
Editorial

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We are presenting a special issue on 'Impact of Foresight Studies on National Innovation Capability' at a time during which the world economy is going through a significant change and the place of technology in the modern society is becoming more critical everyday. Today competitiveness is achieved through knowledge-based technological innovation with globalisation.

Trends ranging from regional to international levels impact our daily lives. Emerging technologies and nations developing and managing them play a key role in improving our way of life. In addition, there is an increasing pressure on national science and technology budgets and we are witnessing an increasing rate of change of technologies and the cost and risk of R&D activities. This indicates that we should allocate our resources to key strategic areas that are supporting key national sectors. Many governments today are aware that they should be developing technology planning

processes as they do it for their financial and human resources. Several of them have been working on formalising these processes which would result in their investment priorities based on their preferences regarding science, technology, economy and society. Technology Foresight is described as a process where scientists, engineers, industrialists, government officials and other related parties work together with an objective to reach a consensus on charting out what the country's optimum focus areas should be in terms of strategic research and the emerging technologies with the maximum financial and social rewards (Irish Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (ICSTI), 2005).

There has been a dramatic growth in the variety of applications of foresight in international organisations, and in countries around the world. In this issue, we cover the application of technology foresight conducted at national levels and its impact on national innovation capabilities and thus identifying best practices, clarifying the linkages to national innovation capabilities and therefore developing a framework for successful foresight projects.

The special issue includes eight papers from leading researchers in this field. The studies represent a wide range of countries: Finland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Turkey and Germany. The papers explore topics ranging from specific foresight techniques to exploration of national or regional innovation capabilities. The papers as a whole provide an excellent reference to those planning such foresight studies with objectives of impacting national or regional innovation system. The first three papers by Torkkeli et al., Cariola and Puga explored innovation capability and its relation to public institutes, their policies resulting from the foresight exercises. Torkkeli et al. specifically delved into the impacts of a regional open innovation system and collaboration between main parties. Cariola compared and discussed different tools and methods, and highlighted the central and multi-dimensional role of foresight in the national innovation system. Puga explored the contribution of the knowledge management to interaction of innovation and the foresight projects in a broader framework through a Latvian experience.

Papers by van der Duin and Jenssen explored specific factors impacting foresight projects and their results. Patrick A. van der Duin discovered and showed the power of scenario analysis in different foresight projects to support innovation chain. Jenssen on the other hand examined the participation issues and influence of organisers.

Papers by Kalan and Alsan, and Cuhls provided insight into specific implementations. Kalan and Alsan looked into a sectoral foresight project in the health care sector in Turkey. Cuhls, on the other hand, reviewed the lessons learned in a foresight study conducted by an industrial foundation in Germany.

Final paper by Oner and Gol provided a comprehensive review on how to run a foresight project and listed key success factors.

We believe these papers in a wide spectrum touch vital aspects of innovation and foresight projects, and provide directions for exploiting foresight results effectively in innovation processes.

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Reference

Irish Council for Science, Technology & Innovation (ICSTI) (2005) *Technology Foresight Overview*.