**Best Practice in Europe for Promoting Collaborative Innovation**

The European Innovation Leaders (Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Finland), through substantially comparable approaches, but each with a reflection of the particular socio-economic and political structure, and history of their nation, provide a clear and powerful exemplar of STI ecosystems that effectively support the translation of research into economic and social benefits.

The common features would appear to be:

* A widespread understanding of and commitment to, throughout all layers of the society and the economy, the knowledge economy as the central framework in which competitiveness, future wealth and employment will be generated; material and energy resources are important, but they do not provide a sustainable basis for a competitive national economy in this global era;
* A recognition that building competitive strengths in the global knowledge economy requires a sustained, long term commitment, with space and appetite for substantial evolution as new lessons are learned and new conditions encountered;
* A consequent bi- or multi-partisan approach on the part of successive governments; these matters are far too important to be the subject of political conflict;
* A commitment to high levels of investment in R&D and innovation, with stretch targets being continuously applied;
* A comprehension of the notion of innovation systems, where interactions between the elements are more important and produce far more value than do the individual components, as important as they are;
* As a consequence, these European Innovation Leaders show a high performance across **all** key dimensions of their innovation system - the enablers (or framework conditions), firm activities and innovation output;
* Explicit targeting of most of their research towards competitiveness and environmental and social challenges, while basic research is required to operate within a highly selective excellence framework;
* A substantial, at times equivalent, commitment to the long-term facilitation, through multiple mechanisms, of deep linkages between knowledge generation and knowledge application; this includes mechanisms to influence the attitudes, practices and competences of research institutions and industry, and the development of powerful and effective intermediary organisations;
* Investment in strategic public-private partnerships for innovation designed to harvest broader economic and social benefits from investments in public research, and to connect science to innovation in order to address Grand Global Challenges;
* A perspective that positioning to address major social challenges, will not only be a means of safeguarding their society but also will generate a capacity upon which future economic advantage can be constructed.
* A significant investment in the development of appropriate metrics and evaluation processes, so that performance can be assessed, and to provide an appropriate basis for the application of continuous learning and improvement to the innovation system architecture and instruments.