Successful ESPRIT projects

Software Production and Maintenance Management Support:

This program designed a new type of information system for managing the development of software products. It was initiated by a number of medium-sized French firms and Siemens was the prime contractor. When Siemens withdrew from the project in 1986, it was replaced by the French firm TECSI and a Spanish firm with which one of the partners had wanted to build closer ties. By the end, the project involved five SMEs and no large firms.

Automatic Control Systems:

This program has contributed to the development of more competitive microchip production equipment and systems. It also contributed to the implementation of new standards in its area. The technology involved is at the leading edge of automatic wafer fabrication sequence control systems for plasma etching. It was initiated by European Silicon Structures (ES2), a consortium with its own wafer fabrication line. All of the partners, Societé Bertin (France), European Silicon Structures (ES2) (France), Leybold A.G. (Denmark), Mietec (Belgium) and Plasma Technology Ltd (U.K.), were SMEs.

European Alliance Programs

BRITE/EURAM, which stands for "Basic Research in Industrial Technology for Europe and European Research in Advanced Materials," was founded in 1989 and will end in 1992. The program has a total budget of $648.4 million for the development of R&D consortia in advanced materials technologies, design methodology and quality assurance for products and processes, application of advanced conventional manufacturing technologies and manufacturing processes for flexible materials (i.e. textiles), technologies for manufacturing processes and aeronautics. Firms and universities established in either the EC or the EFTA countries are eligible.

RACE means "Research and Development in Advanced Communications Technologies in Europe". It is focused on Integrated Broadband Communications (IBC) and the development of technology for commercial IBC services to be introduced in 1995. The RACE program is designed to lay the future foundations of the Community's communications infrastructure. It covers all aspects of terrestrial networks, satellites and mobile telecommunications, and it involves all European telecommunications operators, service providers and equipment manufacturers. The 90 consortia established under the RACE program involve 306 organizations including universities, telecommunications administrations and private companies, 130 of which are small- and medium-sized businesses. RACE 1 is scheduled to run from 1987 to 1992 and has a budget of $841.5 million. The RACE 2 budget is contained in the 1990-94 EC Framework Programme and will overlap with the end of RACE 1.

ESPRIT has been the largest, longest and most successful of the EC programs to date. It stands for European Strategic Program for Research and Development in Information Technology. ESPRIT 1, which lasted from 1984-88, had a budget of $975 million. ESPRIT 2 began in 1988 and will last until 1992, with a budget of $2,321.6 million. The focus for ESPRIT is microelectronics, information processing systems, office and business systems, and computer integrated manufacturing. The program is open to firms established in the EC and EFTA countries.

The EUREKA Program was created in 1985 on the basis of a proposal by French President Francois Mitterrand. The current EUREKA program spans the years 1989-1992. EUREKA is not an EC program, and it has no central fund as do the EC programs. Rather, the funds are contributed and administered by each of the 20 countries involved in the program. The countries pay a portion (usually less than one third) of the costs of participation by their companies or research institutes. The members of EUREKA include the 12 EC countries, plus Sweden, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, Finland, Iceland, Turkey and the EC Commission. EUREKA is open to non-member firms and institutes so long as they are in partnership with at least two European firms.

Several Canadian firms have joined EUREKA projects and several American firms have joined the EUREKA Prometheus projects. The latter is the Program for a European Traffic with Highest Efficiency and Unprecedented Safety, which involves development of electronic road traffic and pollution control systems. IBM is involved in the JESSI project on semi-conductors. French firms are involved in a biotechnology project with Argentinians. Most EUREKA projects are focused on robotics, information technologies, environment and biotechnologies although there are a number of important projects in transportation, energy and lasers. The Eureka Secretariat is located at Avenue des Arts 19 H, Bte 3 B1040 Brussels. Tel: 32 (2) 217.00.30 and FAX: 32 (2) 218.79.06.