

Number	LANCS-D4.3-RN-Science-Innovation	A-PI--
Title	Research Note (RN) for D4.3	
Subtitle	Issues in Focus : Science and innovation	

PROBLEM	<input type="checkbox"/>	SOLUTION	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Note	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Selected Annotation	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Categories: | | |

Summary:

This note addresses the development of innovation policies and strategic innovation agendas. It takes issue with the ways in which conditions of possibility are cultivated in the shaping of frameworks, distribution of money and an official urge to be competitive. It addresses the conditions of accountability created in strategic planning and resource allocation for the public good.

CONTEXT

Scientific and technological advances have been given a prominent role in strategic planning for a safer, more innovative and competitive Europe. The key focus is on solving urgent societal challenges and aiming at a balanced economic growth, highly competitive 'social market' economy, high employment, improved healthcare and social progress.

An ageing population, projections on population growth, health service challenges, future financial markets, epidemics, climate change, and future security concerns, are prominent examples of so-called social drivers. ICT-related developments are high on this agenda, as well as their convergence with cutting-edge developments in the sciences and other technologies.

(Key readings include, European Commission, 2010; European Commission, 2007; Nordmann, 2004; Borup et al, 2006; European Commission, 2009; European Commission, 2011; MoD Strategic Trends Programme, 2010).

FACTS

Conditions of possibility are cultivated in the shaping of frameworks, distribution of money and the impression of an urge to be competitive at the cutting-edge of progress. An important strategy to accomplish this is scenario-building and analysis (see key reading on Aml ISTAG, 2001), to persuasively disclose possible (and seemingly desirable) future lifeworlds. The Aml example is particularly illustrative of the ways in which visions of the future can urge a *technological push* (see Heidegger, 1977), but also how the rhetorical, performative and generative aspects of promise and expectations are integral to the management of contingencies, disappointments and failure (also key readings, Wright et al, 2008; Aarts and Grotenhuis, 2009, Aarts and de Ruyter, 2009).

COMMENT

Innovation practices raise questions about the *conditions of accountability*, created in strategic planning and resource allocation in the name of *public good*. Governing bodies, technologists, industrialists, technology assessment expertise, legal, social and ethical expertise are all implicated in decision-making and policy development. However, what are *accepted social values* is a moving target, negotiated and renegotiated over and over again, while uncertainties remain with respect to the culture of accountability in establishing political, social and ethical legitimacy of decisions made for the betterment of society.

1. Disruptive innovation has taken on a significant social value—to engineer radical developments in and of our societies
 - Can we separate the role of science and technology (S&T) in society from the social value of depending on S&Ts to solve societal, environmental and existential ills? (see von Schomberg, 2011).
2. Hyperbolic expectations and promise are partially indicative of how little is known about future benefits and risks, and uncertainties continue to surround the question of what is wishful enactment and what is actually deliverable (see e.g., Borup et al, 2006).
3. A key challenge would be to reach balance in devotion to three different approaches to science and innovation, i.e., to:
 - study the potential impacts of technologies which are already in the last stages of development and deployment (to minimise risks, maximise benefits and improve wider acceptance)
 - study imaginary impacts of technologies which may or may not be realizable (to contribute alternative visions and scenarios)
 - renegotiate (democratically) the very practices of planning and preparing for future lifeworlds (to contribute alternative futures).