

Coordinated Action

WORK-IN-NET



Innovative work environments and work organisation. Linking R&D Projects beyond borders within the WORK-IN-NET Joint Call 2009

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WORK-IN-NET

Labour and innovation: Work-oriented innovations – a key to better employment, cohesion and competitiveness in a knowledge-intensive society



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1 Preface

The Calls purpose and objectives in brief

The ERA-net scheme is an innovative component of the European Union's Framework Programme, which supports co-operation and co-ordination of national research activities to strengthen the European Research Area (ERA). The EU does not provide financial support for the research activities themselves, for which the ERA-NET members' funding agencies are expected to use their own national resources.

The WORK-IN-NET network supported within the ERA-NET scheme under the 6th Framework Programme of the European Commission, has set the ambitious goal to establish a transnational funding programme in the field of work-oriented innovation.

WORK-IN-NET is a six-year (2004-10) project with the full title 'Labour and In-novation: Work-Oriented Innovations – a Key to Better Employment, Cohesion and Competitiveness in a Knowledge-Intensive Society'. The overarching aim of WORK-IN-NET is to establish European R&D-collaboration in the field of work organisation and work-life. A strategic objective is to increase the awareness of the importance of the field of work-oriented innovations, and by doing so direct Europe's attention to the potentials of a high road way of thinking. Therefore the R&D projects are to focus upon and explore the crucial question:

How do companies work in practice to create organisational conditions that promote innovation, competitiveness and growth?

Organisational conditions include quality of working life issues and are seen as means that may promote innovations, competitiveness and growth. Within the main question, sub questions can focus on new ways to organise work but also new ways to understand and act upon the current situation. What are the ideas for organising work and what alternative ways are there to think about workplaces when a high road strategy is the target?

The main question concerns private companies and will be illuminated from multiple European perspectives (different regions, branches, managers, employees, etc) and from a variety of disciplinary and methodological viewpoints. The following aspects of the main question can for example be addressed:

- How do companies manage and lead towards sustainable innovation, competitiveness and growth?
- How do companies successfully combine technological and organisational development? How is work and business organised when introducing ICT and putting it into use?
- How to enable the experience of individuals to become part of a collective learning process promoting sustainable innovation, competitiveness and growth?

- How do companies work with the balance between company flexibility and sustainable work conditions?
- How do companies cope with the demands for external relations in partnerships and networks that create new challenges for the work conditions?
- How do companies use the diversity potential and outsider perspectives (e.g. gender issues, ethnic groups, age differences) as a source for sustainable innovation, competitiveness and growth?
- How may companies create organizational competence and create learning-supportive environments?

Cooperation of the “WORK-IN-NET- projects”

Within a “joint call” realized by and in the participating countries or regions, projects were selected to be supported at least within the next 18 months (up to 3 years) by the WORK-IN-NET partners. The projects will operate within an international range.

Collaboration between the projects in form of cooperation agreements, joint tasks and joint results are expected. Preparative meetings took place on national level.

For exchanging experiences and to discuss results between all “joint projects” network forums twice a year will be arranged. The first one of this fora will take place in Stockholm on October 27, 2009 in combination with the conference "Sustainable work – a Challenge in Times of Economic Crises" during the Swedish EU-Presidency. The future fora are to be organised by the projects on a rotating basis and should also be used as a brokerage event or a start-up for future mutual activities – e.g. in the following fields:

- Design of international good practice models for innovation in private companies (exchange of ideas, fact finding missions, collaboration among SME in creating models)
- exchange of the research “state of the art” of the participating projects (workshops within extra forums or separated ones: e.g. different evaluation models etc.)
- evaluation e.g. of situation of work, work quality etc in selected companies – creation of a common evaluation concept

Most of the participating projects already have developed some concrete ideas/concepts. We are convinced that the representatives of the selected projects will develop even more possibilities for a fruitful collaboration. To facilitate linkages you will find fact sheets of all involved projects within this brochure. We would like to encourage the selected projects very much to contact each other and to develop joint ideas also for future collaboration.

WORK-IN-NET partners participating in the joint call

Country	Institution	Programme
Finland	- Ministry of Employment and the Economy, TEKES, TYKES Finnish Workplace Development Programme, Finnish Work Environment Fund FWEF	Work organisation Workplace innovation Learning networks
Germany	- Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Germany with Project Management Agency of BMBF at DLR (PT-DLR)	Competence, Health and Employability Sustainable Company Development Equal Opportunities and Demographic Change New Ways of Implementation and Transfer Interregional Alliances
Germany	- Regional Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs, Nordrhein-Westfalen– MAGS, G.I.B.	Work oriented modernisation
Greece	- Ministry of Development, General Secretariat for Research and Technology , Demokritos	Work and Health programme
Italy	- Regional Government of Emilia Romagna,	Regional development networks Work environment Health and safety Regional social quality label
Netherlands	- Netherlands Centre for Social Innovation	Dynamic Management Flexible Organisation Smart work
Sweden	- Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems- VINNOVA	Work Life Development for Sustainable Growth Dynamic Labour Markets and Organisations Efficient Product Development
Sweden	- Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research – FAS	Work, chemical and physical hazards Work, family and welfare Stress, work and health Labour market, qualification and discrimination

2 The projects (by countries and/or regions)

2.1 Finland

2.1.1 Boundary crossing and knotworking in innovative work organizations

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2. Abstract

This study examines boundary crossing and knotworking in companies operating under challenging organizational and business environments. For the purpose organization design for innovation and innovation activity are researched in 2-3 Finnish companies. The concept of activity is used as an analytical unit to depict the emergent innovation activity in practice. Research questions of the study are (1) How do companies design organization for promoting innovation, competitiveness and growth in practice? (2) How do companies carry out innovations in boundary crossing and knotworking in practice? (3) How are conditions for innovations and growth created through boundary crossing and knotworking in innovation networks?

The method of the study draws on activity theoretical perspectives and anthropological methods in the examination of boundary crossing and knotworking. The data gathered includes recorded interviews and observations, fieldnotes and documents.

The proposed research will provide companies knowledge on organization design for promoting innovation, competitiveness, and growth in challenging organizational and business environments. It will also provide companies knowledge on actual innovating processes in networks of innovation activity, and give an opportunity for companies to reflect on the results of the study during the research process thus enabling the experimentation of new ideas.

3. How to cooperate/international links

We seek to exchange experiences and results of the study in national and transnational network activities between projects in work-in-net program. The research will be carried out in parallel and in close collaboration with Chemnitz University of Technology.

2.1.2 ORECAP - DEVELOPING ORGANIZATIONAL RENEWAL CAPABILITY FOR SUSTAINED COMPETITIVENESS AND GROWTH

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2. Abstract

To succeed in turbulent and unexpectedly changing environments, organizations need to continuously renew themselves through learning and innovation. Hence the goal of this project is to improve the potential of European organizations to succeed in the turbulent global competition by supporting their capability for renewal. Through surveys and longitudinal case studies, the project examines the key organizational capabilities which enable continuous organization-wide learning and innovation, develops tools for reliable assessment and relevant reporting of these capabilities, and elaborates methods for developing them. The project will increase knowledge on the antecedents and processes of organizational renewal and develop metrics for assessing and methods for developing organizational renewal capability. Results of the project will be disseminated to the partner organizations, Work-in-Net programme participants and the wider public through lectures, seminars, and workshops as well as reports and publications. Overall, the project will help organizations to achieve a better ability to innovate and learn and thereby to succeed in the global knowledge economy.

3. How to cooperate/international links

The goal of the WIN cooperation is to extend mutual knowledge sharing, utilization of methods and research group collaboration. This includes e.g. the following activities:

- 1) Extending international collaboration concerning assessment of organizational renewal capability with the ORCI-method to the countries involved in the Work-in-Net programme. This entails shared data collection, building an international database of case studies concerning renewal capability, and collecting a shared data bank to be used in external benchmarking, as well as mutual workshops for sharing knowledge on e.g. best practices for developing particular dimensions of renewal capability. The case library consisting of experiences gathered of the development of organizational renewal capability in various types of organizations is useful for practical attempts to enhance renewal in development and consulting projects and for multiple-case study setting academic research.

- 2) Sharing the techniques for enhancing collective creativity, drawn from improvisational theatre. We also are willing to host an improvisation themed workshop for the participants of the Work-in-Net programme and demonstrate how improvisation could be used as a method for improving collective creativity and collaboration.
- 3) Increasing researcher visits in the other project institutions and research collaboration and shared guidance of the MSc and PhD theses, co-authoring research reports, papers and for editorship of a journal special issue and organizing special conference tracks related with organizational renewal.

2.1.3 THE ROAD - The development challenges of high and low road firms from a systemic and constructionist point of view

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2. Abstract

Firms using innovative work practices, especially the so called high road firms, have proven to be successful in many ways. However, the share of this kind of firms seems to be relatively low. Various efforts have been made to explain this innovation diffusion paradox. We argue that the systemic nature of firms, the formal and informal practices used by the personnel including the collective problem solving practices affect greatly to firms' possibilities to adopt innovative work practices. The systemic nature of these practices means that they are context dependent. In other words, every firm has its own kind of "system of work routines or habits" and its own culture. However, there is not enough research about the high and low road firms and about the change processes of the low road firms from a systemic and social constructionist point of view. We are going to fill that gap. Our research will produce knowledge helping firms to take the systemic and constructionistic point of views into account in their development work.

Our main research questions are:

What kind of system of formal and informal practices does the high road firm have? What are the essential characteristics of high road type of firm in Finland and what kind of concrete relationships there are between them?

What kind of system of formal and informal practices does the low road firm have? What are the essential characteristics of low road type of firm in Finland and what kind of concrete relationships there are between them?

What are the main differences between the systems of high and low road firms and how the essential parts of Finnish low road firm (incl. the collective problem solving practices) affect to its efforts to become a high road firm?

The research is based on case studies of 7-10 firms. The research data will include different kind of qualitative and quantitative material like observational data, interviews, transcriptions, personnel surveys and various documents. The cases will be selected accordingly. Three or four "low road cases" will be selected among the firms we have researched for years. Se-

lected organisations have characteristics of a 'low road firm' and they have a clear ambition to become a 'high road firm'. Four to six "high road cases" will be selected with the help of our national internet based personnel inquiry, founded on 12 criteria of a good employer which we have developed. The criteria are based both on a systemic and on a high road type of approach (in Finnish look www.hyvatyonantaja.fi). The collective problem solving practices of 'high and low road firms' are studied by analyzing research material produced from the different development meetings held in these firms. The project will start 01.11.2009 and it will last 30.11.2012.

3. How to cooperate/international links

The project is open to all kind of cooperation with researchers studying similar kind of questions or interested in systemic and constructionistic approach to organizational development work and organizational innovations

2.1.4 VIIWE - Virtual Worlds as Innovative Working Environments

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2. Abstract

This research project studies how virtual worlds can enhance collaboration in distributed teams and in global context. Here, virtual worlds refer to communication systems in which multiple interactants share the same three-dimensional digital space via avatars despite occupying remote physical locations. Avatars are the flexible and easily transformed digital self-representations in a graphical 3D form. Collaboration in fully virtual settings has thus far not been studied much in occupational settings but the focus has been more on game research. Virtual worlds are considered as potentially innovative environments especially for such rather novel organizational forms as distributed teams. This study explores both the managers' and employees' point of views of potential utilization of virtual worlds at distributed work and professional collaboration. First we review the current state-of-art literature and studies of innovative uses of virtual worlds as collaboration platforms in different situations (organizational training sessions, ad hoc meetings, product development prototyping sessions, etc.). Second, we interview a sample of managers and employees of companies currently using virtual worlds in order to explore the uses of virtual worlds at work and to find the best practices and future potential of virtual worlds. The interviews give us a valuable extension to the existing – rather limited – research literature and inform us about the potential of this emerging collaboration media. The study will be conducted in collaboration with Telematica Institute and University of St.Gallen – two leading European universities studying virtual worlds at the moment. The results will be reported in network activities organized by WORK-IN-NET programme as well as in prestigious international conferences and journals.

3. How to cooperate/international links

Tight collaboration in knowledge sharing will take place with the international partner universities. The vmWork Research Unit has connections to Switzerland and the Netherlands. Professor Katarina Stanoevska-Slabeva from University of St.Gallen (http://www.alexandria.unisg.ch/persons/Katarina_Stanoevska/L-en), Switzerland and Dr. Marcel Bijlsma from Telematica Institute (<http://www.futureworkspaces.nl/about/>), the Netherlands, are collaborating in the project by sharing the findings of their studies on the uses of 3D virtual worlds at work. The international research collaborators will contribute to the scientific methodology development, knowledge sharing and research seminar organized during the project.

Moreover, the [vmWork Unit's](#) Research Manager Anu Sivunen will work as a visiting scholar at Stanford University during the academic year 2009-2010 with professors Byron Reeves (http://www.stanford.edu/~reeves/Byron_Reeves/Home.html) and Jeremy Bailenson (<http://communication.stanford.edu/faculty/bailenson.html>). This visit is funded by the [VinCo](#) project. The host professors at Stanford University have an established academic background in studying 3D virtual worlds. Hence, the novel insights gained through this visit will be utilized also in this project.

2.1.5 WAVES - Carrier Waves of Open Innovation: identifying the institutional attributes and conditions of diffused work processes for the promotion of innovation and growth

1. Contact

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2. Abstract

More and more demanding parts of work process are accomplished outside the traditional boundaries of work organisation. Open innovation and opened-up information interfaces are key terms to describe the phenomenon, but not always sufficient for the needs of goal-oriented development processes.

In this research we take a more structured approach to processes associated with open innovation. We start with the problem of isolated development activities, carried out typically in project format, and trace the service innovation features and service product character given to the processes that take place in open innovation environment.

For that we present a three-stage research setting in which we:

- 1 observe the way how information and learning is generated in open environment development teams, and how the process of identifying these events can be turned into a service product;
- 2 study how the companies make the choice of resorting to the use of open innovation environment instead of starting an in-house development process – and the extent to which a more product-like innovation service with a clear form and character might be of use in the decision-making; and
- 3 define a feasible role to actors (existing and future) that facilitate development procedures in open innovation environments as regards carrying experiences and innovations that concern the actual learning and problem-solving situations from one project to another.

The research will be carried out in a particular open innovation environment, the Demola, established in Tampere as a platform for facilitating the entry of new professionals in industrial development projects. Simultaneously it serves as a laboratory to test the applicability of open innovation and innovative processes in more general.

3. How to cooperate/international links

Among the key industrial actors to utilise the Demola open innovation environment is Nokia, and the projects and knowledge/innovation creating activities to be studied in this research will be selected in co-operation with Nokia Research Centre. Nokia will not be the sole beneficiary of the results, but they will be distributed to benefit the industries in general and organisations active in the field of utilising open innovation or developing services to support the utilisation of open innovations on a larger scale.

The international/academic linkages are threefold. The first tier consists of Work-In-Net programme partners. Secondly, we have already established global linkages with the Globelics/Globelics Academy community. On the Nordic level we are preparing a research network on innovation dynamics and arenas with Universities of Stockholm/Sweden and Aalborg/Denmark, and the Nordregio/Stockholm as the institutional partners. Within the University of Tampere, Research Professor Jari Stenvall (Dep. of Management Studies) will be an associate senior member of the team.

2.2 Germany (G.I.B.)

2.2.1 FutureFood.NRW - Employability and innovation in the food industry in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW)

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Project Duration

May 15, 2009 – December 31, 2010

2. Abstract

The pressure on companies in the food industry is constantly growing: New mega-trends (like demographics, healthy food), new technologies (robotics, ultra high-pressure), specific circumstances (e.g. consumer behavior, regulations) lead to a sustainable market change and increase the demand for innovations. Consequently there are enormous development and testing needs for innovative methods and tools for the professional management of innovation, which consider the specific industry requirements and increase the employability and capacity for innovation.

Along with eight SMEs from the food industry, innowise GmbH and the Food Processing Initiative e.V. will develop, test and distribute new consulting, development and qualification processes for a participation-oriented innovation management in NRW's food industry. The main point is to improve the capacity for innovation by improving the employability of staff (individual level) and organisation (company level). The following steps are scheduled:

- Innovation case studies in the participating SMEs for handling typical innovation issues which appear in the food industry in NRW.
- Analysis of training demands and realisation of competence profiling to disclose relevant training needs for those employed in the participating SMEs.
- Aggregation of the achieved results in a toolbox called 'Innovation Competence Pilot Food Industry' to offer it as a "help to help yourself"
- Set-up of the internet based innovation platform "FutureFood.NRW" (<http://www.futurefood.eu>) as the central transfer and diffusion tool.

The primary target group are the 100,000 employees in about 1,000 firms in the North Rhine-Westphalian food industry and their partners in the value chain (another 600 firms).

3. How to cooperate/international links

We aim at

- getting in touch with new possible partners for prospective joint projects and to extend our network
- exchanging our experience on relevant topics with international funding agencies
- gaining information on innovative concepts and concrete results of comparable projects and the transfer possibilities in relevant countries.

2.2.2 INTERKOMP – Skills & talents management by transnational exchange with European partners

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Duration

December 15, 2008 – March 31, 2010

2. Abstract

The demographic change will be a challenge for most companies, particularly in the area of HR-management. Until 2050 there will be a gap of more than one million skilled employees, which will cause high demand on well educated people. To overcome this deficit of skilled employees, it is useful to have a closer look to other countries in the EU. The economic figures in Scandinavia show that the “Nordic model” is a more effective way than the German one. An outstanding example is Sweden. During the last 10 years its GDP has grown twice as fast as the German one. The trade balance in Sweden is more than 8% higher than the European average. This strong economical system is based on a effective management system in the Swedish companies, particularly in the SMEs. On the micro economic level a resource orientated strategy is common, based on a motivated and skilled staff, which results in a highly productive and effective national economy. In this respect, especially better recruiting processes and an effective personnel management are important. The project INTERKOMP was set up to transfer best practice approaches from the Scandinavian management to enterprises in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) to find new ways for a good strategy in the so called “war of talents”. Even though there is a crisis, companies need a positive employer branding to “catch” skilled people for the next boom. According to the Lisbon strategy, the project exposes HR-models which are exemplary in the sectors

- Innovation and creativity progress
- Competitiveness of organisational structures

- Delegation of responsibility
- Personnel development
- Staff training
- Work-life balance
- Social cohesion

in Scandinavian countries and transfers them to local companies in NRW.

Methodology

- Visits in Scandinavian companies, including transfer trips for companies
- Transfer and implementation of these identified approaches in local companies in NRW

- Workshops and international project conferences for exchange and networking
- Coaching of companies and their employees
- Project handbook
- Interactive Homepage

Expected Results

- Identify best practice approaches in Scandinavia
- Initiate a change of focus from a “deficit of skilled employees” to a “management of “skilled employees”- Sensitise for new approaches and models of effective HR management in order to improve effectiveness and employer branding of companies
- Encouragement of companies to testify the identified concrete approaches of the best Swedish models, in order to
 - reach a higher job performance, productivity and innovation rate in NRW
 - increase the competitiveness of the region on the European market
 - evaluate the results by their actability
 - accomplish a documentation (handbook and homepage)

Information about the project will be added here, including practice approaches and videos, news, data etc. The interactive community aspect will be fulfilled by an upcoming forum which will give companies the possibility to transfer their expertise.

3. How to cooperate/international links

We would like

- To reflect our results with partners and projects from other EU-countries.
- to establish and to expand networks for creating new approaches and ideas
- to transfer our results to the Ministry of Labour of Northrhine-Westphalia (NRW) to give impulses for creating new funding programmes in the field of labour policy.

2.2.3 INTAKT! - Integration of workability consulting approaches for small and medium-sized enterprises in existing consulting structures

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Duration: April 2009 – July 2010 (16 months)

2. Abstract

Because of the current demographic change, the preservation and development of workability of the existing workforce is one of the most important challenges for enterprises to secure their competitiveness. According to Ilmarinen and Tempel, workability depends not only on physical and mental health, but also on the work content and the working environment, the vocational competences of the employees, the work organization and leadership principles. In securing the workability of their workforce, SMEs are confronted with specific challenges due to their financial and personal restraints. Due to the importance of SMEs for the North Rhine-Westphalian economy, there are already a broad range of different consulting approaches and support offers for SMEs – many of them are also publicly promoted. But none of these approaches really addresses all aspects of workability as defined above. They always concentrate only on some of these fields. Regarding the preservation and development of workability, none of the current approaches promotes the workability in SMEs in a comprehensive way.

At this point, the pilot project “intact!” aims to counteract this situation and to develop and evaluate a new integrated and coherent approach to support SMEs in preserving and developing the workability of their workforce.

Based on an analysis of existing consulting approaches, Prognos will develop a new and integrated consulting approach for SMEs, addressing all aspects of workability. Existing concepts and approaches will be integrated into the new approach as much as possible.

In two test phases, the new concept will be applied through participating consultants of seven health insurance companies in North Rhine-Westphalia and potential SME consultants in 30 pilot enterprises. All consultations in the pilot companies shall include an initial analysis (status - quo analysis), the conception and implementation of concrete measures in the SMEs and the evaluation of results.

This process is accompanied by a series of workshops with the consultants involved and Prognos AG as the scientific and process consultancy. The workshops aim to secure individual support for the consultants during the consulting process in the SMEs, to promote the exchange of experience between the participating consultants and to enable the evaluation of the new approach.

To spread the results of the pilot project between SMEs and other management consultants, a wide range of transfer activities is intended. Case studies, a manual for consultants and SMEs as well as lectures and presentations document the economic effects, constraints and factors of success of the workability consulting.

Expected results

An integrated and effective approach for workability consulting in SMEs is developed and addresses all relevant fields (health, work satisfaction and working environment, vocational competences, work organization and leadership principles).

The new consulting approach is integrated in existing consulting structures especially in the SMEs' consulting portfolio of the participating health insurance companies and potential SME consultants.

The importance of workability and the new consulting approach is based on both target groups: the SMEs and management consultants in North Rhine-Westphalia.

3. How to cooperate/international links

We are participating in the joint call

- to learn from the experience of similar projects on European level
- to establish contacts and links to exchange relevant professional knowledge more efficiently in the future
- to use the innovation potential of an international network within the realisation of INTAKT! and for future research and pilot projects.

2.3 Germany (PT-DLR)

2.3.1 FLEXSTRAT - Flexible Staff Deployment Strategies in Company Networks

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2. Abstract

Since growing demands for workforce flexibility particularly challenge small and medium enterprises (SME), in some German regions there have been set up networks among SMEs and associated labor pools in order to provide possibilities to exchange workers among enterprises involved, thus creating an innovative combination of improved personnel flexibility and stability of employment. The objective of the "FlexStrat"-project is the scientific analysis and development of such networks and labor pools among SMEs. Moreover the project examines company cooperation with similar objectives like qualification and personnel development networks or cooperation of companies concerning employee recruiting via "decent temporary work".

The Institute for Work, Skills and Training at Duisburg-Essen University has been charged with the research program within the WORK-IN-NET joint project, which can be structured into three groups:

- A deepening analysis of existing examples of German networks of SMEs resp. labor pools by qualitative case studies (interviews of experts, group discussions, document analysis) and additionally a brief quantitative survey on the networks among SMEs and associated labor pools in Germany
- an expertise on existing networks of SMEs (*groupements d'employeurs*) in France and Belgium and the possibilities to transfer this model into the German economy
- scientific monitoring and evaluation of the different projects related to practice which are realized by the partners within this joint project.

3. How to cooperate/international links

One of the main reasons for initiating FlexStrat was the question in what way the relatively widespread model of French and Belgian networks of SMEs is transferable upon the German economic system. This question will be solved by drawing up an expertise in collaboration with French and Belgian experts and practitioners and by organizing an international workshop. Thus FlexStrat aims at contributing to the development of improved methods of mutual knowledge-sharing on labor-market related institutions and instruments between European countries. We are interested in an exchange with other international projects with similar approaches. Moreover the project wants to contribute to creating, stabilizing and enlarging sustainable networks of labor-market related experts and practitioners on European level.

2.3.2 SMEflex – Stability conducive use of flexibility strategies in small and medium sized enterprises

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2. Abstract

The German research project SMEflex aims to identify, develop and apply internal and external flexibility strategies within small and medium sized enterprises. These aspects should be discussed on an international exchange platform between Italy, Finland and Germany (focussing the regions Emilia Romagna in North Italy, Helsinki Metropolitan Area in South Finland as well as Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Berlin-Brandenburg in East Germany).

Main objectives of this WORK-IN-NET based research shall be the development of analytical tools and procedures to:

- Identify obstacles, drivers, criteria and key performance indicators for the use of flexibility strategies in SME (survey in 100 German SME conducted by RKW Center for Rationalization and Innovation of the German Economy as well as German Engineering Federation VDMA)
- Provide instruments for small and medium sized enterprises to apply internal and external flexibility strategies

The project will be carried out together with the Center for Research on Activity, Development and Learning at University of Helsinki. Furthermore a cooperation with the Dipartimento di Scienze Aziendali at University of Bologna is planned as soon as an Italian WORK-IN-NET announcement is published and the proposal of our Italian partners is approved.

Collaborative project work includes:

- Shared development of relevant flexibility criteria and of theoretical models of adequate analytical tools

- Development and pilot application of the analytical tools together with industrial partners (SME) in all countries
- Reflection of the project together with international experts in the field of factory/ organization and work research

3. How to cooperate/international links

We seek to exchange experiences and results of the study in national and transnational network activities between projects in WORK-IN-NET program.

The research will be carried out in parallel and in close collaboration with University of Helsinki (project "Boundary crossing and knotworking in innovative work organizations") and University of Bologna (project planned).

2.3.3 CCM² - Confidence competence management as a system for balancing flexibility and stability needs

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2. Abstract

Two hypotheses form the core of this project: (1) Organizational innovation requires a balance of practices which can enhance flexibility and stability. (2) A system of complementary practices relating to trust and confidence management on the one hand and competence and skill management on the other can provide this balance.

Key research questions are:

- Does competence development influence trust-building in organizations?
- How do long term employment contracts affect the willingness of individuals to develop their competences?
- How can practices of trust and competence management be combined and serve as an “infrastructure” of innovation for different companies embedded in different fields?

Case study analysis based on quantitative and qualitative research methods will be conducted in small and medium-sized enterprises identified as partner firms. The dissemination of results will address the following aspects:

- Good practices of trust and competence management will be identified and developed together with partner enterprises and will thus be multiplied in the project-related enterprise group and in the form of a personnel-economic tool box in order to make them accessible to a wider public.
- Parameters of trust and competence management will be translated into indicators which can also be used for evaluating data from standardised company and country panel questionnaires. This allows comparisons and benchmarks at company and country levels.
- Key results of the project will be incorporated into teaching modules for postgraduate executive students of the "Master of Organizational Management" – also in programs for international student exchange – to sensitise personnel and organization executives to the necessity of balancing flexibility and stability by adopting complementary trust and competence management practices.

3. How to cooperate/international links

Looking back on numerous former international projects as well as on cross-national research findings we are aware that many enterprises in Europe are facing similar challenges. Therefore we are particularly interested in cooperating in the field of analysing and developing specific practices for coping with flexibility or stability demands. What kind of new practices can be identified in other European countries? Due to labour market characteristics, we are especially interested in cooperating with academic partners from Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands. Other partners are of much interest to us as well. We are also interested in cross-national research on the basis of panel data.

2.4 Greece

2.4.1 Cranfield Network on Comparative Human Resource Management

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2. Abstract

Cranfield Network on Comparative Human Resource Management (Cranet) project was established in 1989 and is ongoing with five of the founder countries involved in this unique and important research project in human resource management. It is coordinated by the Centre for European Human Resource Management at Cranfield School of Management. The Cranet survey is now the largest and most representative independent survey of HRM policies and practices in the world.

The Network itself is a [collaboration](#) between 39 universities and business schools which carries out a regular international comparative survey of organisational policies and practices in comparative Human Resource Management (HRM) across Europe provides benchmarks for comparing Europe with developments elsewhere in the world. This allows a systematic comparative analysis of trends in Human Resource Management policies and practices within employing organisations

The aims of the Cranet survey were - and are - ambitious:

to provide hard data on HRM policies and practices for practitioners, policy makers and academics;

to monitor the effect of the European Union on diversity in HRM practices;

to provide concrete pointers for doing business in different countries

to monitor over time any move either away or towards the "Europeanisation" of business on specific Human Resource Management issues

establishing how far there has been a shift in personnel policies towards "Strategic Human Resource Management".

Greece is a member of CRANET Network since 1993 and has participated in 5 studies of comparable research (1993, 1997, 2000, 2004 and 2009).

Several reports with major studies have been prepared and various articles have been published in academic journals.

3. How to cooperate/international links

The network is open to all kinds of cooperation with researcher centres/ universities/ companies/ standing similar kinds of questions and are interested in a similar approach.

2.5 Italy

2.5.1 InnOLaP - Innovation, Work Organisation and Participation

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2. Abstract

In a rapidly changing economic environment, businesses can only respond to international competition with higher standards of product quality and distinctive skill-sets.

According to one body of economic literature, these objectives can be achieved, and rendered sustainable, only through new forms of organization that tend toward greater employee participation in decision-making and management. Traditional business theory sees the firm as an organization governed in the sole interest of a particular group of participants, typically the ownership. Business decisions are the result of a process aimed at achieving the objectives of that group. In the approach we propose here the business is, instead, seen as a coalition of different stakeholders. Workers, in this context, obviously play a significant role, alongside ownership and management, in making firm-level decisions. In this framework, all members of the organization must agree, implicitly or explicitly.

Human resources constitute, therefore, one of the firm's most important assets. Employees are able to create, by contributing knowledge and skill, the aforementioned organizational surplus. The economic literature also emphasizes the impact of new organizational practices on the relationships among the social partners at the enterprise level. The new organizational models, of necessity, influence the processes of information sharing and negotiation between management and employee representatives. At its most profound, that influence can give rise to models of labor-management partnership.

The theoretical framework described will provide the region of Emilia-Romagna with a thorough analysis, using case studies, of organizational solutions and innovative forms of workplace organization, that give rise to creative and dynamic environments, effectively manage knowledge and learning, and promote competitiveness of individual firms through direct and indirect forms of participation. Despite the generally regressive economic context, we identify and investigate replicable, progressive business actions in some of the most emblematic, regional firms.

In this project, we analyze the organizational and management practices of three regional firms of excellence. The aim is, first, to evaluate the effective level of innovation achieved, using as a benchmark the Work-in-Net recommendations. Second, we evaluate those examples to understand the extent to which they can be used as a source of innovation in similar contexts.

The nature of the innovation necessary for change processes, as repeatedly pointed out by the Work-in-Net project, involves employees, not merely as "functions," but as protagonists, each with his or her specific relationship to job tasks, to the environment in which they operate, the people with whom they share the task as well as management. These relationships are decisive for promoting (or blocking) the process of innovation. To evaluate the level and the potential for innovation in the chosen firms, the field research analyzes the "social

changes” underneath the formal, more readily apparent data. Therefore what’s required is a methodology made up of a mix of quantitative and qualitative instruments, aimed at individuals or groups, with more or less interactive modalities, depending on the theme being studied.

3. How to cooperate/international links

The project would like to cooperate with other projects dealing with employee involvement in the context of organisational innovation.

2.6 Netherlands

2.6.1 Organising Flexibility

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2. Abstract

Companies need to be flexible in order to survive. They have to respond quickly to short term demands of the market and at the same time be innovative. In this project our first focus is on the ability of companies to organize their flexible staff in a strategic manner (as opposed to an ad hoc manner) and on the way they organize their partnerships with their suppliers of flexible personnel. Our second focus is on the ability of employees to change quickly and smoothly between jobs or tasks, through enhancing their self steering learning capacities and by introducing intelligent workplaces and tools that support them. Our purpose is to develop tools for companies in order to improve their flexibility strategies.

Strategic partnerships between organisations that hire temporary personnel and temporary employment agencies is not self-apparent. Yet there is much to be gained from more sustainable relationships between the hiring organisation and the supplier of personnel. Our research is founded on the feasibility of such working relationships provided that the price component can be transcended and other aspects like quality of the service, degree of flexibility and required competencies rather than price take on an important role. The focus has been on cases within the temporary staffing sector that could satisfy these elements. The nature and reason for the cooperation can be distilled to three types of cooperative focus: (1) efficiency and cost control, (2) short and long-term flexibility and (3) labour market and education.

We have found that more long term cooperation can benefit both the hiring organisation and the employee. The former can thus cater for the need for flexibility and achieve cost control, process improvement and a higher influx and deployment of employees. The employee benefits from education and training as well as from the opportunities for personal and job intrinsic development, putting him or her in a stronger position in the labour market. This has a positive impact for the hiring organisation that acquires a pool of more motivated and satisfied employees.

The success of long term cooperation is based upon a good 'fit' or matches between the hiring company and the provider of flexible staff: a strategic, an organizational, an operational, a personal and a cultural fit.

3. Suggestions for collaboration, international links

European Temporary Agencies are united in Eurociett. In cooperation with several European research institutes, some Temp Agencies and Eurociett, several small scale conferences has been organized to share research information on temporary agency work. It may be interesting for them and for the European trade union organizations to learn from national insights.

The project started in January 2007 and will be finished in December 2010. It is part of a TNO research programme, named 'Innovation that works'.

2.6.2 Open and social innovation at SME's

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2. Abstract

Innovation is often associated with technology. And indeed, a new device or new materials are concrete innovations. However one of the main reasons why innovations often do not succeed is that they require a new way of working and/or new organisational forms. The renewal of the social system we name: 'social innovation'. Open innovation is a specific form widening the social system beyond the borders of the organisation.

In this project TNO develops tools and instruments to support Small and Medium Sized enterprises in organizing their innovation and measuring the results. The tools are tested in SME's in the discrete production and in the media-sector.

The project started January 2007 and will be finished in 2010. It is part of a TNO research program named: 'Innovation that works'.

3. Suggestions for collaboration, international links

Exchange of experiences in SME's in the two sectors in other European countries.

2.7 Sweden

2.7.1 Entrepreneurial Work Facing Management Routines. A study of how innovative work organizations are developed through HRM practices in Professional Service Firms

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Companies: To be decided after pre-study

Duration of the project

The project will be ongoing during 2010-2012

2. Abstract

The problem addressed in this project is how companies work in practice to create organisational conditions that promote innovation, competitiveness and growth in Professional Service Firms (PSF)? Existing research on PSFs has often focused on the specific nature of the knowledge-intensive work, flexibility, autonomy, work-life balances, etc., but more seldom on governance or HR strategies in use. In a pilot study we identified the importance of HR practices as a mean for management in an entrepreneurial organization to govern and develop the work organization. We found that an emphasis on the intranet and ICT support indicates that the interface between work and governance strategies is often mediated by ICT applications and that this is therefore an important issue for further research. This research project is designed to develop an understanding of how management in Professional Service Firms expressed in soft management practices like developing corporate values as well as in more hard HR structures is used in the development of corporate processes that foster innovation and an entrepreneurial culture. The interface between the innovative work organization and management practice is in focus as are questions about how management strategies translate and transform work organization through such interfaces. Expected outcomes

The focus in the project on the interface between management intentions and control strategies on the one hand, and working practices on the other, makes it possible to develop normative conclusions about how these interfaces can be improved. Scandinavian management and work life traditions could be instrumental to develop new and better interfaces for HR practices, well suited for entrepreneurial organizations and ways- of working. In the extension it is possible to see practical application and use of the expected results for the

benefit of Swedish Professional Service Firms. There is also a potential for the results from the project to be used and exploited by companies in the Swedish software industry.

3. Suggestions for collaboration, international links

The network design of the call will make it possible for the project to contribute to and benefit from the knowledge sharing activities and interactions with other researchers in the international collaboration. We will also interact with other national and international colleagues interested in the issues addressed in the project. The National Research School Management and IT is an important link to both these categories.

2.7.2 Regaining strength: Organisational learning across borders

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Duration of the project

The project will be ongoing from fall 2009 until fall 2012

2. Abstract

This research and development project's aim is to develop new understanding on how technology based organisations will be able to grasp, develop, transfer and make use of innovative organising at low and middle management level, and to do so in a situation of having to regain strength. The focus is on how low and middle level managers can contribute so that their local ways of organising may cross borders and get a hold in the organisation as a whole. And to do just this in times following crisis and organisational remakings. Issues of learning in organisations come to the fore. The project is theoretically grounded in the intersection of two domains of meaning: organisational learning (OL) and leadership. Research is performed using ethnographic and qualitative methods (individual interviews, focus group interviews and reflection groups, field visits and observations, shadowing, participation in regular meetings, extensive field notes). It is a case study of interactive character taking place at units within the Ericsson telecom enterprise in Sweden. The tasks of research and practice meet in the shared interest in how the organisation can make use of innovative organising on the part of low and middle management. The project is expected to generate new knowledge of the conditions for and processes of organisational learning across borders. This knowledge, when put into use, can contribute to sustainable growth to the benefit of Swedish industry.

Expected outcomes

The project is expected to generate new knowledge of the conditions for and processes of organisational learning across borders, knowledge which, when put into use, can contribute to sustainable growth to the benefit of Swedish industry. It is important to be aware of that the potential does not lie in simple advices, manuals or the kind. Influence goes via people changing their understanding and meaning contexts. Results from the project will be documented both in scientific environments and through more easily captured information directed towards interested practitioners. The possibility of opening a webpage about organisational learning is being investigated. Making use of observations and results takes place on an ongoing basis from start to end, and is thus not seen as just an end product or activity.

This is especially so inside the studied company. Rapidness is a requirement if to return with something before interest is lost and people have moved on to new issues. The pace of research and practice are extremely different. Experience from earlier research in the telecom context tells us to search for communication channels that fit contextually; ordinary meetings and seminars face-to-face are here largely thought of as a waste of time. Part of the interactive research method can entail ICT, the web and blogging. Making connections to HR, internal consulting companies and what is left of Ericsson University is also of value.

3. Suggestions for collaboration, international links

On the international scene we hope to contribute to and benefit from being part of the network that is to be established within the call. We are looking forward to getting the opportunity to have some impact on the European agenda and understanding of conditions of importance to companies' organisational learning. Being part of an international research network is of value to us since we want to develop more contacts and collaboration also outside Sweden.

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Finnish Workplace Development Programme, Ministry of Employment and the Economy

<http://www.tem.fi/?l=en>

<http://www.tykes.fi>

Work Environment Fund

<http://www.tsr.fi>

Germany

Project Management Organisation at DLR of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (**Coordination WORK-IN-NET**)

<http://www.pt-dlr.de>

Gesellschaft für Innovative Beschäftigungsförderung

<http://www.gib.nrw.de/de/index.htm>

Greece

Secretariat for Research and Technology, Ministry of Development

<http://www.gsrt.gr>

Italy

Regional Government of Emilia Romagna

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Netherlands

Netherlands Centre for Social Innovation

<http://www.ncsi.nl/>

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Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems

<http://www.vinnova.se>

Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research

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