders, EC, MS/AC² in the field of energy

- **Simplicity in working arrangements I:** the EC proposes that “in the new SET Plan governance, only one stakeholder platform will exist instead of the two structures (ETP and EII) currently co-existing for several technologies.” We support this. The stakeholder platform would be called an ETIP (“European Technology and Innovation Platform”). There is one ETIP per category of energy technology, as today. Renewable heating and cooling technologies may be taken together as one ETIP, as is the case with today’s RHC-Platform.
- **Simplicity in working arrangements II:** ETIPs expect to find in one place – the Steering Group, or its Specific Configurations – all the most influential people they need to address from national administrations and the EC. The permanent members of the Steering Group will invite in expert colleagues, for example managing European Structural and Investment Funds, as necessary.
- **Subsidiarity:** discussions take place in the smallest group needed for the decision (i.e. no must-attend meetings where a large part of the agenda is not relevant for one technology);
- **Clarity of mission I:** we see the primary purpose of EC facilitation of ETIPs as “Helping the EC to help us”, where “us” is the particular energy industry sector concerned. The EC can help directly with the resources that it controls and with its legislative powers. It can also help indirectly by both enabling greater contact between the ETIPs and MS/AC and by promoting ETIPs’ messages to MS/AC.
- **Clarity of mission II:** Once a forum for discussion with MS/AC has been created by the EC, the secondary purpose is “Helping the Member States to help us”. Member State guidance or action could also be crucial for matters relating to competitiveness or the removal of regulatory barriers to technology deployment.
- **Clarity of mission III:** The third purpose is “Using the EC’s resources to help us the stakeholders help ourselves”. For example, an ETIP might want to increase public acceptance of its technology by producing a set of myth-busting factsheets. Such work would come under this category.
- **Mutual respect I:** ETIPs’ annual work plans should be discussed jointly by the ETIP and the EC; substantial changes to the plan to be approved by both.
- **Mutual respect II:** Information flows in both directions (between stakeholders and funding programme owners) on R&D strategy with stakeholders understanding much better than today why in some cases their recommendations may be retained and in some cases rejected. The SET Plan DGs have handed over project management duties to executive agencies, which may free up some capacity to provide feedback to stakeholders.
- **Mutual respect III:** Adequate financial resources provided by the EC for the tasks it asks of stakeholders (see next section).
- **Acceptance:** ETIPs should be accepted by the sectors they claim to speak on behalf of. This means they must be:

² MS/AC: Members States and Associated Countries (i.e. countries associated to Horizon 2020)

- **Representative:** The balanced presence of stakeholders from different backgrounds (including companies, research centres and universities, geographically spread) in each platform would ensure that one of the platforms' potentially most valuable deliverables, their Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas (SRIAs – described in Annex 1), give a picture of a sector's research priorities that takes all relevant considerations into account. To take into account the consumers point of view as well, Like it is for today's ETPs, NGOs and civil society organisations including consumer groups should continue to be welcome in ETIPs.
- **Transparent:** EC should, with ETIPs, work out transparent Terms of Reference for ETIPs that are easy to understand, non-bureaucratic and that describe how the ETIP reaches out to its sector. The ToR for each ETIP should contain many common features but with some possibility to adapt to each ETIP's particular circumstances.
- **Confidence in the working arrangements once they are set up:** The EC cannot simultaneously be sensitive to criticism that ETIPs are a back door for industry to exert covert influence on its funding programmes and state (and apparently believe) that ETIPs operate openly and transparently. The second of these perceptions, which is the correct one, should be asserted confidently by the EC.
- **Equality:** All energy ETIPs should be equal in responsibilities and rights, regardless of whether or not they were part of the original list of SET Plan EITs (COM(2007) 723).

Tasks of ETIPs

ETIPs stand willing to assist in improving the efficiency of European R&D investments by accomplishing such tasks as:

- Continuing to establish Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas per technology area, from basic research to market uptake, identifying priorities in the short, medium and long term (see Annex 1);
- Identifying gaps and overlaps within national/European R&I activities and informing the Steering Group about them (*);
- Identifying innovation barriers, notably those related to regulation and financing. The platforms should attempt to provide recommendations on the regulatory framework to the extent that they affect (positively or negatively) technology development;
- Reporting on the implementation of R&I activities at European, national and industrial levels in order to support the work of SETIS. They could report on the progress of R&D performance in their sector (for example against particular pre-agreed high-level indicators, e.g. the cost of a technology by a certain date), on R&D infrastructure, R&I investments and R&I policies and barriers, and the state of the industry (*);
- Developing knowledge-sharing mechanisms that help bring R&I results to deployment (*);
- Identifying priorities of cross-cutting nature: e.g. education & training, socio-economics aspects, international cooperation (*);
- Establishing and maintaining a meaningful dialogue with national stakeholders and authorities (*);
This involves two kinds of work.
1 – towards stakeholders: ETIPs will support national technology platforms (where they exist) to align national and EU funding programmes, survey national experts on their country's priorities and see

what overlaps and gaps exist when all national and European efforts are considered as a whole.

2 – towards public authorities: The dialogue with national public authorities should lead to better alignment of national funding with the European strategy described under 1. ETIPs could help Member States in setting up ERA-NETs.

- Establishing and maintaining a meaningful dialogue with related ETIPs
e.g. Memoranda of Understanding between related ETIPs, the first example is already underway between ETIP SmartGrids, ECTP and EU PV TP.
- Other tasks
The ETIPs can produce reports or undertake actions that do not fit under the headings above, providing they are adequately resourced and are within the capability of the ETIP and/or its support team. An example might be an analysis of the European competitiveness of a sector.

Support to ETIPs

- ETIPs will need a team to manage their workflow, carry out some administrative and content-related tasks for them, minute their discussions and disseminate their position papers or other documents that express their views. To keep platforms open and representative of the collective view of their members, this administrative work needs financial support from the EC. Some of the tasks above imply additional workload (particularly those marked with an asterisk: **(*)**) for which adequate financial support must be provided. Data-mining and -analysis and initial discussions with Member States would typically require the time of an ETIP's support team ('secretariat'). The experts sitting in ETIPs can
 - guide the secretariat's work and
 - take the lead on those tasks that can reasonably be expected of people who offer their time for free.
- An example of a contract that has supported the asterisk-marked tasks above is [Gridplus](#), which supported the EEGI (European Electricity Grid Initiative), and which the EC considered to work well.
- Allowing each platform's leadership and the EC jointly to decide the platform's tasks implies the EC creating vehicles to fund platforms over three or four years (for example, Coordination and Support Actions) that allow the exact work of the platform after the first year to be detailed between both in the course of the contract.
- The EC would like to be consulted on the members of the ETIP. This is acceptable if the EC is expecting to fund them as 'third parties' or subcontractors under a contract to a consortium supporting the ETIP.

Tasks of the SET Plan Steering Group

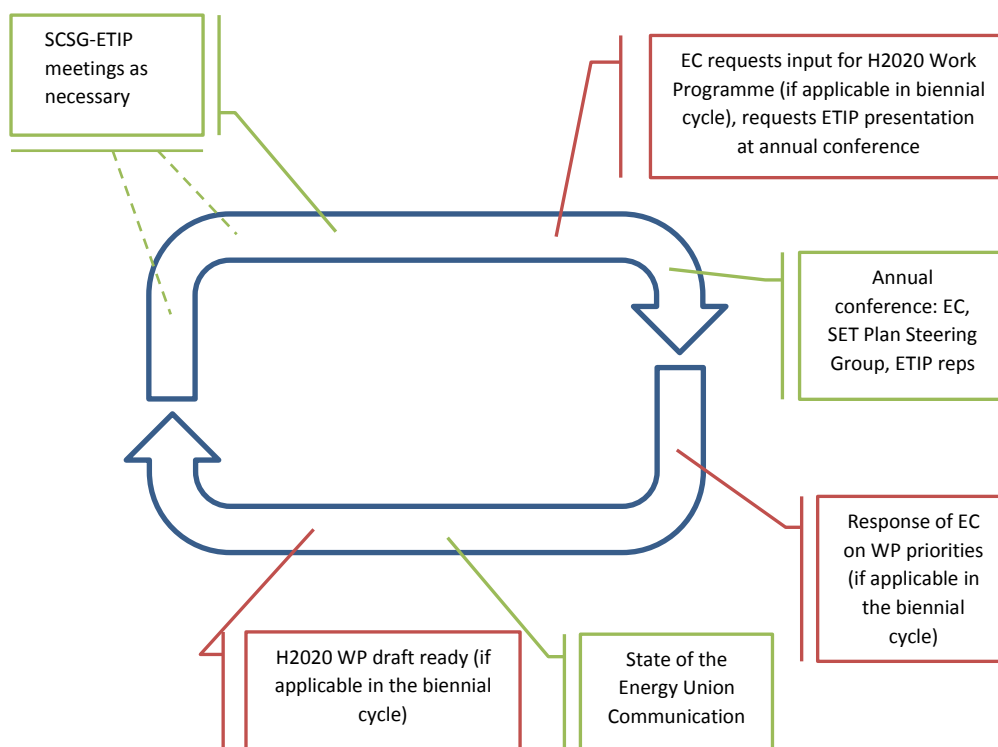
- **(Specifically the EC)** Request formally from the ETIP input to the Horizon 2020 Work Programme at an influential time in the Horizon 2020 Work Programme definition cycle (say, right at the start), much like the H2020 Advisory Group in Energy is already. ETIPs it should be remembered, are recognised as the EC's partners in [Horizon 2020's legal basis](#), which allows the EC, we think, to give them this privilege. Input may be requested according to a particular template provided by the EC. The EC will publish its reaction to that input.
- **(Specifically the MS/AC)**

- Request input formally from ETIPs on the choice of topics for any ERA-NET or any other initiatives that MS/AC members are close to finalising.
- Create regulatory conditions in their countries that are propitious for low carbon energy technologies, in particular concerning (for RES) the expansion of manufacturing or production capacity or (for smart grids) the deployment of technologies or market models enabling a flexible grid. Report on progress.
- **(to the SET Plan Steering Group as a whole)** Ensure that at EU-level (strictly speaking, 'European Research Area'-level) ETIPs' SRIAs are being followed.

A process for keeping the ETIPs, MS/AC and EC focused on delivery

The Energy Union Communication introduced the annual State of the Energy Union Communication, one dimension of which is the EU's innovation policy in energy.

The preparation, year after year, of this Communication, which must give an update on progress in energy technology and on the policies that support, it is the foundation on which an annual cycle of exchanges between the Steering Group and ETIPs should be built (Box1). The need exists to inject a dose of routine into the SET Plan's operation, and the advent of State of the Energy Union provides the opportunity for this.



Box 1 PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS OF AN ANNUAL CYCLE BASED AROUND THE STATE OF THE ENERGY UNION COMMUNICATION INDICATING THE REQUEST MADE BY THE EC TO ETPs TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND, IN APPLICABLE YEARS IN THE BIENNIAL WORK PROGRAMME CYCLE, THE FORMAL REQUEST FOR INPUT AND THE FORMAL RESPONSE TO IT. SCSG STANDS FOR 'SPECIFIC CONFIGURATION OF THE SET PLAN STEERING GROUP' – SUBSETS OF THE SET PLAN STEERING GROUP MEMBERS WILL MEET ETIPs WHOSE WORK THEY ARE INTERESTED IN. THEY WILL BE A STABLE POINT OF CONTACT OF THESE ETIPs.

Annex 1 – the SRIA and the process around it

On the assumption that the EC's H2020 Work Programmes in future include carefully worded and closely defined topics, an important part of ETIPs' work should be to draw up research (RA) or research and innovation actions (RIA) in the form of a Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) giving, where possible, indications of cost, the actors to involve and a priority rank. The notion of boosting Europe's industrial competitiveness in the short and long term will guide the SRIA's content.

Member State buy-in to the work of ETIPs is essential to ensure that the SRIAs' recommendations are reflected in the priorities of national funding programmes. In the SRIA-writing process, stakeholders may seek the (often valuable) input and advice of Member States, which the ETIP will decide whether or not to include.

Each Member State of course has the right to choose which of an SRIA's recommendations it wants to focus its resources on, but after presenting and explaining to the EC and the Member States, the hope of ETIPs is that they and the EC they will implement as many of the recommendations as possible, starting with those of highest priority.

The input provided by ETIPs on the H2020 Work Programme will be consistent with their SRIA.