

## **Mid-term assessment of the ITEA programme**

**Executive Summary**

**IDATE / TNO**

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# 1. Executive summary

*This chapter synthesises the European assessment of the ITEA programme made on behalf of the ITEA Committee.*

## *What is ITEA ?*

ITEA (Information Technology for European Advancement) is a Eureka cluster, a cooperative R&D programme in the field of embedded and networked software, initiated by industry and supported by governments. Its overall objective is to boost European competitiveness by "leapfrogging the gap in software-intensive systems". It was launched in 1999 and is to finish in 2007. It is run and financed by industry and research institutes with financial support from national Public Authorities.

Up to mid 2003, there are a total of 65 Universities, 45 Research organisations, 136 SMEs and 101 larger companies, totalling 7,300 person-years from 19 countries.

## **ITEA has been a success and should continue**

Our overall conclusion is that ITEA should continue in its present form. The ITEA programme is achieving many of its objectives and the programme is perceived by participants as being very efficient and making a significant contribution to the competitiveness of European industry. Several problems were identified, in particular regarding the funding structure and procedures. However, our view is that these problems have solutions and need not become major impediments to Phase Two of ITEA. We have made recommendations about how some of the difficulties could be addressed.

## **Relevant industry and technology trends in relation with ITEA objectives**

In general we view the approach to setting the ITEA objectives in a positive light, especially in relation to other programmes, particularly the Framework Programme. *The ITEA approach is based on a single clear goal – to boost European competitiveness of the industry – and further defined by a roadmap produced through a consultative process.*

ITEA has been very good at developing and sharing knowledge. But the view among specialists is that the real gap for the European software industry vis-à-vis the US lies more with the ability to develop markets for technologies. This implies that much more effort in the "D" part of R&D is required. We consider that movement in this direction would be very coherent with the general objectives of Eureka as a whole.

The current focus on embedded and networked software could in our view still allow for a wider variety of participants, including the product software industry, that also have a stake in "Software Intensive Systems". This could be done either outside of ITEA or internally.

## **Contribution to the ITEA rationale and strategy and main results**

The current results from the programme are good, and this is widely recognised both by participants and non-participants. The work has led to a significant improvement in mastery and application of software technologies and tools by European companies.

In terms of the exploitation of results and the impacts that follow, it is very clear from the results of both the interviews and the survey that the main effects for ITEA participants as a whole lie in areas that are further upstream from the market interface than originally expected by participants.

We did however consider that a more pronounced standardisation strategy within ITEA could further enhance ITEA goals. Standardisation activities, which were widely recognised to be highly strategic in market development and susceptible to leverage by the concerted actions of coordinated technology suppliers, were being pursued mainly at the level of individual firms.

### **Selection process, review and monitoring**

Most of these processes currently work rather well. Furthermore, they reflect significant improvement over the first four years of ITEA. The project selection process appears to have provided good coverage of the main domains and technologies, as defined in the roadmap and accepted by the domain specialists. Project review and monitoring were satisfactory. There were relatively few instances where partners did not cooperate or where project teams worked inefficiently. The continuous improvement should continue, and be supported actively by the ITEA organisation. The existing ITEA selection process must be kept oriented to selection of the most efficient partners, whatever their nationalities. In the second phase, however, software service companies should be considered more as potential participants and specific support should be provided for SME participation.

Some problems occur when an unexpected funding refusal happens after the launch of the project. Any action allowing for a more accurate exchange of information between public authorities, ITEA and industry would be welcome. The main issue seems still to be obtaining more rapid funding decisions from some Public Authorities.

### **Effectiveness and efficiency of ITEA organisation**

Within its mandated parameters, the ITEA Office has been responsive, supportive and able to evolve with the needs of the programme. There is a strong coherence between the size of ITEA Office and the work they are doing, allowing for a reasonable level of control and animation. The financial burden of the ITEA organisation is kept at a minimum. The cost of managing cooperation and of reporting is kept also at a reasonable level.

However, the ITEA organisation is not always well understood by researchers, particularly in terms of its role vis-à-vis the Public Authorities. The ITEA organisation is making a significant effort in communicating to the research community, but should further develop its ability to communicate at the political level: i.e. not just with officials in the public authorities, but also with policy makers. This may facilitate solutions for national funding issues.

The ITEA organisation should promote a stronger basis for developing the EUREKA brand name in the international marketplace and in collecting feedback on marketing initiatives involving the EUREKA label that would be valuable to all participants.

### **Nature and effectiveness of cooperation inside ITEA projects**

There was much more cooperation within consortia than between them, and much more horizontal communication (i.e. within discrete technological fields) than vertical communication (i.e. between fields or with the intended user communities).

The development of Open Source Software is likely to complicate the IPR situation and this may impede cooperation in Phase Two of ITEA. It would be unwise in our view to let ITEA split up into Open Source and proprietary source projects, which could happen if an open dialogue is not maintained within ITEA on this issue.

### **ITEA and the rest of the R&D community**

The relationship between the Framework Programme and large EUREKA clusters has been difficult for a long time. It is clear that they have different structures and goals, each with significant advantages and disadvantages. Both programmes are useful, but as they address almost the same technical domains, a much better degree of coordination should be reached soon. The ITEA roadmap could be exploited more effectively in this context in order to help position the various FP and ITEA projects and to estimate expected time to market for resulting products. This "light synchronisation" could then be a first step towards closer cooperation between the programmes.

There are also complications due to the different national policies. Several scenarios come to mind, although not all of them are equally possible in the present circumstances. Many of the complaints were simply that the process under which projects obtained funding was not transparent and that many decisions were not known in time for the project to begin on an efficient footing. We suggest that several efforts should be made at the national level. Firstly, funding decisions should be made more quickly and efforts should be made to synchronise national decisions as much as possible. Secondly, the policies and mechanisms in each country for managing the relationship between Eureka and national programmes should be made more transparent and available to all current and potential ITEA participants.