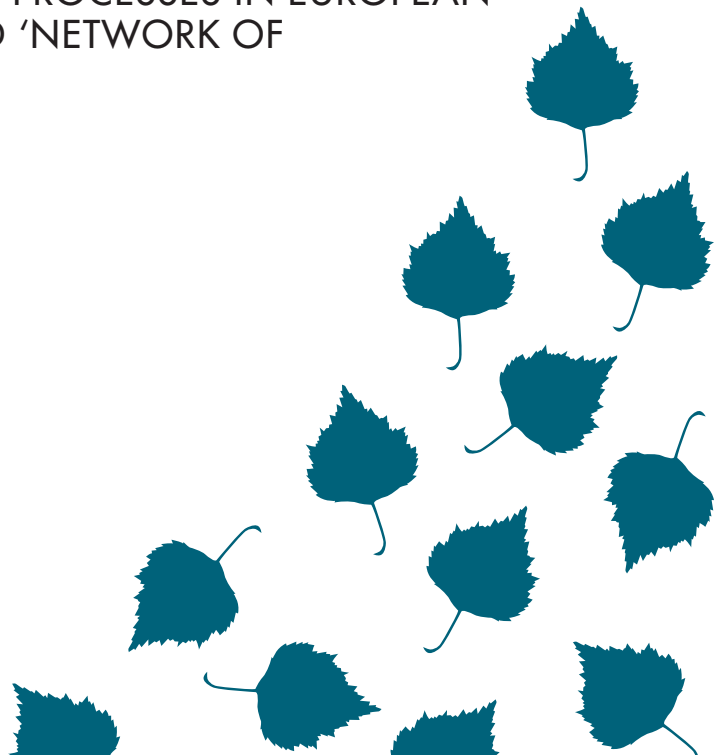HANKEN

A THEORY OF META-ORGANISATION

AN ANALYSIS OF STEERING PROCESSES IN EUROPEAN COMMISSION-FUNDED R&D 'NETWORK OF EXCELLENCE' CONSORTIA

SANNE BOR

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A Theory of Meta-Organisation: An Analysis of Steering Processes in European Commission-Funded R&D 'Network of Excellence' Consortia

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FOREWORD

My journey started long before the part of the journey I will write extensively about in this thesis. I would therefore like to share with you, how I got interested in the topic.

In some way it started when I became involved with the Dutch student union 'LSVb' in 1994. First, I became involved as a demonstrator and activist fighting against the massive budget cuts in higher education. After some time, I became involved as the representative of a local member organisation and as a volunteer active within several work groups and committees. In 1997 I became a member of the executive committee, which was a full-time, paid position. Between 1996 and 2000 I was most active in the workgroup 'international' and was LSVb's representative on the governance board of the European student union 'ESIB'. In ESIB, I met Pekka for whom I moved to Finland in 2000.

At the same time, in 1998, I started my second study 'Policy and organisation studies'. For this study I took the course on inter-organisational relations. This is where my now proven long-lasting fascination with the governance, management and administration of inter-organisational networks started. The literature we needed to read resonated with my experience of both national and European student unions, but it actually did not provide answers as to how such organisations are to be governed, managed or administered. Nor did it tackle the complexity of working in such structures. I decided to write my master's thesis on the management of 'virtual organisations'. This process developed some ideas, and my fascination remained.

I graduated and started to look for jobs, and Pekka suggested I would do a PhD. "Well", I said, "that is a nice idea but for the study I would like to do, I would need comparable networks with enough similarity to actually study that what I want and I have no clue how to find these networks, so that is a no-go".

Almost a year later, Pekka came home from work one day with a pile of papers on the Framework Programme 6 funding scheme of the European Commission. The papers explained the funding tools 'Networks of Excellence' and 'Integrated Projects'. Almost the same day I set out to write a research proposal. I oriented myself as to where I would do such project, and applied for doctoral studies at Hanken School of Economics in spring 2003. In the initial research proposal I proposed to study how the Networks of Excellence funded under the sixth Framework Programme by European Commission are governed and managed.

I was accepted and set out to continue my journey to gain (a fuller) understanding of the network organisations that fascinated me. Since then my interest in the topic has grown deeper as well as spread to new question areas inter-linked with the topic I

started with. I suspect that I will in one way or another continue my journey of trying to get a better understanding of inter-organisational networks (or meta-organisations as I would now call them) and hope to be able to share my insights with others who are fascinated, frustrated with or simply in the topic.

PART ONE   INTRODUCTION

1 THE TOPIC, THE STUDY, THE APPROACH, AND THIS BOOK

1.1 META-ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR STEERING PROCESSES

Organisations connect to other organisations for a whole host of reasons and they do so in many and various different ways. An organisation may connect to another organisation, for example, to buy or sell a good or service (an inter-organisational relationship) or an organisation may link to a group of other organisations to attain a common goal (an inter-organisational network). This thesis focuses on the latter, whereby the main challenge focused on is how these inter-organisational networks are steered (governed, managed and administered) in order to attain common goals. This is a challenge as the organisations remain autonomous or largely autonomous, and thus the inter-organisational network cannot be governed, managed or administered in the same way as single hierarchical organisations.
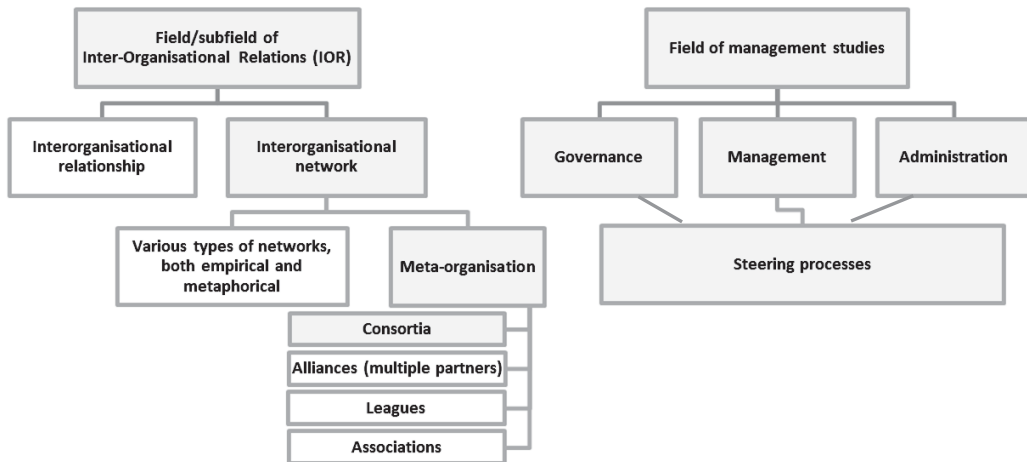
Figure 1   Positioning of the study

In the inter-organisational relations literature, the term inter-organisational network is used in much more varied ways than presented above. First, the term is used to discuss inter-organisational relationships (such as a joint venture or an alliance between two organisations) as well as inter-organisational networks (such as consortia and alliances between three or more organisations). Second, the term is used to discuss the results of an analysis of the relationships existing between organisations such as, for example, supply chains or the supplier and buyer network of one organisation. As the term inter-organisational network is used to refer to very different concepts, this has created difficulties in navigating the literature and linking research concentrating on similar structures. This is further complicated by the multidisciplinary interests that there are in studying these phenomena, whereby

disciplines often use their own specific terminology and concepts, making it even harder to share and compare findings (Cropper, Ebers, Huxham, & Ring, 2008b).

In order to overcome some of the above mentioned problems, the concept of *meta-organisation* (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2005, 2008) is used to clarify the specific kind of inter-organisational network which this thesis addresses. Meta-organisations concern those inter-organisational networks that are themselves organisations of which other organisations become or may become a member. Thus, meta-organisations are formal[1] organisations of organisations. Meta-organisation as a concept covers a variety of kinds of inter-organisational networks, such as consortia, alliances, leagues, and federations.

Meta-organisations differ from other organisations, as well as from other inter-organisational networks. By taking an organisational perspective on inter-organisational networks, instead of a network or institutional perspective as is common in the field of inter-organisational relations, meta-organisation theory aims at explaining how meta-organisations differ, and proposes the conditions specific to meta-organisations. The initial theory of meta-organisation developed by Ahrne and Brunsson (2005, 2008) specified how meta-organisations are different from other organisations along the membership dimension. As meta-organisations have organisations instead of individuals as members, this creates different conditions. This dimension is essential for understanding meta-organisations. However, this dimension alone is not enough to differentiate meta-organisations from other organisations and inter-organisational networks. This thesis suggests that another dimension, the dimension of constitutional membership, needs to be added to be able to differentiate meta-organisations from other organisations and other inter-organisational networks. Constitutional membership means that the members constitute the organisation. This thesis aims at specifying assertions and conditions created by the dimension of constitutional membership to complement the dimension of members being organisations.

As mentioned, the challenge in this type of inter-organisational network is *steering*. This thesis therefore aims at uncovering how meta-organisations are steered through governance, management and administration. The challenges met in this literature are that, first of all, these terms refer to a variety of concepts, and second, for similar concepts different terms have been used. Another challenge in this literature is that these concepts are often dealt with in isolation, which means that tools are needed to understand these concepts as a system working together. In seeking to address these

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[1] Formal is understood as agreed upon and confirmed, which often gets a written form (such as a signed contract, agreement or memorandum of understanding).

problems a conceptual framework of steering processes is created. In this framework, governance, management and administration are not treated as tasks of formal roles but instead as functional processes that take place on every level in the organisation. This framework guides the final analysis of the data.

Thus, this thesis seeks to contribute to research literature in two different ways. First, it seeks to contribute to the inter-organisational relations literature and organisation studies literature by addressing a new dimension of meta-organisation theory. Second, it addresses theoretical problems with the overlap of the concepts of governance, management and administration and presents tools to understand governance, management and administration as generic intertwined steering processes.

Although the thesis has a rather theoretical orientation as a starting point, it draws on a large amount of empirical data about consortia funded as Networks of Excellence by the European Commission (from this point onwards referred to as Commission). The data includes general information about 101 consortia funded as Networks of Excellence, and fifty of their consortium agreements. Five of these consortia participated in the case study which included 30 interviews and a large number of documents. The final aim of the thesis is to show, through an analysis of steering processes, how the Network of Excellence consortia dealt with their particular meta-organisational conditions.

1.2   NETWORK OF EXCELLENCE CONSORTIA

As mentioned earlier, the meta-organisations studied for this thesis are Networks of Excellence consortia funded by the Commission. In order to implement its research and technology development (RTD) policy, every five years the Commission develops a new five-year programme, a so-called Framework Programme. These Framework Programmes not only specify the research fields and aims of the programme, they also specify the way in which the aims are to be reached – the instruments. Networks of Excellence are one such instrument. This instrument was developed for Framework Programme 6 (2002-2006).

According to the Commission, the Networks of Excellence were designed for "strengthening excellence by tackling the fragmentation of European research, where the main deliverable should be a durable structuring and shaping of the way that research is carried out on the topic of the network" (European Commission, 2002a). The strengthening of excellence is to be reached by creating durable integration of the research capacities of the organisational members in the network. To achieve this durable integration, the Commission demanded each network which would receive funding as a Network of Excellence should form a consortium. The consortia that sign a funding contract with the Commission are expected to create a long-term or, in the

term used by the Commission, durable basis for co-operation. According to the Commission this durability is to be reached by integrating activities. These integrating activities may include (European Commission, 2003):

- co-ordinated programming of the partners' activities;
- shared research facilities, tools and platforms;
- joint management of the partners' knowledge portfolio;
- schemes for increasing staff mobility and exchanges; and
- using reinforced electronic information and communication networks in order to support interactive working among the teams involved.

The Networks of Excellence as a funding tool as well as the actual networks which received funding will be discussed in more detail in chapter three.

1.3 AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aims of the thesis as well as the research questions for the thesis developed over time; they became more specific, disappeared, and/or changed during the research process. The overall aim of the research, however, stayed largely unchanged. The overarching aim was to know how things are made to happen in consortia. The idea was that the organisations focused on in this thesis will, especially due to their (semi-)autonomous member organisations, need to make things happen in different ways than organisations with more hierarchical structures.

During the research process, which consisted of six phases, the specific aims of the thesis and the research questions changed more radically than the overall aim of the research. During the first phase, the research questions focused on how the organisations studied are structured in order to be able to manage their collaboration. During the second phase, one aspect was added to this, focusing on what the decision-making processes in these organisations looked like and who participates in these processes. In the third phase another aspect was added. This aspect focused on who is given managing responsibility contractually, who takes responsibility for this in practice, and if differences exist between these two. Then a more radical change took place during a short time in the fourth phase. The work focused during this phase on meta-organisation theory and understanding power in meta-organisations. In the fifth phase the focus of the thesis moved to steering processes, which includes governance, management and administration processes. This built on the work done in the earlier phases, although the perspective changed from a focus on tasks and structure to a focus on generic processes. In the sixth and final phase, the aim returned to meta-organisations, but this time the target became to utilise the insights gained from the analysis of the steering processes to develop meta-organisation

theory, especially to redefine, specify, change as well as add conditions caused by constitutional members.

While the thesis seeks to contribute theoretically to different literatures, the final empirical aim of the thesis is to show through an analysis of the steering processes, how the Network of Excellence consortia dealt with their particular meta-organisational conditions.

1.4 CLARIFYING TERMINOLOGY

The explanation of terminology in relation to the conceptual frameworks and the concepts discussed in the thesis will be presented in part 2 of the thesis, mainly in chapter 5 and 6. An overview of the definitions of the concepts (such as meta-organisation, steering, governance, management, administration) is presented in appendix 4. Some basic terms, not related to the concepts or conceptual framework developed directly, will be clarified here. The definition of these terms will also be included in appendix 4.

- The term *constitutional member* or *member* in this thesis refers to an organisation that is a member of the meta-organisation or an individual who is member of an association. The members of meta-organisations are also referred to as *member organisation(s).* The term *individual member* is occasionally used when referring to a single member organisation of meta-organisations. When discussing employees, managers, or any other individuals undertaking work in the work-processes of the meta-organisation, the term member is not used. Thus, diverging from the tradition in organisation theory, members of the organisation are in this thesis not the organisation's employees.

- Those involved in the work processes of the meta-organisation or association will be referred to in the following manner:

  o *Employee* refers to the person is employed directly by the meta-organisation.

  o *Participant* refers to those employed by a member organisation of the meta-organisation or to an individual who is a member of an association and participates in the work of the association.

  o *Representative* refers to those participants which have the authority to represent the constitutional member organisation.

1.5 RELATION BETWEEN THE METHODOLOGY, THE FIELDS OF KNOWLEDGE, AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

1.5.1 OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of three parts and ten chapters. This introduction chapter is part one. The other two parts will be described in a bit more detail below.
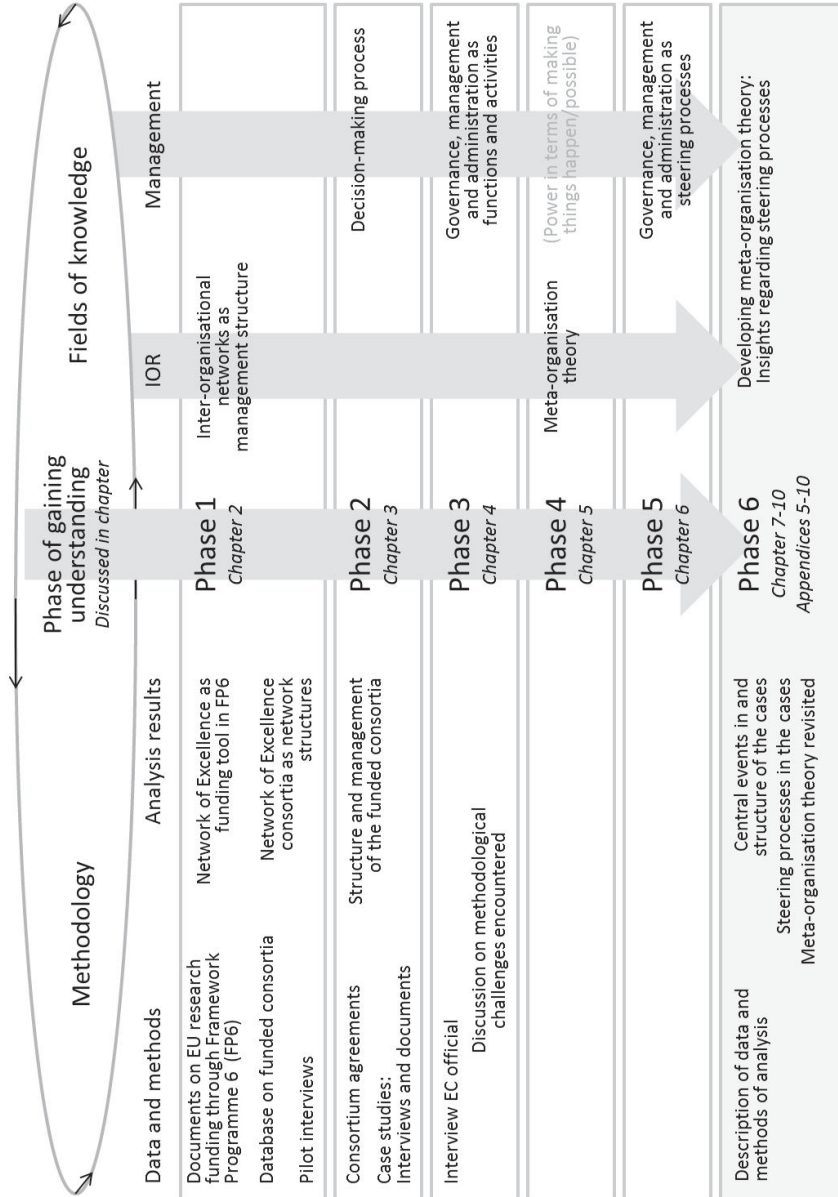
Figure 2   **The overall structure of the thesis**

Part two consists of chapters two up to chapter six. This part focuses on what I refer to as the process of gaining understanding. This process of gaining understanding is used as the meta-narrative for presenting the theoretical and methodological considerations during the research process in chronological order.

Six phases are identified in the research process and each chapter in part two of the thesis focuses on a particular phase. The last phase, phase 6, is, however, presented as a whole in part three of the thesis (for an overview of the structure, see Figure 2). Each chapter in part two presents the engagement with the literature and data related to that phase. It also includes the conclusions and consequences of the insights gained through this iterative process, in terms of further need for engagement with theoretical ideas and the empirical data which lead to a new phase in the research process. In section 1.5.2 I present the methodological reasons I had for structuring the thesis in this way.

Phase 6 –
Developing meta-organisation theory:
Insights from the analysis of steering processes

Chapter 7	Data and analysis	Data included in the analysis Approach and methods of analysis Challenges in the analysis
Chapter 8	Description of the cases	Reconstruction of the central events in the initiation and operational phase and the structure of the cases.
Appendices 5-10	Steering processes in the cases	Detailed analyses of the steering processes of each case.
Chapter 9	Revisiting Meta-organisation theory	Reflecting on the assertions of meta-organisational theory using the results of the analysis of the steering processes.
Chapter 10	Summary of findings, discussions, conclusions and future research	

Figure 3   **Phase 6 presented as part three of the thesis**

Part three consists of chapters seven, eight, nine and ten (see Figure 3 for an overview). Part three focuses on presenting the last phase of the process of gaining understanding in this research project. It focuses on presenting the case data and the steering processes analysis of the case data in the light of meta-organisation theory. In this part each chapter focuses on a different aspect of the phase. Chapter eight introduces the five cases and presents their initiation process, their structure and key events in the operational phase. Chapter nine then presents the findings related to

assertions and conditions met by Networks of Excellence consortia, as well as the way the consortia dealt with them. The detailed analysis of the steering processes, which is used as a basis for the presentation of findings, are presented in appendices five to ten. Chapter ten presents an overview of the findings, draws conclusions and presents ideas for future research.

Figures 2 and 3 clarify the structure of this thesis. It is important to note thereby that the thesis does not provide a separate methodology chapter or literature review chapter found in more traditional thesis. Instead of these separate chapters, the related information is presented intertwined throughout the thesis. How this is done will be presented in detail in section 1.5.2.4.

1.5.2 METHODOLOGY AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The research process and the changes during this process are not a matter of finding new variables or factors; they have been a matter of shifts in understanding, or even in the understanding of understanding. As these shifts in understanding have had a major influence on the research process, I deemed it necessary to make this process visible and explicit in the thesis. As I believe understanding is gained through dialogue, I also wish to demonstrate and provide some insights into this dialogue. In this sense, the thesis as a whole, and especially part two, is strongly influenced by methodological considerations. It thus presents the research process, the changes in perspectives and focus, and the methodological choices made.

The way in which I gained understanding and more broadly my epistemological stance towards the end of the research process is best reflected in the writings of philosophical hermeneutics as developed by Hans-Georg Gadamer. I will therefore present some of his ideas to give insight into the research process.

1.5.2.1 UNDERSTANDING AND THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE

Grondin (2002) identifies three different but interrelated connotations of the notion of understanding in the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer. First, if we wish to understand something, we wish to grasp something; to see things more clearly; to be able to integrate a particular meaning into a larger frame. Second, to understand also has a connotation of application, to be able to apply a certain meaning, to understand how to. This also includes a connotation of self-understanding. Third, the notion of understanding has a connotation of agreement, in the sense that we understand each other. "Agreement, namely, is something that occurs mostly through language, dialogue or conversation" (Grondin, 2002, p. 41).

Grondin points out that these three connotations are brought together into one notion of understanding in the following manner:

"To understand, in Gadamer's sense, is to articulate (a meaning, a thing, an event) into words, words that are always mine, but at the same time those of what I strive to understand. The application that is at the core of every understanding process thus grounds in language." (Grondin, 2002, p. 41)

Gadamer points out that language is key, it is "the central point where the 'I' and the world meet or, rather, manifest their original unity (…) Being that can be understood is language" (1979, pp. 431–432). As Wachterhauser (2002) points out Gadamer argues here that:

"[C]oncepts and objects, or language and the world, constitute spaces of overlapping or interpenetrating intelligibility or meaning. Neither side is reducible to the other; neither side is the product of the other. The world or the object has its own intelligibility that can resist or confirm our ways of thinking and speaking about it, but language has a creative power to elicit or evoke the intelligibility of the object." (Wachterhauser, 2002, p. 74)

Gadamer (1979, pp. 346–347) thus argues that language is a medium through which the world is disclosed to us and through which we can understand. Words are not mere signs; words are not neutral (Wachterhauser, 2002). Words give us the possibility to describe what we see and words then also can help us to get a clearer picture of what we see.

In my research process I have been struggling to find the words which would give meaning to what I saw and thought. In the fragment below, I have reconstructed from my research diary[2] one of the central struggles.

Struggle with clarity of concepts
One of the major obstacles in progressing in my research has been the difficulties caused by words which refer to a great variety of concepts and in addition, multiple words used for the same concept. It was only until late in my research process (2010) that I started to call the structures I was looking at 'meta-organisations'. Before I started to use this concept, I called them inter-organisational networks or consortia. I used the term consortia because the networks of excellence I studied had signed a consortium agreement, but I felt this was not accurate as I had experienced a similar structure when working for

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[2] This is the first of several reconstructed fragments from my research diary in this thesis. These fragments are always styled in the same way as this fragment.

the national student union in the Netherlands. So, the structure and therefore the challenges met do not only apply to consortia, but, I believed, also to unions, associations and federations. I therefore more frequently used the expression inter-organisational networks. The problem with this, however, was that it was not a specific enough concept. It covered all kinds of other structures, which were different from those I wished to understand. I therefore created long descriptions and explanations of which structure it actually was that I was fascinated about. Only when I read the book *Meta-organizations* (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008), in late 2010, did I find a concept that expressed exactly the structure which had fascinated me. While reading the book, a stream of thoughts developed, exciting and clear. The concept of meta-organisation described exactly what I was interested in, and thereby made it possible to think anew about what I had been researching, writing and discussing until then.

1.5.2.2 UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETATION

Gadamer (1979) argues that all human understanding involves interpretation. Although interpretation is something humans do, we cannot understand this activity apart from the way things are that makes interpretation possible and even unavoidable (Wachterhauser, 1999). As Wachterhauser points out:

> "For Gadamer, "interpretation" is not the means by which we construct a reality. It is rather the means by which we come into contact with reality itself and genuinely know it" (1999, p. 24).

Interpretation, according to Wachterhauser (1999, p. 94), is "the *constant movement* between 'seeing and saying' that every interpreter engages in". What happens is that we, as human beings, start by seeing a vision or intuition of what we are trying to understand. This vision is often very complex, even so complex that we see more than we are able to say. After this, we try to say what we see, which is clearly dependent on what is seen. Then what we say affects what we are able to see in such way that we will always see from this or that perspective. Although we see from a perspective, this perspective is still guided by the things themselves. As Wachterhauser points out

> "The fact that we almost always occupy a standpoint (perhaps even multiple standpoints) from which the world discloses itself to us in a great variety of ways needs not to be imagined as a situation where our vision is blocked by our perspective, but rather made possible by it. A "standpoint" is in principle a point from which we see something, but, of course, not necessarily everything. What needs to be emphasized here is that a standpoint is precisely a point from which we *see* and not a point from which we are necessarily blinded" (Wachterhauser, 2002, p. 72).

Indeed, Gadamer (1979) argues that all understanding inevitably involves some prejudice. Prejudice is our preliminary and provisional understanding of the reality (Wachterhauser, 1999). The interpreter's prejudice can thus not be put neatly aside; rather, it is a necessary part of interpretation (Hekman, 1983). Gadamer points out that "prejudice certainly does not mean a false judgement, but it is part of the idea that it can have a positive and a negative value" (1979, p. 240). Furthermore, prejudices are not fixed; they can and do change overtime. It is important therefore that the researcher stays open, and willing to be challenged by the data, when it is questioning the prejudice of the researcher (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013).

Both the constant movement between seeing and saying, between data and literature, between analysing and writing, and the changing prejudice are recognisable in my research process. It becomes clear from the fragment below, which is reconstructed based on my research diary.

Changing prejudice

In the beginning of the project, influenced by the reading I had done on governance boards, managers and administrative staff, I interpreted governance, management and administration as loosely the tasks or responsibility of governance boards, managers and administrators respectively. Later when analysing the cases, however, I found it disturbing that when comparing cases, the tasks and responsibilities varied, and thus the meaning of governance, management and administration changed. It was disturbing especially as to me these concepts had meaning in themselves and could not be as flexible. Thus, I needed to come to terms with the question of how governance, management and administration could be understood as more stable and more generic concepts. This interpretation grew from first seeing the need and slowly finding ways to define them uncoupled from position and hierarchical levels. The end result made it possible to ask where and how governance, management and administration are taking place in an organisation instead of automatically assuming governance to be what a governance board does, management what managers do and administration what administrators do. In chapter 6 this reconceptualisation of governance, management and administration as a system of generic intertwined steering processes is presented.

1.5.2.3   EMBEDDEDNESS OF KNOWLEDGE CLAIMS

Interpretation is also inherently a process of selection. We select by deciding consciously or unconsciously which aspects of reality we want to focus on. In addition, we select by choosing consciously or unconsciously the words to describe the reality we have focused on. As Wachterhauser (1999) points out, in the situations

where we talk about interpretation, we are trying to understand such complex phenomena that their possible meanings can never quite be contained in any one account.

> "[A]ny individual phenomena or reality always stands in a "web" of intelligible relationships to other phenomena. These relationships include linguistic, semantic, logical, analogical, metaphysical, practical and historical ties that exist between the realities we seek to understand. Such ties bind them together in a web of innumerable, overlapping and intersecting strands of meaning (Wachterhauser, 1999, p. 28).

As each interpretation can only offer selective insights into the phenomena we try to understand, various interpretations can exist side by side. Nevertheless these interpretations can give us true understanding of these phenomena. The validity of an interpretation is, however, not dependent on it being the only one and only correct interpretation (Wachterhauser, 1999).

> "The fact that knowledge is always dependent on historical, linguistic, and normative conditions, which constitute a relative standpoint, is not an inherent danger to knowledge, but a condition of its possibility." (Wachterhauser, 2002, p. 72)

This means that all knowledge claims are embedded "in a fabric of linguistic, semantic, logical, metaphysical, and historical relationships which makes it impossible to discover any truly self-justifying origins of knowledge" (Wachterhauser, 1999, p. 21). This means not only that there are no self-evident starting points for knowledge, it also implies that "to demand such starting points is to misconstrue the nature and conditions of knowledge itself" (Wachterhauser, 1999, p. 21).

In order for the reader to get, at least to a degree, insight into the fabric of relationships in which the knowledge claims in this thesis are embedded, the thesis presents personal reflections on the different phases of the research process. These reflections are reconstructed from what I had written in my research diary as well as on other documentation such as funding applications and funding reports. These personal reflections are marked clearly identifiable by their layout. The personal overviews reflect on the back and forth movement between the empirical material, theoretical perspectives and the insights these led to during the process. Importantly, at the end of each chapter the reason(s) for a more radical change – the reason(s) for me to define it as an end of a phase and start of a next phase in the process – are discussed.

1.5.2.4   UNDERSTANDING AND THE ROLE OF METHODS

Gadamer is rejecting the attempt "to found understanding on any method or set of rules. This is not a rejection of the importance of methodological concerns, but rather an insistence on the limited role of method and the priority of understanding as a dialogic, practical, situated activity" (Malpas, 2009). As pointed out by Wachterhauser:

> "Gadamer stresses dialogue as the real life of inquiry and not certain formal rules of dialogue like logic and grammar, or 'method' because he thinks that over and above these rules and methods (but not necessarily contrary to them) the twists and turns of dialogue itself help bring the subject matter to light. (...) It is only through 'talk' that different ways of 'grouping' the data may emerge that may enable new insights to be gained or new questions to be asked that will reveal some inadequacy or theoretical breakthrough. In all these ways, conversation is necessary to gaining a deeper, more adequate understanding of things." (1986, p. 33)

In the research process, methods have been seen as tools to assist in creating dialogue between empirical material, theory, and the goal of gaining understanding of how consortia make things happen. The particular methods chosen for the dialogue are presented throughout the thesis, where relevant. The thesis thus does not provide a traditional methodology chapter as the idea is that the method is the tool for the dialogue and thus is better understood and evaluated in relation to the dialogue. The specific data gathering methods and the methods of analysis utilised for the initial analysis of empirical data gathered are presented in sections 2.2 (networks of excellence as funding tool), 2.3 (consortia funded as Network of Excellence), 2.5 (pilot interviews), 3.2 (consortium agreements), 3.4 (case related interviews and material) and 4.2 (interview with EU official). These sections present the initial aim(s) of gathering particular data, a description of the data and how it was gathered and processed, the method of analysis and initial results of the analysis. In chapter 7, presented in part three, the data included in the final analysis and methods of analysis utilised are described. A particular methodological challenge met in the study, created by the multiple functional positions of interviewees, is discussed in detail in section 4.3. In addition, challenges met in relation to the analysis of the steering processes are discussed in section 7.3.4.

1.5.2.5   THE PROCESS OF GAINING UNDERSTANDING AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This section briefly introduces the key elements of the different phases as well as the key insights or the realisation of a need for insight leading to a new phase of the research process. Figure 2, presented earlier, gives the visual overview of the phases.

The first phase focused on gaining an understanding of what Networks of Excellence were about in detail, how they could be placed in the inter-organisational relations or network literature as well as how they would be best researched. This phase came to an end with the pilot interviews which gave insights that demanded a new approach. The first insight was that structure and responsibilities contractually agreed upon are of importance for understanding how these networks are managed. The second insight was that decision-making processes are important in understanding how 'management' takes place. This phase is presented in detail in chapter 2.

The second phase focused on getting access to the consortium agreements of the actual consortia that had been accepted for funding from the Commission as a Network of Excellence. The theme I tried to look more closely at was decision-making processes. When analysing the consortium agreements in terms of decision-making processes, I realised that the governance board, management team and administration all seemed to play a role in the decision-making processes. This led to the need to change focus and understand better the difference between governance, management and administration and the link between the decision-making process and these groups. This phase is presented in chapter 3 in more detail.

The third phase focused on trying to better understand governance, management and administration and the roles of governance boards, management teams and administrators in decision-making processes. As the case interviews were done in this period, the focus in the interviews was on who is involved in particular decision-making processes. One of the main difficulties came from the ambiguity in when and how decisions that were made, changed from being governance or management to administration. This was further enhanced by the differences between the cases, whereby the role of the administrator in one case was to make particular choices in a specific decision-making process, which had been the role of the governance board in another case. Governance, management and administration thus needed to be clarified, but the literature did not offer enough tools to actually analyse what I came across. At this time, clarity came when I discovered the book 'Meta-organisations' (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) which gave me the vocabulary and conceptual framework I had been searching for and not finding in the inter-organisational relations and network literature. This phase is presented in chapter 4 in more detail.

In the fourth phase, after reading the book *Meta-organisations* I found the tools to combine insights about the networks that I had studied with insights I had from different inter-organisational networks I was familiar with. It resonated into lots of interesting ideas which clarified the dynamics in this particular type of inter-organisational network. For a while it also led to a fully changed focus, with meta-organisations and power as the main themes. Most fascinating was how particular members or the central office could gain power while being able to maintain or even

enhance the power of the meta-organisation as a whole. Thus, why do member organisations allow one or a few member organisations or the 'office' to gain power over, for example, decisions influencing how the member organisations can work together? After some intensive reading of the literature on power, I became especially inspired by the insights of Göhler (2000, 2009). The major problem was that the data I had gathered, although offering some ways to understand power dynamics in the cases, was far from suitable. Given this, I decided to postpone my work on power and meta-organisations. This also means that the work that was done on power in this period will not be presented. The engagement with this literature, however, did help in gaining a different perspective on the literature of governance, management and administration, as becomes clear in the next phase. The fourth phase is described in detail in chapter 5.

The fifth phase starts with clarifying the specific focus of the thesis. During a two day writing/thinking session I wrote down what I had learned and what I would be able to describe about these networks, the literature on governance, management and administration the literature on inter-organisational networks, my thoughts arising from the data and the work done on meta-organisations. Through this effort of synthesising the specific focus became clear. Governance, management and administration were not anymore seen as that what governing boards, managers and administrators would do. They became a system of processes that were present in each part and hierarchical strata of an organisation; a system of processes steering the organisation. This resulted in the development of a conceptual tool that would aid in analysing who is involved in the governance, management and administration of a particular level or particular work area. The conceptual framework is explained as well as illustrated in the chapter focusing on this phase of gaining understanding. This phase will be presented in detail in chapter 6.

The sixth phase started with the analysis of the empirical data whereby the conceptual tools developed during the fifth phase were put to work. These analyses resulted in a great amount of detail needing to be synthesised. Different ways of presenting the data, clarifying the data and synthesising the data did not get the thesis beyond description. Then, while working on two papers, one on meta-organisation theory and one on the steering processes framework, and presenting them in the British Academy of Management at the same time, the final understanding of the possibility of combining the two themes developed. Not only could meta-organisation theory help in presenting the setting in which this study was set, the data and analysis also gave insights that could help develop the theory. The final focus of the thesis became then to show how the insights from the analysis of the steering processes contribute to meta-organisation theory. This then resulted in what will be presented in part three of the thesis, chapters seven to ten. The detailed analyses of the steering processes of

the cases, which form the basis of the contribution to meta-organisation theory, are included in appendices five to ten of the thesis.

1.5.3   FIELDS OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This research is a project aimed at gaining understanding of both the structural phenomenon captured in the concept of *meta-organisation*, as well as the process phenomena captured in the concept of *steering processes*. Each of these concepts developed during the research process through a dialogue between the empirical material, relevant but dynamic knowledge fields and the goal of gaining understanding of how the process is formed by the structure, or how the structure is formed by the process. The thesis is situated on a rather unexplored crossroad between these structure and process concepts.

Consortia are inter-organisational structures and, therefore, the field of inter-organisational relations was considered a natural field of knowledge for gaining a better understanding of the setting and its particularities. A distinctive field of knowledge, however, inter-organisational relations is still in its relative infancy (Cropper, Ebers, Huxham, & Ring, 2008c). The knowledge developed about is fragmented and shared concepts are at best shared in particular knowledge pillars following disciplines (Cropper et al., 2008b; Cropper, Ebers, Huxham, & Ring, 2011). The field thus combines various perspectives, on various entities as well as on various processes whereby the linking of organisations is the common denominator. The field, although providing various ways of typifying and categorising inter-organisational structures, including that of consortia, provides little theoretical underpinnings for understanding the consequences of these particular structures. Meta-organisation theory, developed by Ahrne and Brunsson (2005, 2008) is an attempt which changes this. Arhne and Brunsson explicitly theorise about the circumstances and processes that can be found in inter-organisational entities such as consortia.

The processes focused on are those that make things happen within such structures. My perspective on this shifted over time during the research process. The process was initially referred to broadly as 'managing'. After a while, especially due to the interaction with the data gathered at that point, a focus on decision-making processes was added. Due to the involvement in decision-making by people from various functions, I shifted to a focus on what governors, managers and administrators do to make things happen – their role or function as defined in the contracts and described by interviewees. The tasks defined were varied and most concerned the tasks sometimes considered 'management' as it was done by a 'manager', where in other cases 'governance' as the governing board was undertaking them. This problem was also present in the literature. This lead to a search for clarity across the concepts of governance, management and administration; the result of this work created the

concept of steering processes in which governance, management and administration are considered as generic as well as intertwined phenomena.

The literature reviews in the thesis thus have two distinct foci. The first focuses on the theoretical understanding of the type of organisation or structure studied. Initially, inter-organisational network literature is considered and discussed in section 2.4. This literature is utilised to clarify the particular structure this study focuses on and point out some of the particularities of this setting. Later on in chapter 5, meta-organisation theory is reviewed. This literature helps specify some further particularities.

The second literature review focuses on a theoretical understanding of the steering processes of organisations. The thesis, following a chronological order, presents the development of this theoretical understanding. While the initial focus was on the structure of management (governance structure, see 2.4.3) and the participation in managing through decision-making processes (see section 3.3), the initial analysis shows the need for the development of a theoretical framework in which governance, management and administration are seen as generic intertwined elements of steering processes.

Due to the chronological order in the presentation of the thesis, the development process of the framework is split into two. In section 4.4 the first attempt at clarifying the concepts of governance, management and administration is presented. This focuses on clarifying these concepts through the roles and tasks of governors, managers and administrators. Even though the literature helped clarifying the concepts to a degree, at the time it stayed unclear how to further synthesise these concepts to prevent reproduction of the hierarchical top-down conceptualisation of governance, management and administration. After a break in which I focused on meta-organisations and power, and especially due to the insights gained from the power literature, I was able to clarify the concepts in a way that helps to overcome this reproduction. This second attempt is presented in chapter 6.

PART TWO   THE PROCESS OF GAINING UNDERSTANDING

2   GAINING UNDERSTANDING 1: NETWORKS OF EXCELLENCE AND INTER-ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONS LITERATURE

Personal overview of phase one

When I started this research process I set out to first learn more about three key aspects of the research: the Networks of Excellence as such, possible research designs and different approaches to inter-organisational networks.

I first focused on learning and getting to know what the Networks of Excellence were about. I therefore gathered the available documents that concerned Network of Excellence as a funding tool and got acquainted with them. They included the rules, plans, suggestions and advice given to those considering applying for funding as a Network of Excellence. At the end of 2004 I started to collect information about the consortia that had received the Network of Excellence funding or were selected to get it. I enjoyed making the overview as it gave the feeling of progress and when the day came that I had decided to do a last check, I created a big chart of all the networks. This chart I has been hanging on my wall ever since (a version of this chart is included as Appendix 1).

In order to gain more insight into research design and data gathering methods I participated in and discussed my research idea and the initial research design in different Ph.D. courses. In addition to this, I studied independently.

The course work focused on broadening my understanding of research approaches in the field of organisation and management studies as well as research design. The independent study as well as one Ph.D. course focused specifically on deepening my understanding of inter-organisational networks and inter-organisational relations.

In inter-organisational networks and relations there was a wide diversity of approaches. Differences between these were not always clearly expressed, though it was clear that they did not always match with one another. This made it difficult to get a thorough, comprehensive picture of the research field. What made it even more difficult was that concepts used remained often vague, unexplained or ill-defined. This was especially difficult as almost every article seemed to work with a different understanding of the terms and concepts. This made it difficult for me to express clearly and without needing a great deal of time and space to get around all the possible misinterpretations. Although the literature helped me in seeing where I could be misunderstood and possible perspective others may have, I initially did not find a natural 'home', area of

specialisation, grounding or language framework that would help me communicate my own approach and focus. This was somewhat frustrating and also has made me wonder at times if (1) I was the only one interested in this or if (2) I just was unable to locate the literature discussing that what I was interested in.

After the initial clarifying of both the possible research design and the focus of the study, I set out to test my initial ideas and research design. I undertook five pilot interviews with three networks funded by the Commission in the last stage of Framework Programme 5. Interviewing was exciting and most interviews turned out to be great fun. Interviewees shared their perspective, and provided me with very valuable insights.

Timeline

2003   *- Initial idea, drafting research plan*
       - Gathering background information (funding schemes, networks etc.)
       - Written paper 'Managing inter-organisational networks: an institutional and power perspective'
       - Written paper 'Positioning the research on 'Managing an inter-organisational network' in the inter-organisational network literature
2004   *- Pilot interviews*
       - Transcription of pilot interviews
       - Initial analysis of pilot interviews
       - Gathering information on all funded Networks of Excellence (NoEs)
       - Database building
       - Written paper 'Inter-organisational network literature reviewed'
       - Written paper 'Research positioning'
       - Co-written paper 'Parliaments and R&D consortia compared: Similarities in two organisational forms' with Hertta Niemi (Presented at EGOS 2004)
       - Co-written paper 'Management and management practices of European R&D organisations' with Christina Reis (Presented at Radma 2004)
2005   *- Finalising database*
       - Initial analysis of the database

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the first steps that were taken in the research process. As the announcement of the coming into existence of the research object – Networks of Excellence – was the reason for starting the research project, the first step was to gain an understanding of these in a broader setting.

Networks of Excellence are both a funding tool of the Commission as well as consortia funded through this tool. Therefore, in order to understand the environment or surrounding of the consortia, it is necessary to understand the aims and criteria of the funding tool itself. The most important results of the analysis of the documents are presented in section 2.2.

In section 2.3 the actual consortia which were selected to receive Network of Excellence funding before January 2005 are presented. These consortia were the inter-organisational networks that I planned to study. Some of the variation among these consortia is presented.

The theoretically I focused, in this phase on gaining understanding, on inter-organisational networks. In section 2.4, the central key insights gained from the inter-organisational relations literature is presented in order to show how the research was positioned as research on whole networks with a network unit approach. The inter-organisational relations literature is further utilised to describe and clarify the specific type of inter-organisational network the consortia studied are.

In section 2.5, the initial research design and the way in which this design was tested through pilot interviews is presented. After this, the key insights gained from the analysis of the pilot interviews as well as the conclusions drawn based on the analysis are detailed.

This chapter ends with a section discussing the main insights gained during this phase and the consequences of these insights. In this final section I present which particular insights led to the following phase in the process of gaining understanding and why particular changes were deemed necessary.

2.2   NETWORKS OF EXCELLENCE AS FUNDING TOOL

2.2.1   *BACKGROUND AND AIMS OF THE DATA-GATHERING ABOUT THE FUNDING TOOL*

The research objects for this study are consortia that were funded as Networks of Excellence by the Commission as part of Framework Programme 6. These consortia were chosen as the target of the study because of the relatively unique situation where many consortia were going to be created in a short period of time under rather similar circumstances. One could thus expect these networks to be comparable, because of

similarities in, for example, regulation and environment. Furthermore, the large number of consortia would also make a deliberate selection of cases possible. This in turn could make comparability of cases even more precise.

In order to more fully understand the Networks of Excellence, data about these was gathered focussing on Networks of Excellence as a funding tool to gain insight into the rules, regulation and advice given by the Commission.

2.2.2 *DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA GATHERED ABOUT THE FUNDING TOOL*

The information gathered concerning Networks of Excellence as a funding tool included a broad range of documents. The documents can be grouped into three different categories:

- Documents concerning the preparation and final decision on Framework Programme six[3];
- Documents informing and instructing those applying for the funding, both by the Commission[4] and the IPR Helpdesk[5];
- Documents informing the general public about the goals of these funding tools.

2.2.3 *DESCRIPTION AND AIMS OF THE ANALYSES OF THE FUNDING TOOL*

The documents were analysed in order to gain insight into the institutional environment of the consortia. This concerns both the original need to form a consortium through signing a written contract, as well as the need to report annually to the Commission about the activities undertaken in order to ensure funding for the following year.

The aim of this analysis was therefore to understand why the Commission had constructed this funding instrument and to immediate consequences that these goals set by the funding body had for the participating consortia.

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[3] Such as European Parliament and Council (2002).

[4] Such as European Commission (2002a, 2002b, 2003) and see for more details also the Cordis website: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp6/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP6GlossaryPage

[5] Giving advice on, for example, IPR issues and providing examples of different consortium agreements. See for more details http://www.iprhelpdesk.eu

2.2.4 RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS: WHAT ARE NETWORKS OF EXCELLENCE?

A Framework Programme is the main instrument of the Commission through which it provides research funding in Europe. Each programme runs for five years with the first and last year of the consecutive programmes overlapping. Each Framework Programme supports different types of research and both the R&D areas that get funding and the funding instruments may change. The Networks of Excellence as a funding tool were introduced in FP6[6]. This funding tool was different from the instruments previously used by the Commission in that the Networks of Excellence were to provide longer-term funding (up to 7 years) and aimed at durable integration.

> "NoE are designed to strengthen scientific and technological excellence on a particular research topic through the durable integration of the research capacities of the participants. They aim to overcome the fragmentation of European research by:
> - gathering the critical mass of resources
> - gathering the expertise needed to provide European leadership"
> (http://cordis.europa.eu/fp6/instr_noe.htm, accessed 11.09.2012)

To be eligible for funding as a Network of Excellence, the aspiring applicants needed to set up an international research group, which was to integrate the research capacities of the members and at the same time advance the knowledge on their topic. The international research group had to consist of members from at least three different member states of the EU. Furthermore, the research group would only be eligible for funding if it established itself as a consortium.

The members of the consortia were expected to be public or private research institutes, universities, and companies. The participation of small and medium-sized companies was seen as a bonus. An additional element was that to be eligible for funding, a consortium had to spread excellence beyond the boundaries of its member community.

The funding was supposed to be in the form of a grant for integration, which would be a fixed amount distributed in annual instalments. The distribution of the grant was

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[6] Although Networks of Excellence were introduced as a funding tool in FP6, in FP5 a handful of networks were funded as a Network of Excellence to test the funding tool. The networks funded under FP5 as Network of Excellence were, however, not obliged to form a consortium, while all networks in FP6 were obliged. The Networks of Excellence in FP7 have changed significantly, not only are they less numerous, also their purpose is more restricted. Those receiving this funding in FP7 are expected to form a 'virtual research centre' in a particular field, whereby the participating units of the member organisations become highly integrated.

supposed not to be fixed either to participants or activities, giving the consortia the freedom to distribute the grant as they desired[7].

The grant was to be calculated taking into account (1) the degree of integration proposed by the consortium, (2) the number of researchers intended to be integrated, (3) the characteristics of the field and research concerned, (4) the joint programme of activities. The scale of the grant was supposed to be sufficient to overcome the barriers for integration and was to avoid the risk of creating dependence on financial support of the Commission as this would counter the aim of durable integration.

The number of researchers intended to be integrated was seen as the main basis on which the grant would be calculated, whereby a network could apply for 1 million euros per year for every 50 researchers to be integrated[8]. In addition, each participating doctoral student would generate a bonus of 4000 euro a year up to a total of 10% of the grant for integrating researchers.

As durable integration was intended as an outcome, the Commission in their explanation of the funding tool set out a list of indicators for integration.

> "The main factors that will need to be examined by those assessing the quality of the integration in a network will include the following:
> - the extent of mutual specialisation and mutual complementarity, particularly through the regular co-programming of the partners' activities, through the building up of strengths and the shrinking of weaknesses, and perhaps through the relocation of resources;
> - the sharing and development for common use of research infrastructures, equipment, tools and platforms;
> - the regular joint execution of research projects;
> - interactive working between the partners using electronic communication systems;
> - the joint management of the knowledge portfolio;
> - joint programme of training for researchers and other key staff;
> - a coherent management framework that encourages staff mobility, staff exchanges, the interoperability of data and other systems, common

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[7] In practice, as will be discussed later, this seems not to have been implemented in this way, and changes in the use of the funds are said to have been extremely difficult.

[8] The amount to be calculated per 50 researchers is reduced when involving more than 150 researchers, whereby, for example, for 500 researchers to be integrated one could apply for only 5 million euros per year, and not 10 million euros per year. This seems to indicate that the level of integration has been included into these calculation rules, expecting that the degree of integration between 500 researchers will be less than can be reached between 150 researchers.

> approaches to science and society issues and gender equality in research." (European Commission, 2003, pp. 1–2)

In the presentation of Framework Programme 6, seven thematic areas were defined in which funding would be available for research. In each thematic area Networks of Excellence were planned to be used as funding instrument[9]. The areas defined were:

1. Life sciences, genomics and biotechnologies for health

2. Information society technologies

3. Nanotechnologies and nanosciences, knowledge-based multifunctional materials, and new production processes and devices

4. Aeronautics and space

5. Food quality and safety

6. Sustainable development, global change and ecosystems

7. Citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society

In addition, as part of the separate sub-programme on nuclear energy, research funding was also available in the area of 'Euratom'. Networks of Excellence were also planned to be used in this area as funding instrument.

2.2.5 CONCLUSIONS

The most important conclusion from the analysis of the documents on Networks of Excellence is that the Commission, with the Networks of Excellence as funding tool, hoped to create longer-term collaborative structures, even beyond the time-frame of the Network of Excellence funding it is planning to provide. In order for this to be possible, the funding is to lead to higher integration, for example, through the creation of shared structures and shared policies.

The highest possible funding for a Network of Excellence consortium is calculated based on the number of participating researchers and doctoral students. This may lead to the inclusion of researchers (especially during the application), who are not greatly interested or able to actively partake in the network. In addition, researchers are seen as the main participants, who may lead to less broad involvement of the member organisations. This can hamper the creation of shared structures and makes the creation of, for example, shared human resource policies not very likely. We can therefore expect that integration will be sought mainly through joint execution of

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[9] Although at the start of the Ph.D. project it was not entirely clear how many consortia would get Network of Excellence funding, it was clear from all documentation that this funding instrument would be used to establish a large number of consortia with the aim of durable integration.

research projects and possibly shared research-related policies as well as the creation of common research tools.

2.3 CONSORTIA SELECTED FOR NETWORK OF EXCELLENCE FUNDING

2.3.1 *BACKGROUND AND AIMS FOR GATHERING THIS DATA*

As Framework Programme 6 only started in 2003 with the first calls for proposals, it took until late 2003 or early 2004 before the first consortia had finalised their contract negotiations with the Commission. The information about the consortia that had been selected for Network of Excellence funding slowly started to become public during autumn 2004.

The gathering of data about these consortia aimed at getting an overview of these networks and at gaining insight into their similarities and differences. This set of data is in later stages also used in the selection of cases[10]. An overview of the analysis of the data will be presented in this chapter[11].

2.3.2 *DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA GATHERED ABOUT THE CONSORTIA*

Two different sources, 'Cordis'[12] and 'FP6 major projects library'[13], were used to locate the networks selected for funding as Networks of Excellence. These sources also provided most information concerning the details of the networks. When these sources were lacking data, internet search engines were used to locate additional information from press-releases, presentations or the consortium website, if already available.

The data gathered included first of all general information about the consortia, such as names of the consortia, number of members and countries the member organisations came from. Secondly, it included information about their funding as Networks of Excellence, such as the contract numbers, fields of research, amounts of funding awarded, the duration of funding, and starting dates of funding. Thirdly, it included information about the coordinators of the networks, such as names and contact information.

This data was stored in an excel database. The last date of checking for and entering new consortia into the database was 3rd January 2005. The list of Networks of

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[10] The selection of cases will be discussed in detail section 3.4.2.

[11] How the overviews have been utilised in choosing the cases for the case studies will be more closely looked at in chapter 3.4.2.

[12] http://cordis.europa.eu/en/home.html

[13] http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp6/projects.cfm?p=0

Excellence consortia existing in the database by that date became the research sample for gathering of consortium agreements. By that date 101 networks were known to have been selected for funding as Networks of Excellence[14]. An overview of the database can be found in appendix 1.

2.3.3 RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS: VARIATION AMONG THE CONSORTIA

Based on the data on the 101 consortia that had been established by early 2005, it can be stated that they vary in all dimensions available, but most importantly in the following dimensions:

- the number of member organisations
- the estimated number of researchers
- the number of countries the member organisations come from (geographical diversity)
- the field of research

2.3.3.1 NUMBER OF MEMBER ORGANISATIONS
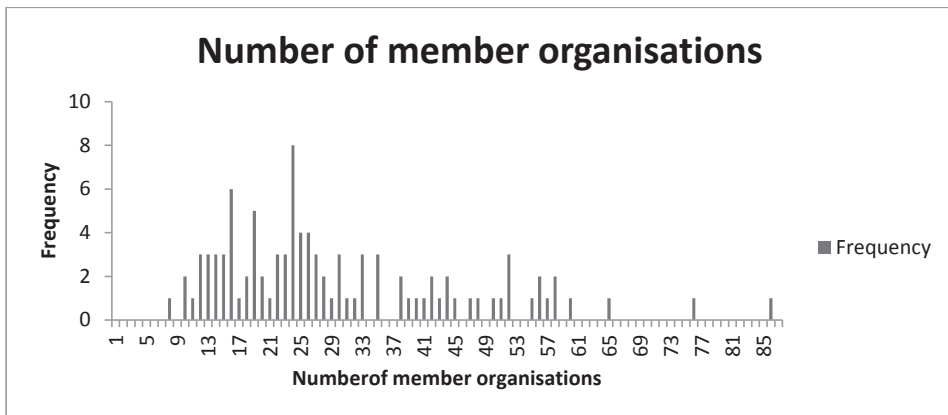
Figure 4   Number of member organisations

The smallest network had only 8 member organisations while the biggest had 86 member organisations. It is clear that the variation in size was so large that this would inevitably influence the way the consortia would be steered. The median amount of

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[14] Originally, 103 consortia were found from the sources. Two of these networks were however later found not to be funded as Networks of Excellence but through another instrument (Integrated Project). They were removed from the database and the further analysis is based on the 101 consortia that were established as Networks of Excellence by the aforementioned date. During Framework Programme 6 as a whole a total of 205 consortia were funded as Network of Excellence.

members in the consortia that were in the database was 25 and the arithmetic mean was about 30, with a standard deviation of approximately 16. Half of all networks had between 19 and 40 members, and roughly two thirds comprised between 14 and 46 members.

2.3.3.2   *ESTIMATED NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONSORTIA*

There was no direct information on the number of participating researchers available, but the amount of funding could be taken as an indicator for the number of researchers to be integrated[15]. The grant for Networks of Excellence was, as presented above, to be calculated based on the number of researchers and doctoral students to be integrated. Using this information it was possible to calculate an estimate of the number of researchers in the consortia. The results are presented in the graph[16] below.

Estimated number of researchers
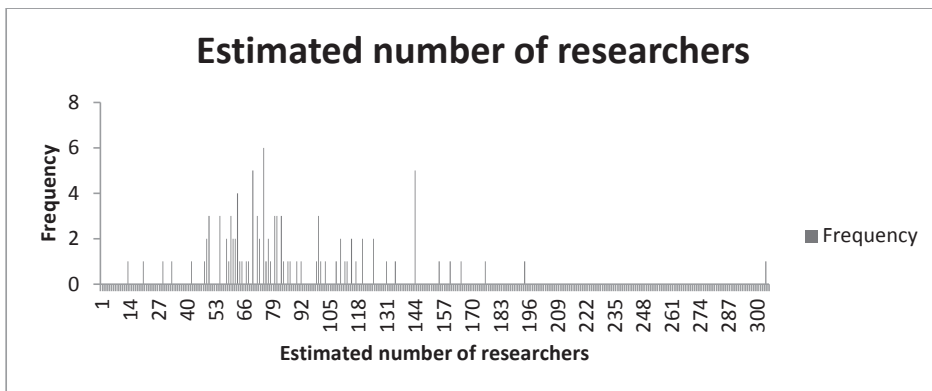
Figure 5   **Number of researchers**

Some basic statistics of this population are the following: the median is 76 researchers and the arithmetic mean is approximately 88 researchers, with a standard deviation of approximately 41. What is interesting is that the number of researchers does not have a significant correlation with any of the other factors except with funding[17].

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[15] Based on the calculations suggested by the Commission, a Network of Excellence was able to apply for €20,000 per researcher to be integrated per year.

[16] The presented data lacks the information about five cases of which (1) the number of member organisations, (2) the amount of the funding promised, or (3) the duration of the promised funding was not available.

[17] The estimation on the number of researchers was calculated based on the amount of funding received by the consortia, so this does not represent any new information.

My expectation was that the number of researchers would correlate with the number of member organisations. One could expect that the integration of researchers becomes more challenging when the number of member organisations increases. I expected for this reason that the number of researchers per member organisation to be integrated would rise when the number of member organisations grows. The situation is actually the contrary: as the number of member organisations grows the number of participating researchers per member organisation diminishes.

2.3.3.3   *GEOGRAPHICAL DIVERSITY IN THE NETWORK OF EXCELLENCE CONSORTIA*

The consortia differ in terms of geographical diversity, that is, in the number of countries represented and how evenly the members are divided among the represented countries.[18] This diversity can be measured with the Blau index (1977, p. 9)[19], that has values from 0 to 1, 0 being the lowest level and 1 the highest level of diversity.

When looking at the consortia accepted as Networks of Excellence from the perspective of geographical diversity it becomes evident that they are quite diverse; the average value of the Blau index is 0,877 and its standard deviation is 0,0362.

2.3.3.4   *DIFFERENCES ACROSS THE FIELDS OF RESEARCH*

Important differences across the fields of research are (1) the number of networks of excellence funded within a field, (2) the average funding a Network of Excellence received in a field and (3) the average number of member organisations.

As can be seen from Figure 6, the field of 'information society technologies' (IST) has been very actively using the Network of Excellence funding instrument, as about 45% of the consortia in the sample come from this field. Far less, but still frequently, the funding instrument has been used in the fields of 'nanotechnologies and nanosciences, knowledge-based multifunctional materials, and new production

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[18] A regional instead of a country comparison could have been used to reflect the cultural diversity in the consortia. This approach, however, presented a few challenges: first there was no ready framework for such a division that could have been applied in the context of this research and secondly this would have implied presumptions on the ethnicity of the participants. This presumption is, however, ill-founded in the context of the European research community. For these reasons it was considered a sounder approach to just look at the geographical diversity in terms of organisations situated in the same country vs. organisations situated in different countries.

[19] Blau index is calculated as follows: the sum of the squares of the proportionate shares of the observed classes is subtracted from 1. If all observed instances belong to the same class the value will be 0, the more classes and the more even the distribution of observed instances in the classes, the closer to 1 the value will be. The value actually shows the probability for two independent observations not to belong to the same class.

processes and devices' (NMP) (16%), 'life sciences, genomics and biotechnologies for health' (LIFESCIHEALTH) (14%) and 'sustainable development, global change and ecosystems' (SUSTDEV) (12%). In the fields of 'food quality and safety' (FOOD) (6%), 'citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society' (CITIZENS) (3%), 'aeronautics and space' (AEROSPACE) (2%), and EUROTOM (2%) the funding tool was used far less frequently. As will be discussed later, the number of Networks of Excellence funded in a particular field has implications for the selection of the cases, as cases from one field were preferred above cases from a variety of fields.
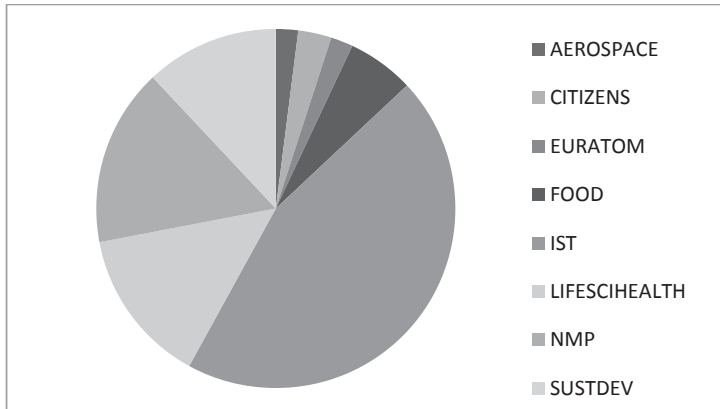
Figure 6   Consortia spread over the research fields

A second difference across the fields of research is the average funding each Network of Excellence received within a field. Figure 7 shows that the average funding a Network of Excellence received in the field of EURATOM, CITIZENS and FOOD was far higher than that of IST; LIFESCIHEALTH; NMP, and SUSTDEV, while the Networks of Excellence in the field of AEROSPACE got the least funding.
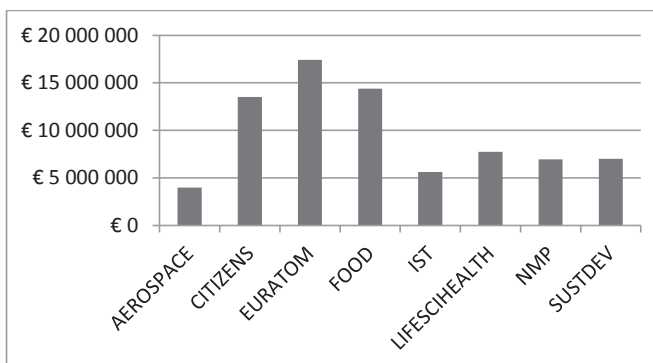
Figure 7   Average funding per consortia in each research field

A third difference to be noted across the different research fields is the average number of member organisations participating. The fields of EUROTOM, SUSTDEV,

CITIZENS, and IST have a higher average number of participating member organisations (more than 30) than the research fields AEROSPACE and NMP (around 20 member organisations), while FOOD and LIFESCIHEALTH can be found in between these two groups.
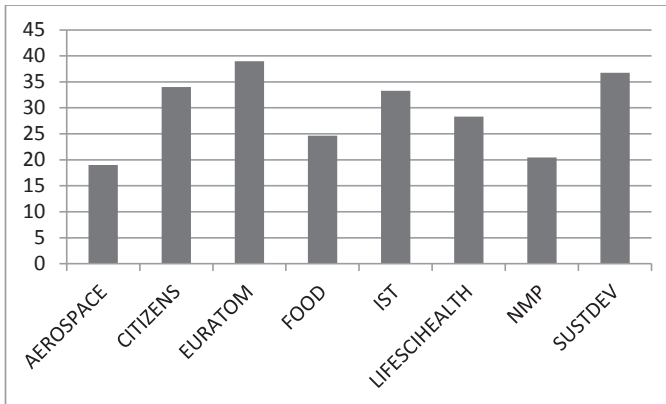
Figure 8   Average number of member organisations per consortia in each research field

The amount of funding does not correlate with the number of member organisations. This means that in the research fields of IST, SUSTDEV and AEROSPACE, the average number of member organisations is far higher in relation to the average funding these Networks of Excellence receive than those in the fields FOOD and NMP. As the amount of funding each Network of Excellence would receive was linked to the number of individual participants to be integrated, a possible explanation for this difference is that the number of individual participants per member organisation to be integrated is much higher in the fields of FOOD and NMP. Unfortunately, it is impossible to check this explanation as no data is available on the number of individual participants.

2.4   INTER-ORGANISATIONAL NETWORK

2.4.1   INTRODUCTION

In the early stages of the research, inter-organisational network literature was reviewed with the aim of gaining understanding of Network of Excellence consortia. The review focused on clarifying possible differences 1) between consortia and other inter-organisational networks and 2) between individual consortia. This literature review on inter-organisational networks was written with two goals in mind. First, the review is to clarify my perspective on inter-organisational networks – that is to position the study within the field. Second, the review aims to clarify and discuss some of the characteristics of and possible difference between Networks of Excellence consortia.

Inter-organisational network forms have been gaining more attention in research as they have become a more common organisational structure. The research field is rather multi-disciplinary including scholars from, for example, sociology, organisation studies, public administration and policy studies. This is logical as inter-organisational networks can be found in private, public, non-governmental and not-for-profit sectors and are used to reach a multitude of goals.

This multi-disciplinary nature makes it quite challenging to get an overview of research that is being done on inter-organisational networks and relations. There are various literature reviews that try to tackle this fragmentation[20]. Most of these literature reviews, however, as Oliver and Ebers (1998) also note, offer only a part of the picture by concentrating on particular theoretical issues or literatures. The review of the inter-organisational network literature that is presented below will not change this. In this chapter, only the aspects and issues highly relevant for understanding this research will be tackled; the review does not aim to synthese the whole research field. It is highly selective and aims at being able to situate the research within the literature as well as present some of the features common to consortia.

2.4.2 THE RESEARCH FIELD OF INTER-ORGANISATIONAL NETWORKS

2.4.2.1 GROWTH OF RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS ON INTER-ORGANISATIONAL NETWORKS

Interest in studying inter-organisational networks, which can be seen from the publications on the topic, has grown exponentially since the beginning of the 1990s (Borgatti & Foster, 2003). This growth in interest seems to follow the increase in the number of inter-organisational networks built during the same period (Hagedoorn, 2002; Hagedoorn & van Kranenburg, 2003; Owen-Smith, Riccaboni, Pammolli, & Powell, 2002).

This rise in the number of inter-organisational networks is often explained by the possibilities created by new information and communication technologies. Some authors (such as Byrne, Brandt, & Port, 1993; Davidow & Malone, 1992; Franke, 2000) argue that inter-organisational networks, which they call virtual organisations, first started at the beginning of the 1990s. Interest in inter-organisational networks, however, also existed before email and the internet developed, as can be seen from some important literature discussing inter-organisational networks published in the

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[20] See for instance Borgatti and Foster (2003); Grandori and Soda (1995); Oliver and Ebers (1998); Oliver (1990); Powell and Smith-Doerr (1994) as well as the various contributions to the *Oxford Handbook of Interorganizational Relations* (Cropper, Ebers, Huxham, & Ring, 2008c).

1970s and 1980s[21]. The research field is thus not by all means new, but has been clearly growing steadily over the years.

2.4.2.2 THE CHAOS IN THE RESEARCH FIELD OF INTER-ORGANISATIONAL NETWORKS

As the interest in studying inter-organisational networks has grown, the studies presently available on these networks are numerous. The differences in the type of members, relationships and purposes of the inter-organisational networks create the basis for a great diversity in inter-organisational networks. The interest in studying them is present in a variety of disciplines, such as organisation studies, entrepreneurship, management studies, sociology, marketing, economics, psychology, computer science, public administration, policy studies, population ecology and law. Furthermore, the theoretical approaches within these disciplines can vary widely[22]. Influenced by this variety, the research field on inter-organisational networks is very fragmented.

Cropper et al. (2008c), when discussing inter-organisational relations[23] as an evolving field of study, talk about a silo-like structured field. They argue that

> "It remains difficult to relate contributions from different silos to one another, as each silo has its own theories, concepts, research traditions, and style." (Cropper et al., 2008b, p. 734)

Two things make orienting within this field difficult. First, within a discipline such as organisation studies or management studies, different silos exist for different network forms, different member types, and maybe even for different relationship types and different purposes. Second, the research literature on one network form or member type will run across different disciplines, such as organisation studies, law and information and communication technology studies. As noted by Cropper et al. (2008a), due to differences in approach, language and so on, these contributions are not linked.

Porter and Powell (2006) and Provan et al. (2007), however, help in creating at least some basic clarity in the field. They argue that research on inter-organisational networks can be divided into two fundamentally different approaches. "Those that

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[21] Some key writings from this period are, for example, Evan (1965, 1966, 1978), Warren (1967), Aldrich (1972; 1979); Tuite, Chisholm, and Radnor (1972); Turk (1973); van de Ven, Emmett and Koenig (1975); and Provan, Beyer and Kruytbosch (1980).

[22] See for a good overview for instance Grandori and Soda (1995).

[23] This is even a broader field of study as the field of inter-organisational relations also includes the study of all one to one type of relationships between organisations.

view networks as a tool to trace relationships; and those that view networks as a form of governance" (Porter & Powell, 2006, p. 77). I agree with them that such a fundamental difference in approach exists, but wish to make the distinction between these approaches even more clear. In order to do so, I will distinguish the metaphorical network approach and the network unit approach.

In the metaphorical network approach, sometimes referred to as social network methodology approach (Isett, Mergel, LeRoux, Mischen, & Rethemeyer, 2010), the network is defined externally, often by the researcher. This is common in, for example, policy network studies, social network studies, egocentric network studies, industrial network studies and regional or district network studies[24]. These studies have in common that networks here are understood as the pattern of inter-linkages, whereby the type of organisation, the type of connection, a process, field or outcome, or a combination of these is taken as the starting point for defining the network and for locating the different network members.

In the network unit approach, the network is an existing unit whereby the boundaries are defined by the network participants themselves. Thus, the organisations participating are aware of being a member of the network. This approach is common in service or product delivery network studies (both public and private sector), in problem-solving network studies (public sector mainly), and collaborative network studies (all sectors).

In the research presented in this thesis, the network unit approach is taken. This means that the boundaries contractually defined in terms of member organisations were taken as given. The network unit is the consortium which receives Network of Excellence funding.

2.4.2.3 *UNITS OF ANALYSIS*

Aldrich (1979: 279-284) and Van de Ven et al. (1975: 19-30) present different units of analysis that can be used in studying inter-organisational networks. Three different units of analysis can be identified from the frameworks they present.

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[24] When giving examples of the two different approaches, both Porter and Powell (2006) and Provan et al. (2007) classify regional or district network studies under the other approach which they define as 'network as governance form' approach. I think that although within a district there is lots of interaction and thus coordination may take place, this takes place in one-to-one relationships. Furthermore, the network and its boundaries are defined externally such as by the researcher and thus the study of district networks should be seen as a metaphorical network approach.

(1) <u>Nodes</u> of the network as the unit of analysis. These nodes can be a pair of organisations, a focal organisation and its direct links, or a group of organisations. By using this unit of analysis one tries to answer questions concerning the transactions or relations that can be found between the units.

(2) <u>Relation</u> as the unit of analysis. With this unit of analysis one searches for the nodes connected through that relation and one tries to say something about what the network looks like.

(3) <u>Network</u> as the unit of analysis. The network is thus at the start already an existing unit. When using this unit of analysis, one can study networks in two very different directions. The first direction is to dig into the network and analyse the nodes and the relations among those nodes within the network studied. The second direction is to stay on the network level and analyse, for example, network level processes and functions.

However, the unit of analysis is elsewhere discussed very differently. Klein, Palmer and Buhl Conn (2000) most importantly argue that there are four different levels which an inter-organisational network can be analysed on: (1) individuals; (2) groups; (3) organisations; and (4) networks.

The focus in this thesis is on processes on the network level. The network level processes can take place 'purely' on the network level; however, they may also result from intertwined processes on organisation, group, and/or individual level within the consortia.

2.4.3 NETWORK OF EXCELLENCE CONSORTIA AS INTER-ORGANISATIONAL NETWORKS

2.4.3.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO INTER-ORGANISATIONAL NETWORKS

In inter-organisational networks three or more organisations, or participants/groups thereof, are connected to each other in some way. They can have various shapes and forms. These inter-organisational networks can be goal-oriented or have some sort of purpose, but do not necessarily need to[25]. The basic elements of all networks are the actors, which are also sometimes called *nodes* or *members*, and the connections between the nodes, which are also called *ties* or *relationships* (Scott, 2000).

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[25] As discussed in the previous section, in studies with a metaphorical network approach, the network does not have a purpose or goal, but the relationships that are found can and mostly do have a purpose or meaning.

In the case of inter-organisational networks, the members of a network can be, for example, companies, governmental organisations or non-governmental organisations. These organisations may participate as a whole or only one part of the organisations may be involved. The members of inter-organisational networks can be geographically close to each other (regional) or more dispersed, for example, within one country (national) or in different countries (for example in the Nordic region, EU or internationally).

The relationships between organisations in an inter-organisational network can be informal or formalised. Informal relationships are based on social contacts between the individual participants of the different member organisations. Formalised relationships are those whereby the member organisations have signed contracts or agreements between themselves individually or collectively. Formalised relationships in most cases also include informal relationships, but do not have to. For example, in cases whereby contractual agreements have been made on the delivery of certain goods, informal relationships may be replaced by technical or mechanical exchange of information.

Furthermore, the relationship can be symmetric or asymmetric (Grandori and Soda 1995: 198-205). Symmetric connections between organisations create a parity-based network and asymmetric connections can create centralised networks, which have a central co-ordinating firm. Asymmetric connections are often one-directional, which means that one or more of the nodes are able to demand something from the other nodes, or a node may invest money or give advice to the other nodes (Borgatti and Foster 2003: 992).

An inter-organisational network can, besides the members and the relationships, also have one or more purposes or goals. These inter-organisational networks are also called goal-oriented inter-organisational networks (Provan et al., 2007). The purposes or goals of inter-organisational networks vary greatly. In the broadest terms inter-organisational networks may aim at one or a mix of the following:

1. co-ordinating activities;
2. sharing costs or services;
3. sharing insights;
4. speaking with one voice.

The coordination of activities may concern only one or several types of activity undertaken by the member organisations, such as coordination of the buying of particular products or the coordination of the delivery of goods or services. The sharing of costs or services concerns the shared hiring or production of goods or services such as a hiring a shared accountant or secretary, or creation of a shared R&D department. The sharing of insights is often expected to lead to learning,

development and innovation. This aim is often combined with other aims, but can, for example in communities of practice, also be the main and even the only goal. Speaking with one voice is in principle a combination of co-ordinating activity and sharing costs or service. It is considered separate as it concerns activities which often are not undertaken by the member organisations themselves and which limit the autonomy of the member organisations more than the sharing of costs or services would tend to indicate.

Network of Excellence consortia as inter-organisational networks

The Network of Excellence consortia are inter-organisational networks which can have private or public research institutes, universities, companies or a mix of them as its members. The relationship between these members is formalised by signing a consortium agreement which regulates the relationship between the members. The relationship between the members is symmetric; they are all member of the same collective. This, however, does not mean that they are equal, differences in power still exist.

Network of Excellence consortia are goal-oriented inter-organisational networks. Their purpose is to co-ordinate their activities. Often, however, this is combined this with the sharing of insights and sharing of costs or services. The sharing of costs or services can include costs for the co-ordination of their activities or for the delivering of the goods and services to the Commission. Speaking with one voice is not the main purpose of the Network of Excellence consortia themselves, but the demand by the Commission on the networks in creating consortia also aimed at making them speak with one voice to the Commission.

2.4.3.2 FORMS OF INTER-ORGANISATIONAL NETWORKS

The form of an inter-organisational network influences the nature of the collaboration taking place. Various typologies of inter-organisational network forms have been suggested over the years (Cropper, Ebers, Huxham, & Ring, 2008a; Evan, 1966; Grandori & Soda, 1995; Gulati, Puranam, & Tushman, 2012; Provan et al., 2007). Often a set of three to six types of structure is identified. These different types are normally discussed simply as parallel alternatives, but I wish to divide them along the research lines to which they belong. I will do this in order to clarify some essential differences that are often overlooked in the literature. This will also make the difference in approach discussed earlier in 2.4.2.2 more tangible.

Studies using the metaphorical network approach have identified numerous types of network structures, whereby organisations are linked together through separate social or contractual linkages. Three ideal types are identified (Evan, 1966). The first type of metaphorical network is that of a *hub-and-spoke or star-model network*, whereby the different members are connected to one (focal) organisation. This type of

network is studied commonly in egocentric network studies[26]. The second type of metaphorical network is that of an *all-channel network*, whereby all members are connected to all other members. This type is not commonly studied as such, but commonly would be identified within a larger metaphorical network. The third type of metaphorical network is a *chain network*, whereby the members are connected one after the other. This type is commonly studied in supply chain network studies[27].

In research that has approached networks as existing units, two types of network can be identified. The first network unit structure concerns those inter-organisational networks which form a unit and set up a *network entity*, such as consortia, joint ventures (Gulati, 1998) and network administrative organisations (Provan et al., 2007). In relation to this type, the difference between entities with two members and entities with more than two members will be discussed later. The networks with an established network entity can resemble an all-channel network or a hub-and-spoke network.

The second network unit structure concerns those inter-organisational networks which form a unit without setting up a separate entity; a *linked membership network*. This type includes, for example, networks with a collective agreement such as a memorandum of understanding and minority equity alliances. These linked membership networks can, like the network entity, resemble all-channel networks or hub-and-spoke networks.

Grandori and Soda (1995) argue that the different types of inter-organisational networks rely on a different combination of coordination mechanisms. They suggest differentiating networks based on the formalisation level into non-formal (social networks)[28], formal based on a contract (bureaucratic networks), and most formal based on exchange of equities and property rights (proprietary networks). They further suggest differentiating networks based on centralisation, grouping networks into those with a central co-ordinating member-organisation (asymmetric networks) and parity-based coordinated networks (symmetric networks).

Grandori and Soda (1995) argue that each type uses a different combination of coordinating mechanisms. The coordination mechanisms they identify and discuss include the follow ten mechanisms: (1) communication, decision and negotiation mechanisms, (2) social coordination and control, (3) integration and linking-pin roles

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[26] Ali-Yrkkö (2001) is an example of this type of study.

[27] Andersson (2002) is an example of this type of study.

[28] As Grandori and Soda do not differentiate between metaphorical networks and network as a unit, this social network group includes many metaphorical network types such as districts and supply chains.

and units, (4) common staff, (5) hierarchy and authority relations, (6) planning and control systems, (7) incentive systems, (8) selection systems, (9) information systems, and (10) public support and infrastructure.

Table 1 **Forms of inter-firm networks (Grandori and Soda, 1995)**

Centralisation / Formalisation	Parity-based networks	Networks with a central agent or co-ordinating organisation
Informal networks	Symmetric social	Asymmetric social
Formalised through contractual agreement	Symmetric bureaucratic	Asymmetric bureaucratic
Formalised through contractual agreement and ownership commitments	Symmetric proprietary	Asymmetric proprietary

Network of Excellence consortia as symmetric bureaucratic networks

Consortia, the focus of this thesis, are seen as belonging to the symmetric bureaucratic type of inter-organisational network which "are formalized in exchange or associational contractual agreements" (Grandori & Soda, 1995, p. 201). Symmetry does not necessarily mean that all network participants participate in the coordination equally. The coordination will, however, not look like a hub-and-spoke, but more like an all-channel network. Grandori and Soda (1995) point out that symmetric bureaucratic networks differ in the way they are co-ordinated. Some of these symmetric bureaucratic networks use common services to co-ordinate large numbers of similar members. Other symmetric bureaucratic networks use planning and programming systems, as well as control, incentive and penalty systems. Grandori and Soda (1995), however, note that usually these networks use an intense social co-ordination in addition to the other forms of coordination.

In addition, public support is often a driver for setting up R&D or technological consortia. Public support as well as external legitimation can, furthermore, be critical in regulating the cooperative interdependence among otherwise competing organisations. This may also be of importance in the Networks of Excellence consortia.

2.4.3.3   GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF INTER-ORGANISATIONAL NETWORKS

The discussion on governance structure often draws on the economic governance literature and aims to understand how different control and coordination mechanisms create different organising forms. Besides the work by Grandori and

Soda (1995) already discussed in the previous section, two typologies are central in discussing inter-organisational governance structures, the typology by Park (1996) and the typology by Provan and Kenis (2008). I shortly present these two typologies. Thereafter I discuss some of the difficulties these typologies present.

Park (1996) distinguishes four different inter-organisational governance structures. The main division is based on a split between bilateral and trilateral organising (see Table 2). Bilateral organising means that the organisations involved govern their collaboration themselves, whereas trilateral organising means that in addition to the organisations, a central office exists which is staffed externally.

Table 2   **Governance structures suggested by Park (1996)**

Bilateral	Trilateral
Mutual adjustment	Voluntary
Alliance	Mandatory

Park (1996) distinguishes between two different bilateral structures: mutual adjustment and alliance. Mutual adjustment is a governance structure in which there is no central unit, no formal rules, and the full decision-making authority in the network resides with the participating organisations. The coordinating mechanism that it depends on is negotiation and bargaining. An example of this governance mode is relational contracting. Alliance, on the other hand, is a network structure that is more formalised than mutual adjustment. The coordinating mechanisms relied upon are formalised rules and systems for collective decision-making. Alliances with a central office do, however, not belong to in this category; they belong to the category of trilateral governance structures.

In trilateral structures there is a central office which Park (1996) defines to be staffed externally. The autonomy of the central office in the trilateral mode is thus higher and the distance to the member organisations is larger. Park (1996) divides the trilateral mode into two forms, those in which the membership is voluntary and those in which it is mandatory. In voluntary trilateral structures, member organisations decide to outsource coordination/sanctioning activities to a separate external management entity as the external management is expected to be more loyal to the network than to individual members. This entity monitors behaviour, administers the process of collective decision-making, and coordinates and directs members' efforts toward the collective goals in the network. In mandatory trilateral structures, to be able to belong to the network, one needs to become a member and follow the rules set out by the network. The central office has full decision-making power (dictatorial) and represents the interests of third-party constituencies.

Similarly to Park (1996), Provan and Kenis (2008) suggest dividing governing structures of inter-organisational networks into three types. They create a division based on internal and external organising and based on a decentralised or centralised approach. First, participant-governed networks are the simplest and most common form, which is similar to Park's bilateral category. The inter-organisational network can, in this case, be formally governed by its participating organisations formally (referred to by Park (1996) as alliance) or informally (in Park's terms, mutual adjustment). These networks, however, vary from highly decentralised to highly centralised in terms of the number of member organisations participating in the process of governing. Second, lead organisation-governed networks are an extremely centralised version of participant-governed networks. In this form a single member organisation acts as the lead organisation of the network (similar to Park's trilateral mandatory category). Third, network administrative organisation is a form whereby the network has a central office that is staffed externally, (corresponding withPark's trilateral voluntary category).

Table 3   **Governance structures suggested by Provan and Kenis (2008)**

	Decentralised	**Centralised**
Internal	Participant-governed networks Formally/Informally	Lead organisation-governed networks
External	-	Network administrative organisation

The categorisations of both Park (1995) and Provan and Kenis (2008) do not explicitly distinguish who governs and who manages or administers, though they implicitly draw a distinction based on this. Both authors distinguish governance undertaken by the members (collective governance) and governance undertaken by one of the member organisations or an external organisation (dictatorial governance). They also distinguish based on the organising of coordination or the management and the administration, the management and administration can take place through mutual adjustment between the participants or can be the responsibility of a separate organisation. If there is a separate organisation to undertake management and administration, these can either be internally staffed by employees of the member organisations or externally staffed. This creates a six-fold field as presented in Table 4.

Table 4   Governance structures

	Collective governance	Dictatorial governance
No separate management/ administration	Mutual adjustment/Participant-governed informally	-
Management/ administration staffed internally	Alliance/Participant-governed formally	-
Management/ administration staffed externally	Voluntary trilateral/Network administrative organisation	Mandatory trilateral/Lead organisation governed

When considering this six-fold field as presented above, it can be noted that a further separation can be made between the organisation of the management and that of the administration. This was, however, considered unnecessary for clarifying differences between basic types of organisations, though the dynamics within each type of organisation may differ due to a different way of staffing administration and management.

Network of Excellence consortia: collective governance with management/administration internally or externally staffed

The Networks of Excellence consortia are all networks with collective governance, where all or a large proportion of the members are represented. They differ, however, in the organisation of their management and administration. Although most have the management and administration staffed by the member organisations, some of the consortia have included specialised organisations to take care of particular management and administration processes. In particular, processes related to planning and reporting requirements in relation to the Commission tend to be externally organised.

2.4.3.4   TWO LAYERS OF OPERATIONS

In the literature on virtual organisations[29][30] an interesting further distinction is made between two layers of operation[31]. These layers will be referred to with the terms

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[29] Not all virtual organisations are inter-organisational networks, but inter-organisational networks are sometimes discussed as virtual organisations. Virtual may then be used to refer to an inter-organisational network having no physical space and in which information and communication technology is used widely to connect people and systems across the organisations within the network.

[30] The literature discussing networks as 'virtual' is vast, but still has a very unclear vocabulary, whereby the meanings of the terms used differ per article. I will not discuss the concept of virtual nor the terminology used in this discussion. For further details see for instance Bultje and van Wijk (1998),

platform layer and *project layer*. The nature and function of both of these layers and the connection between the layers are explained below (see also figure 9).

With *platform layer* the different authors refer to the features of the network that have a permanent nature. The platform is the basis for long-term co-operation from which the co-operation is structured and the implementation is made as useful, easy and quick as possible. The platform is a means for regulation and mediation, goal-setting, planning and administration, co-ordination and support, knowledge management and network development. Furthermore, the platform is referred to by Blecker and Neumann (2000, p. 65) as "the structure of trust … [which is] … the major instrument of co-ordination and control" needed for the creation of projects.

With *project layer* the different authors refer to the features of the network that have a temporary or project nature. The project layer consists of one or more projects. Each project is a means for carrying out specific tasks, where the involved members seek common advantages by sharing the costs and the available resources (Blecker & Neumann, 2000). As Lundin and Söderholm (1995, p. 440) put it "a task legitimizes a temporary organization and can be compared to a permanent organisation's devotion to goals". Lundin and Söderholm (1995) further point out that the creation of a temporary organisation is often motivated by a task that must be accomplished. The temporality of the organisation is thus determined by idea that when a task is accomplished the temporary organisation will be dismantled.

The general assumption in this literature is that the co-operating organisations need each other to be able to implement the specific tasks of the projects. Blecker and Neumann (2000) point out that in order to be able to co-operate, organisations need to find the right partners with whom they have a trust relationship and some shared understanding on how to work together. If the parties do not have this relationship, the outcomes of the projects would become very uncertain and the process of building shared understanding would take a longer time.

Wassenaar (1998), Franke (2000) or Blecker and Neumann (2000) for discussion of 'virtual' and use of terminology.

[31] See, for instance, Ollus, Ranta and Ylä-Anttila (1999); Franke (1999, 2000); Blecker and Neumann (2000); Degener and Inversini (2001).

1. *Participating organisations formalise their relationships through one or more collective contracts or agreements.*

2. *On the platform level the member organisations can agree on and change rules, procedures and practices.*

3. *Projects are formed by the members for carrying out specific tasks, following the rules, procedures and practices agreed upon at platform level. When finalised, these projects are dis-mantled, but the experience and understanding gained may stay with the organisations at platform level.*

Figure 9   **Inter-organisational network divided into platform and project layer (Adapted from Ollus et al., 1999: 6 and Blecker and Neumann, 2000: 66)**

The Network of Excellence instrument: promoting the creation of platforms

The division between platform and project layers presented above helps to further understand the nature of the consortia funded as Networks of Excellence and the difference between these consortia and other research and development projects funded by the Commission. Research and development projects are often developed by those that have co-operated in the past, but most often also include some new partners. The rules for the co-operation and trust relations between the partners need therefore to be developed for each project separately. The Commission wished, with the Networks of Excellence instrument, to promote the creation of more long-term structures for co-operation. Networks of Excellence can thus be seen as a funding instrument aimed at the building of platforms for long-term co-operation and with the idea that from this basis it would be easier and faster to set up new projects.

The Network of Excellence consortia will have both a platform and project layer. As these have a different nature, network processes studied need to take into account this possible difference in the different layers.

2.4.4 *FINDINGS IN THE LITERATURE ON INTER-ORGANISATIONAL NETWORKS*

This section focuses on some of the commonly mentioned issues discussed in relation to inter-organisational networks which may be relevant to understanding Network of Excellence consortia. This includes the lack of clarity in power and authority, the lack

of clarity in goals as well as the influence of number of participants. These issues will be discussed in more detail below.

2.4.4.1 LACK OF CLARITY IN POWER AND AUTHORITY

An aspect that is commonly mentioned in research on inter-organisational collaboration is the lack of clear power and authority structures. When organisations work together in collaborative settings this to a certain degree lessens the autonomy of the members, as within the domain of the collaboration certain decisions are made collectively and not by the members separately. In most cases, however, the organisations maintain a relatively high degree of autonomy in relation to their own resources and procedures. In relation to these resources and procedures voluntary adjustments may be made by willing members, such as integrated administrative systems or shared norms and standards.

Although at the outset voluntary, the existence and use of integration systems or norms and standards by some members creates pressures on the other members to adjust as well. In addition, the member organisations may also make promises in relation to the collaboration in terms of contributing resources, taking particular responsibilities, etc.

Thus, in some areas, decided by the members collectively, the collaboration structure will have authority to steer and control its undertakings and those of the member organisations, also called governing capacity (Traxler, 2007). In some areas, the members will keep the authority to decide and control themselves. And in some areas, the member organisations will share authority with the network. In addition, over time, the authority over particular areas may shift from the member organisations to the network or become shared. All of this contributes to the lack of clarity in the authority structure.

In addition, the authority structure, even if it has been clarified in detail and agreed upon, can always still be challenged. This is due to the fact that the power structure is not fully bound to the authority structure alone. Macro power structures, such as uneven resource dependencies, and micro power processes, for examples through participation in particular discussions at a particular point and place in time, also influence the power structure in inter-organisational relations[32]. Thus, the power and authority structure in inter-organisational collaborations differs per specific area in question, lacks overall clarity, and is therefore hard to assess.

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[32] For a review of macro and micro power in inter-organisational relations see Huxham and Beech (2008).

2.4.4.2 LACK OF CLARITY IN GOALS

The second aspect often taken up in relation to the nature of collaboration is the lack of a clear goal structure. In part this is inherent to the differing goals and motivations of the member organisations for joining and participating in the cooperation. In addition, the goals and motivations of the member organisations are not static, but change over time. Furthermore, inter-organisational networks often have multiple goals and aims whereby the priority of one over the other is not always clearly established. This results in a continuous process of negotiating and renegotiating the goals and aims for the cooperation as well as the priority of the various goals.

In addition, the goal structure will be influenced by, for example, the resources available to the meta-organisation at any point in time. When a meta-organisation is dependent on a particular set of members to work towards a particular goal and one of these member organisations is unable to make the needed resources available at that time, priorities will be shifting to other goals for which resources are available.

The lack of clear power and authority structure and the lack of clear goal structure make collaborative inertia, which means hard fought, slow or negligible progress (Vangen & Huxham, 2003), a common problem in inter-organisational collaborations.

In addition, lack of clarity in the authority structure can easily lead to conflicts among members and between the member organisations and the collaborative structures. In order to make progress and to be able to deal with conflicts, trust, social norms and social relationship structures become essential next to or even sometimes replacing contracts and rules, as is commonly argued in inter-organisational collaboration literature[33].

2.4.4.3 NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS AS A DIFFERENTIATING FACTOR

The third aspect influencing the nature of collaboration is that of the number of participants. Das and Teng (2002) argue, based on social exchange theory, that the nature of collaboration is different in alliances with two as opposed to multiple (three or more) members. Social exchanges in dyadic relationships are restricted and direct, while social exchanges tend to get generalised in multi-partner relationships. This creates three key differences in the nature of collaboration.

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[33] See, for example, Canning and Hanmer-Lloyd (2007); Das and Teng (1998, 2001); de Man and Roijakkers (2009), Lyon (2006), Mellewigt, Madhok and Weibel (2007); and Vlaar, van den Bosch and Volberda (2007).

First, in multi-partner relationships the partners are likely to need to rely on generalised reciprocity, whereby obligations to one party may be transferred to another party or to the entire group. Generalised reciprocity makes potential free-riding possible, but is also seen as the basis for trust-building.

Second, in multi-partner relationships all members observe and monitor the conduct of all other members, and when needed can take actions as a group in the form of social sanctions. This is expected to help in preventing and resolving conflicts.

Third, in order to sustain stable multi-partner relationships, shared beliefs and values (what might be thought of as the macro-level culture) are seen as particularly important. The macro culture is argued to also help make coordination easier and less costly.

2.4.5 REFLECTIONS

While strategic alliances, joint ventures, and partnerships refer to a variety of forms of inter-organisational relations, the research literature which discusses them provides little to actually understand the Network of Excellence consortia studied, nor how they are managed. I will try to explain why.

First, the research literature on strategic alliances and joint ventures focus mainly on situations in which two or a small number of organisations initiate collaboration. Thus, the relationship looked at in this literature is that between these initiating organisations or those between the newly-created organisation (the alliance or joint venture organisation) with its parent organisations or owners. Those that do specifically look at situations with multiple partners are less common, and the perspective then often turns to be ego-centric (such as, for example, in Goerzen, 2005; a similar argument is made by Provan et al., 2007). Furthermore, the theoretical foundation of the research literature on alliances and joint ventures arises from industrial and business organisational economics (Shenkar & Reuer, 2006). This means that even if consortia are discussed (see, for example, Faulkner, 2006), consortia are conceptualised as large scale activities with the partner organisations as the investors or shareholders and commonly-owned organisation with its own management that is external from the partner organisations. The Network of Excellence consortia are internally managed and it is specifically this that this thesis tries to understand.

'Partnership' refers to a variety of different types of collaborations in different sectors, such as public sector (Friend, 2006; Mitchell & Shortell, 2000; Provan & Milward, 2001; Rethemeyer & Hatmaker, 2007) and the voluntary and community sector (Mandell & Keast, 2008; Mitchell & Shortell, 2000; Sanyal, 2006), as well as across sectors, such as public-private partnerships (Carayannis & Laget, 2004; Noble &

Jones, 2006; Vancoppenolle & Verschuere, 2012). A partnership refers to relationships between organisations on the continuum from informal to formal relationships, from individual to corporate level involvement, from short-term to long-term (Goerzen, 2005), and it refers to the whole continuum of level of involvement from cooperation to integration (Sandfort & Milward, 2008). However, in most research literature in which partnerships are discussed it stays unclear if the factors, behaviour or other issues discussed can be generalised across these differences or not (Hibbert, Huxham, & Ring, 2008). In addition, when differences along the continuums of formal/informal relationship, individual/corporate involvement, short/long-term and cooperation/integration are made explicit, such as in typologies, the substantive issues discussed are usually kept at such general level that they do not specify the effects of these differences. The very extensive typology of Grandori and Soda (1995), for example, shows the differences between inter-organisational forms by specifying the type of coordination mechanism commonly used by different inter-organisational forms. The effects of the use of these mechanisms on the organisation are, however, not specified in much detail.

When considering the research literature on managing inter-organisational networks (see Hibbert et al., 2008 for a review of approaches), the focus is particularly strong on 'the manager'. In the Network of Excellence consortia, however, there is no separate class of 'managers' – there often is a network coordinator and a project manager or project administrator. These titles could be compared with 'managers', but we would then assume that these coordinators and administrators perform management tasks. Although it can be expected that they at least carry out some managerial activities, that is not the point. The point is that I am not, for the purpose of the study, especially interested in what these coordinators or administrators do in order to call this 'managing'; I want to know how the organisation is managed. When coordinators or administrators play a large role, I aim to find this out.

In the analysis of the Network of Excellence consortia it is expected to be useful to distinguish between two layers of operations: the platform and the project layer. On the platform layer the Network of Excellence consortia, due to multiple participants and generalised reciprocity may need to cope with free-riding. It can therefore be expected that monitoring and sanction systems will be developed on the platform level to prevent related conflicts. Furthermore, as the Network of Excellence consortia are, to a large extent, participant-chosen networks within a research field, we can expect these networks to have a macro-culture based on the common discipline which then supports a rather stable collaboration. This macro culture may help on the project level especially in coping with potential conflicts.

2.5   TESTING OF INITIAL RESEARCH DESIGN

2.5.1   BACKGROUND AND PURPOSES OF THE PILOT INTERVIEWS

Although the research object was clear, the actual research design was still rather open at the start. A large range of options was considered possible, such as observation of meetings, interviews, document analysis (for instance contractual documents but also minutes of meetings), survey, and a mix of these methods. This was especially due to the difficulty of establishing a more precise understanding of what management entailed – was it what managers do, was it decision-making, was it coordination, or was it a combination of these. In addition, as the Network of Excellence consortia were to be multinational, the design of the study needed to take the related challenges, such as cost and language, into account.

In my first research plan the initial preferences started to become clear. I wrote:

> "(…) the main goal is to collect and analyse the data needed to answer the research questions. The data collection methods include four to six case studies and a large-scale survey. The four case studies will include interviews with those involved in the management of the consortia and other key figures of and related to the consortia. A key figure is for instance a project officer assigned to each network by the Commission to maintain close contact with the network management team. The internet-based questionnaire will be announced to a large group of people (100-500) involved in consortia funded as a Network of Excellence, which have not been included in the case studies."

The choice to include both qualitative and quantitative methods reflects how uncertain I was as to what data would give to most useful insights into the questions I had formulated and in addition what would be possible in practice. As my personal preference was to work with qualitative data and most questions demanded a more qualitative approach, I decided on piloting a semi-structured interview design in which both phone and face-to-face interviews were tested. This was done by conducting a small number of pilot interviews.

The aims for the pilot interviews, when they were being planned, got extended into different directions. At least four different aims were formulated:

1. I wished to check how accessible these European R&D consortia were. Is it possible to get access to these consortia? Are people in consortia willing and able to talk about how they manage?

2. I wished to check the suitability of semi-structured interviews as a data-gathering method. Am I able to get useful data through semi-structured interviews on the questions I was most interested in?

3. I wished to check if the questions and themes of the semi-structured interviews were understandable for those interviewed. I did not know much of the terminology the potential interviewees would use, and I thus saw a possible need to adjust my way of asking about their organisational environment to fit their reference frame better.

4. I wished to gain more of an inside view from people involved in managing a consortium concerning three themes: These were the management of consortia, the management structure and its relation to the organisational structure, and the roles and tasks of consortium managers.

2.5.2   DESCRIPTION OF THE PILOT INTERVIEWS

At the point when I was planning my pilot interviews, the Networks of Excellence consortia had not yet been selected or become operational. As introduced already earlier, in order to pilot the Network of Excellence instrument, the Commission had during the last stages of the Framework Programme 5 granted three networks[34] Network of Excellence type of funding. This also made it possible to undertake pilot interviews in a very similar set-up.

Five semi-structured interviews were conducted during weeks 19 and 20 in 2004. In two of the networks one person was interviewed; in one network three people were interviewed. Two interviews took place in the Netherlands, two in Finland, and one took place by phone. Four of the interviews were with men and one with a woman. Most interviews lasted for about 45-60 minutes, but in one case the interview lasted over 90 minutes. The interviews were taped and the tapes were transcribed.

2.5.3   SOME KEY RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF PILOT INTERVIEWS

The pilot interviews indicated that it was important to do qualitative research, especially to be able to look at who is involved in managing the consortia. In all the pilot cases the assistants of managers seemed to undertake important managerial tasks, especially in terms of preparing decisions and coordination.

Although only one phone interview took place and thus no large conclusions could be drawn, a negative element of the phone interview seemed to be that it would be more difficult to get access to documents, such as information flyers and consortium agreements. In all other interviews, the interviewees had shown and were willing to give access to internal documents that related to the topics discussed. This did not occur in the phone interview.

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[34] Note: The groups that received the Network of Excellence type of funding in Framework Programme 5 were not obliged to sign a consortium agreement.

The costs and time investment needed to do face-to-face interviews were, however, very high. Two alternative options were therefore considered. One alternative was to undertake interviews while observing one of the meetings of the consortium and the other alternative was to undertake phone interviews. Observation during meetings was considered possible, but pilot interviewees indicated the very extremely full programme of such meetings. It could therefore be difficult to get people to sit down and talk in such circumstances. In addition, the more controversial or difficult issues on the agenda of the meeting could possibly overshadow other issues which were important for managing the consortium. Phone interviews were seen as a very good alternative. This would give less insight into how management takes place in these meetings, but would be able to cover more easily the whole range of possible management activity during and between meetings.

The pilot interviews also resulted in important issues to think about concerning the content. The most relevant content-related findings of the pilot interviews were difficulty of getting insight into the organisational structure, the focus on decision-making, the relationships between individuals, the autonomy consequences for managing, and the difference in the way individuals participate. These issues will be briefly highlighted below.

When asking about the management or organisational structure of the consortia, interviewees responded with what they remembered of the structure as described in formal documents (consortium agreement or contract with the Commission). They often even wished to get the contract and show the structure as drawn in the contract. This brought me to the decision to gather consortium agreements from the different consortia as this would give a good picture of the structure which they would try to 'repeat' to me when asked. If I had these agreements, I could more explicitly ask about the reality in practice. Thus as a consequence, gathering of consortium agreements became one of the central activities in the next phase of the research.

When interviewees were asked about how the consortium was managed, interviewees concentrated on describing who decides what and with which consequences. Interviewees thus seemed to see decision-making as the most central issue related to managing these consortia. The most interesting insight taken from these interviews was that these networks had complex or difficult hierarchical structures. These were a combination of hierarchical decision-making whereby higher levels were to decide 'over' lower levels and at the same time an upturned hierarchy whereby decisions prepared by the base decided 'over' the higher levels, which seemed to have little possibility to decide differently. Decision-making then became a central aspect of the research topic, along with the management structure and management tasks. As a consequence, decision-making theory became a central topic in the next phase of the research.

The interviews, furthermore, showed that an interesting tension existed in these types of networks between friend-colleagues and colleagues – whereby some participants in the network are very close friends and others are mere colleagues. This seemed to influence who gets to be involved in which positions and who is consulted or gets to be involved in the decision preparation and decision-making. This insight is used in next stage as part of gaining understanding of decision-making.

In addition, there were also some interesting comments which started me thinking in new ways about the management of networks. One of the interviewees commented on the difference in organisational culture and consequences for decision-making. Some of the groups were managed very centrally, while others were managed in a decentralised manner. The interviewee noted that the groups that were managed in a centralised manner were doing rather poorly, while those managed in a decentralised manner flourished. A further comment was that deciding what researchers in different organisations need to do, is not possible without their own input and agreement as in the end they are the ones that need to do the work. For a long period, this insight did not receive the attention it requires, although it was considered important. It is addressed in section 5.4, especially in the part related to indirect resources.

Comments on difference in culture between member organisations in terms of hierarchical relations within member organisations were also made. One interviewee commented that in those organisations where hierarchical structures were strongly present, the participation level of individuals from these member organisations depended on the interests and opinions of the boss. If the boss stood not fully behind the initiative, subordinates would stop contributing actively to the network, while in less hierarchical member organisations the interest level of the individual participants was more important. This has not been addressed explicitly in the thesis, but is considered as part of the discussion on the complexity of the organisations due to indirect resources.

2.5.4 REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The pilot interviews have been a stepping stone to the second phase of my study, which will be discussed in chapter 4. It helped in choosing the research methodology, which became case-based phone interviews. In addition, consortium agreements were seen as possibly giving insight into the structure chosen for the consortium and the rules agreed upon. I therefore chose to gather the consortium agreement of these networks in addition to general information concerning the networks funded.

Two other important insight were that managing, or at least that what I thought to be managing, was also done and in some cases mainly carried out by, for example, administrative assistants. This made me change my view from 'management is what

managers do' to management as a more generic activity– it can also be done by those who are not called managers. Furthermore, the interviews focused mainly on decision-making as management, which seems to derive from the multinational setting of the consortia in which meetings are effectively the only time in which visible management work is being done.

2.6 REFLECTING ON PHASE ONE AND LOOKING AHEAD

In this phase I sought to gain a better understanding of the differences between the various forms of inter-organisational networks and how other researchers talk and think about inter-organisational networks in various ways. More importantly for me, however, I gained insight into how I understood inter-organisational networks and where my way of talking and thinking might fit into the field of inter-organisational relations. This had become especially significant, as whenever I talked about my research, colleagues were expecting a particular approach, which was most often not the one I had been trying to present. Reactions such as 'oh, so are you doing social network analysis' or 'oh, so are you looking at the consequences for the member organisations participating to the network' were very common.

In order to explain to others how my work was situated in the field, I needed a rather long explanation of precisely what it was that interested me. In the extract below a recompilation of such explanation is given, based on the information in my research diary.

Explaining the research object

I am interested in inter-organisational networks, so networks in which several organisations are participating. I am thereby interested in the whole network, and I am thus not looking at the network from one of the organisations participating but the whole network. And I am looking at networks that are an existing unit, thus they have formalised the network through a consortium agreement for example, and I am not looking at researcher-defined networks. Colleagues then often asked 'why don't you say that you are doing research on consortia?' 'Well', I would then explain, 'although the data consists of only consortia, I am interested in a phenomenon that I think is broader than what is called consortia'.

In this phase of gaining understanding the main research question had been to gain insight into how inter-organisational networks are managed. Managed at this point had meant the structure as well as the tasks of managers/management team. The pilot interviews led to a shift from this structure and task orientation towards decision-making processes[35]. In the pilot interviews interviewees described decision-making processes in detail to give insight into how their consortium was managed. They also used these process descriptions to clarify differences in the way in which parts of the consortium were managed.

The pilot interviews also led to another important decision, which was to include the gathering of consortium agreements. The interviewees in the pilot interviews when asked about the management structure would try to re-draw the organogram of the network as presented in the consortium agreement, the contract with the Commission or on their web-pages. In addition, interviewees would refer to these sources as the most important source of information about the tasks of the management team and managers and the lines of responsibility.

Thus, the management issues I had been interested at first, the structure and tasks, were by interviewees difficult to reflect upon 'as practice' and they thus tried to recall the way in which it was formalised in the consortium agreement. However, when they did talk about managing 'as practice', they talked about decision-making processes. These insights led to two changes that initiated a new phase in the process of gaining understanding: (1) I decided to collect consortium agreements to gain access to the description of structure and tasks; (2) theoretically I started to focus on gaining an understanding of decision-making processes.

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[35] Note however that structure and tasks were still seen as important, they were however seen as more an integral part of decision making processes, this will be discussed and described in more detail in section 3.3.

3   GAINING UNDERSTANDING 2: CONSORTIUM AGREEMENTS, DECISION-MAKING AS A PROCESS, AND CASE STUDIES

Personal overview of phase two

The analysis of the pilot interviews let to two changes, which initiated a new phase of gaining understanding. One of these changes was the choice to gather the consortium agreements from the announced Network of Excellence consortia.

I enjoyed gathering the consortium agreements, as the response rate was high and after every email I sent, I received lots of new data. The downside was that it was a lot of data and I had no clue as to how to get the thousands of pages analysed. I was not very familiar with how to analyse qualitative data and especially needed to get used to legal terminology used in the contracts. I set out to get acquainted with NVivo software to understand how this tool could aid the qualitative data analysis I would do. I also started to familiarise myself with different methods of analysis. As part of this, I was looking for a course on qualitative data analysis. To my surprise and disappointment I found many courses on qualitative data gathering, some of which I had already attended earlier, but there was none specifically focusing on developing skills for qualitative analysis.

At the same time, I had focused on developing my understanding of decision-making processes. The framework developed was used to structure the initial analysis. Initially, I thought that there was little difference between the agreements, except for the difference in structure based on the templates for consortium agreements provided by the Commission. After careful study of the agreements, however, it became clear that changes were made, though often only a couple of words or sentences. These small changes, however, could have large consequences as to who had a say, at least contractually.

After some of the initial analysis of the consortia, I selected the cases which I aimed to study through both interviews and documents. Only one of the six cases I had wished to study did not want to participate in the study; the others agreed. This was great news, and I set out undertake the interviews and gather additional documents related to these cases.

During this period of gathering and analysing the data my personal life changed radically. First, my daughter Lejonka came into my life and after this I became pregnant with my son Eelis. These changes in my personal life have had consequences for the development paths that my work followed. Two

developments have been very clearly related. First, it influenced the gathering of the case data. Although I had adjusted the planning of the data-gathering to make sure that I could undertake all interviews of a case in the same period, complications during the last two months of the pregnancy made this impossible. This influenced especially the data-gathering with the Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Social Network Case for which interviews were planned, but needed to be cancelled due to the complications. Contacts with the Long-Term Collaboration Case stayed very positive and when I returned to work months later interviews were quickly planned and arranged. In the Social Network Case I had difficulties in regaining access to the interviewees I had not been able to interview earlier. Ultimately this resulted in not interviewing the coordinator or the administrator of this case.

Second, both pregnancies also produced what I started to refer to as 'thesis stress' – a feeling of a need for the thesis to be finalised in one way or another before the baby was born. Due to pregnancy, motherhood and parental leave, I felt I would be unable to concentrate on the thesis work for such a long time and therefore I had the need to get some kind of closure before starting such leave.

Timeline

2005   *- Written paper 'Decision-making in inter-organisational networks: Toward a theoretical framework' (Presented at EGOS 2005)*
      - Gathering consortium agreements
      - Processing consortium agreements
      - Initial analysis of consortium agreements
      - Selection of cases
2006   *- Gaining access to the Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case, the Long-Term Collaboration Case, the Social Network Case*
      - Interviews in the Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case, the Long-Term Collaboration Case, the Social Network Case
      - Transcription of some interviews of the Friendship Case
      - Gaining access to the Funding Agency Case
      - Drafting a rolling thesis synopsis
2007   *- Interviews in cases the Long-Term Collaboration Case, the Social Network Case, the Funding Agency Case*
      - Transcription of all remaining case interviews
      - Check of all case interview transcriptions
      - Gathering of additional case related material
2008   *- Initial analysis of case specific material*

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this phase there were three issues of importance for the development of the thesis. These three issues will be presented and discussed. First, the chapter will present the gathering and initial analysis of the consortium agreements. These consortium agreements were not initially part of the research design, but were considered important for getting direct information about the structure formally agreed upon by the member organisations of the consortia.

Second, due to the decision-making focus of interviewees which participated in the pilot of the study, in this chapter I present the conceptual framework for understanding decision-making processes in inter-organisational networks[36]. This work contributed to the initial thinking on the types of relationships in inter-organisational networks. This issue will also be returned to in other chapters. This work also contributed to gaining an understanding of a process perspective.

Third, this chapter presents the case study data. The choices made in relation to the methods for gathering the data and selecting the cases will be discussed first. After this, the actual access gained to cases and data within the cases is described. The last part of this section is focused on presenting some results of the initial analysis.

The consequences of the gathering and analysis of the consortium and case data as well as that of working on the theoretical basis will be discussed in the reflections. In this final section of this chapter I will also present what kind of avenues for further gaining of understanding were opened up by the work done during this phase.

3.2 CONSORTIUM AGREEMENTS

3.2.1 DESCRIPTION AND AIMS OF GATHERING CONSORTIUM AGREEMENTS

During the pilot interviews consortium agreements were used to show the structure of the decision-making as well as the structure of the organisation. This was the initial reason for considering gathering consortium agreements as part of the research. The consortium agreements are the constitutional basis of the consortia, in which the goals, rules, and structure of the consortia are described. They are a private agreement that institutions taking part in a research or innovation-related project conclude together for the implementation of the project. It allows the members to implement and complement the provisions of the contract with the Commission and regulate internal issues related to work organisation, intellectual property, financial and other matters.

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[36] The text here is based on a paper on this topic that was presented at the EGOS conference (Bor, 2005).

The organisations that participate in the Networks of Excellence needed to sign such consortium agreements with each other in other to be able to receive funding from the Commission. As presented in the previous chapter, as part of the documents available for those preparing a Network of Excellence, different models of consortium agreements (a French, German, and European model) were available. The consortia however have the possibility to change these as they wish or develop their own agreement. The decision-making described in the consortium agreements thus can vary from one another. Even the consortia that have used the same model as their base may differ due to one having changed some of the articles.

The consortium agreements were gathered in order to get a picture of the 'formal', 'written' account of structure and the roles of the governing and management groups of the networks. The initial analysis of the consortium agreements also made a content-rich selection of cases possible.

3.2.2 DESCRIPTION OF GATHERING OF THE CONSORTIUM AGREEMENTS

Three consortia had their consortium agreement freely available on their web-pages. The consortia-funded database[37] was used for retrieving contact details of the coordinators of the rest of the consortia for the purpose of collecting consortium agreements. Coordinators of the remaining 100 consortiums were then contacted by email or through a web-based contact form on 18.1.2005.

Those that reacted mostly reacted on the same day or the day after. Of all 100 coordinators 33 reacted on the first contact and 28 of these reactions were positive. Of those who gave an initial positive response, 23 ultimately sent their consortium agreement.

Those 67 coordinators, who did not react to the initial request in any way, were sent a first reminder two weeks after the first request on 27.1.2005. This first reminder created 37 responses, of which 23 resulted in getting access to the consortium agreement. The second and final reminder was sent to 30 coordinators mostly on 24.2.2005. Three of the coordinators of this group decided to send the agreement.

In the case where a consortium reacted positively, but did not send their consortium agreement, a maximum of two reminders were sent. Table 5 gives an overview of the process and results of the process of gaining access to consortium agreements.

As can be seen from table 5, the process resulted in gaining access to 52 consortium agreements. In two cases, the consortium agreement showed that the consortia were

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[37] See for more information about the consortia-funded database section 2.3.

not funded as Networks of Excellence, but as Integrated Projects. This results in a total of 50 consortium agreements used for this research[38].

Table 5   **Results of gathering consortium agreements**

	Access to CA secured	CA promised	No CA	No reaction
Freely available	3	-	-	NA
Request (100)	23	5	5	NA
1st reminder (67)	23	6	8	NA
2nd reminder (30)	3	6	1	NA
Total (103)	52	17	14	20

3.2.3   *PROCESSING THE CONSORTIUM AGREEMENTS*

Almost all consortium agreements were delivered in pdf-format or Microsoft Word-format by email. Only two consortium agreements were sent by ordinary mail. As I had chosen to use NVivo as a tool that would assist me in the analysis, I needed to process the consortium agreements into digital rtf-format. The documents that had been sent in pdf-format needed first to be formatted into a txt-format with Adobe. The documents that were delivered in paper format were first scanned and thereafter proofread.

For the sake of anonymity and comparability I decided to have a layout that is the same for all the documents and to cut out all names of and references to participants. All documents were therefore screened and anonymised and given the same layout. These anonymous versions of the agreements were then saved under a numerical code in rtf-format and finally imported to NVivo.

3.2.4   *DESCRIPTION AND AIMS OF THE ANALYSIS*

The analysis of the consortium agreements aimed at getting a general picture of the consortia and the agreements which regulate their functioning. The formal structures described in the consortium agreements were at this stage a focal point of interest. In this sense this work not only served the choice of cases but also an attempt to answer the research questions about decision-making in the Networks of Excellence.

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[38] The consortia that sent their consortium agreements were promised anonymity. In some cases I was asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement which I also did.

The analysis went through three steps. *Firstly,* the texts were analysed in terms of their similarities. Most consortia had chosen to use one of the three pre-existing model agreements made available by the IPR Helpdesk[39]. The pre-existing models were made by ARNT (the French model), by CA-Team (the German model), and by a combination of organisations across Europe UNECA (the European model). This gave a first picture of how the agreements looked and what the probable structure of the organisation would be.

Secondly, a content analysis was done to specify the differences both within as well as amongst the four different groups. As slight changes in the agreement text may have big consequences for the division of roles and responsibilities in the organisation, an overview was made of the role of the coordinator, the management group and the governance group and who was to be involved in which role. This analysis resulted in a new perspective, where an important observation was that variation within the groups became much bigger and differences between the groups smaller.

Thirdly, a new division was made of all consortium agreements between centralised organisational structures and participatory organisational structures. Centralised organisational structures were defined as those in which only few are involved in the management of the consortium and where the governance group has a weak position. Participatory organisational structures were defined as structures in which many member organisations are involved in the management and/or all are involved in the governance group which has a strong position. The results of the analysis were used as the basis for the selection of the cases.

The analysis was aided by using the computerised qualitative data analysis programme NVivo. The use of the programme included coding by hand, computerised coding based on chapter structure, computerised coding based on search words (such as coordinator, executive committee but also different action words such as deciding, preparing, etc. as well as several methods for retrieving different portions of the data.

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[39] The IPR helpdesk was a project of the European Commission co-financed within Framework Programme 5. It gave advice on IPR issues, whereby they had brought together a tutorial on consortium agreements for participants under Framework Programme 6 as well as provided links to model consortium agreements for Framework Programme 6 made by other organisations.

3.2.5 *SOME RESULTS OF THE INITIAL ANALYSIS*

In this section the results of the initial analysis concerned with the vertical complexity and types of managers will be presented[40].

3.2.5.1 *VERTICAL COMPLEXITY*

When analysing the consortium agreements from a hierarchical point of view, we can see that the consortia consist of different layers of management. As shown in figure 10, the consortia consisted of 1 to 4 layers of management.

All cases, except one, have an addition governance layer and an operational layer. The one exception is a case which does not have an additional governance layer. This is a case with two layers of management with the highest layer consisting of 5 managers. The governance layer consists in all cases, except two, of the representatives of all member organisations. The two exceptions have fewer governors than member organisations.
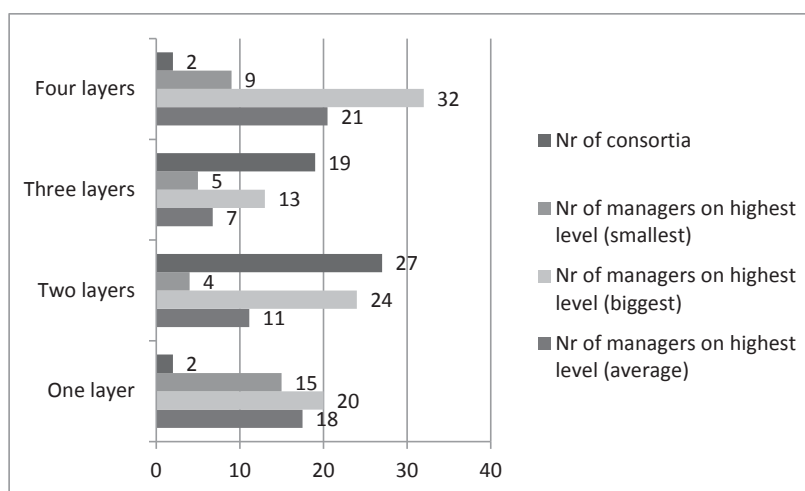
Figure 10   Vertical complexity and the number of managers on the highest level

The number of managers on the highest layer ranges from 4 to 32 managers, while on average the cases have about 10 managers on the highest layer. Furthermore, most cases have two or three layers of management. Those cases with one layer have a decentralised decision-making, while those with three and four layers have more centralised decision-making. In the cases with two layers of management, the number

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[40] These results also inform to a great extent the choice of cases. This selection of cases is more closely tackled in chapter 4.

of managers ranges from 4 to 24 managers on the highest layer, with an average of 11 managers. Most frequently the cases with two layers have 5 managers (4 cases), 9 managers (3 cases) or 12 managers (3 cases) on the highest layer. A low number of managers in this group indicates centralised decision-making, while a large number of managers indicates decentralised decision-making.

3.2.5.2   *DIFFERENT WAYS OF CHOOSING MANAGERS*

In most consortium agreements, the management (now looking specifically at the highest layer), can be people chosen by the governance group (representative chosen managers) or they can be chosen by the participants at lower managerial levels (participant chosen managers). In some cases the managers are not to be chosen, but have been named in the consortium agreements.
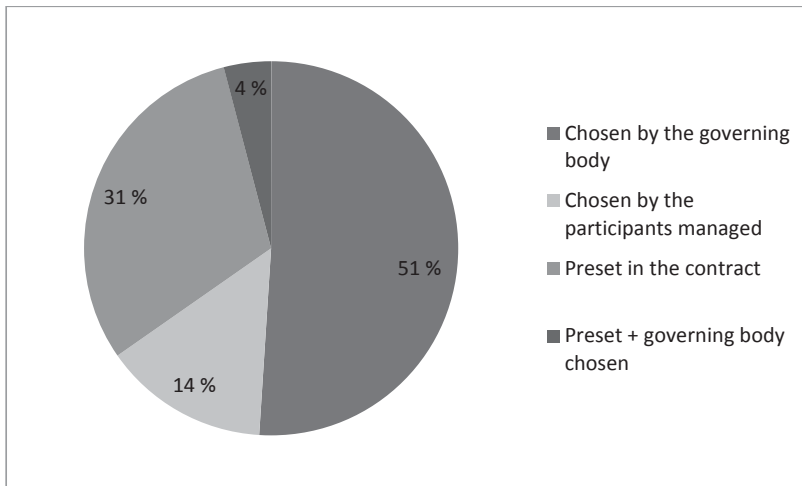
Figure 11   **Who chooses the managers?**

The criteria that are mentioned as the bases on which the managers have been or are to be chosen can be also identified. For example, in several consortium agreements the managers are foremost chosen as leader of a particular area of activity or expertise. In other consortium agreements, however, the managers are to represent particular member groups.
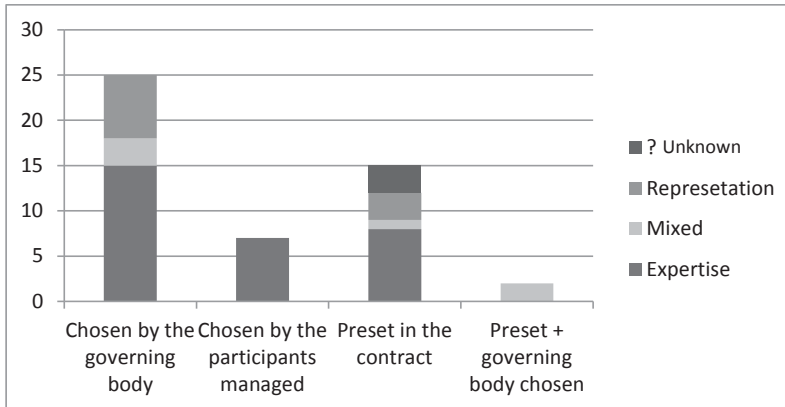
Figure 12   **Which criteria are prescribed for choosing these managers?**

About 60% of the consortium agreements prescribe that the managers are responsible for a particular work area, while about 20% of the cases prescribe that the managers represent (a selection of) the member organisations. In about 10% of the consortium agreements, some managers represent (a selection of) the member organisation, while others are responsible for a particular work area.

Besides the differences in the vertical complexity and the differences in how managers were chosen, the decision-making process had been one of the most important foci to be considered. As I had not come across a clear framework for analysing decision-making processes in the inter-organisation network literature, I started to work out such a framework. This decision-making process framework as well as the results of the analysis of the decision-making processes as described by the consortium agreements will be presented and discussed in the next section.

3.3   DECISION-MAKING IN INTER-ORGANISATIONAL NETWORKS

3.3.1   A FOCUS ON DECISION-MAKING

The analysis of the pilot interviews, as discussed in chapter 1, pointed at the importance of decision-making processes in the management of the Networks of Excellence. This resulted in the need to gain a better understanding of decision-making processes, whereby I aimed at gaining understanding of how decision-making happens on the so-called platform layer[41]. The understanding would then be used in the development of the semi-structured interview guide which would be used in the

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[41] For the presentation of and discussion about the platform and project layers see section 2.4.3.3.

interviews conducted with the cases. An additional aim was to develop a conceptual framework that would aid the analysis of the consortium agreements.

The analysis of the pilot interviews also showed the need for understanding that several actors, including those that are not called 'manager', play an important role in these processes. My perspective on decision-making was thus steered towards understanding it as processes to which multiple actors participate subsequently or simultaneously. I thus set out to review the literature in order to gain tools for analysing these unclear and multi-actor processes. Although a process view may seem to contradict with the static data – the consortium agreements, these agreements do try to prescribe the needed steps within these processes in the consortia.

The review on decision-making literature will not be presented in full detail in this thesis, but I will present the conceptual framework I developed and discuss with the help of relevant literature the different elements this framework consists of. After setting out the framework, I present some of the key results from the analyses done on the consortium agreements using the framework.

3.3.2   THE ELEMENTS OF THE DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

The decision-making framework I developed consists of three different perspectives on decision-making. The *first* perspective concerns the type of decisions made in the consortia. The *second* perspective concerns the decision-making process. And the *third* perspective concerns the types of decision-makers. These three perspectives in combination with each other create a coherent but complex pattern of how decision-making 'happens' in these networks. The perspectives on decision-making will be explained in more detail below.

3.3.2.1   TYPES OF DECISIONS

The first perspective is the type of decisions that might be taken in a consortium. Each type of decision combines different decision topics or issues which are expected to be of importance on the platform level of a co-operation structure. I categorise the different decision topics into 5 types. These five categories are: (1) mission and vision, (2) constitutional, (3) strategic, (4) organisational, and (5) operational.

Each of these categories will contain specific decision-making topics that relate to them and will include the key questions to which the decisions relate. The categories are explained below.

Mission and vision decisions

This category includes all decisions that relate to the question 'Why are we together?'. This category is very special, as it includes decisions rarely made and issues that are normally set in place for a very long time.

Constitutional decisions

This category consists of all decisions that relate to the questions 'With whom do we relate, how do we relate to each other, and how do we wish to relate to one another?'. To this category belong all decisions related to rules, policies and agreements, which includes all decisions dealing with how to behave, what is allowed and what does not belong to this category. This category also concerns all decisions about membership.

Strategic decisions

This category relates to the mission and vision category, but deals with more frequent, concrete and fine-grained issues. This category includes all decisions that relate to the questions 'What do we want to reach, have we reached what we wanted to reach and do we need to reformulate what we want to reach?'. This category is concerned with all decisions concerning goals to be set for the network as a whole.

Organisational decisions

This category includes all decisions that relate to the question 'How do we reach what we want to reach?'. It also includes decisions related to the reflecting on the past ways of organising and changing the way of organising. Thus, decisions related to the questions 'Do we need to change how we try to reach what we want to reach and how do we reach this?' would be included into this category. This category thus includes decisions related to the organisational planning, organisational structuring, including staffing and resourcing.

Operational decisions

This category includes all decisions that relate to the question 'How do we implement or organise the way we want to achieve our targets?'. This category includes all decisions that concern the implementation of the work to be undertaken and the work procedures.

This category differs from the category of organisational decisions in such way that it tackles decisions concerning the work itself, where the organisational decisions concern the broader questions of planning and division of labour. A practical example of an operational decision would be a decision concerning where and when a meeting would be held.

3.3.2.2   PROCESSES OF DECISION-MAKING

The second perspective concerns the process of decision-making. There are various ways in which the decision-making process can be conceptualised. According to Noorderhaven (1995) the different conceptualisations consist of at least three more or less distinct phases.

These phases include *awareness* (recognising the opportunity or need for a decision and formulating what the problem is about), *analysis* (setting the goal to be achieved, and generating and evaluating options), and *action* (making a choice, considering the implementation and needs for controlling this implementation). A picture drawn by Noorderhaven to present the conceptualisation of the process can be found below.

These phases or steps in the decision-making process can be seen to logically follow one another. They do, however, not always have to follow one another chronologically, as Cohen, March and Olsen (1972) have successfully shown with their 'garbage can model' and is also shown by the studies of, for example, Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Théorêt (1976) and Nutt (1984). Phases or steps may be taken in various orders and some phases or steps may be left out totally.

In the conceptualisation presented by Noorderhaven (1995) this possibility for flexibility can be seen by the connecting lines in figure 13, with which he tries to point out that one can start from anywhere in the model and jump to any other point in the model.
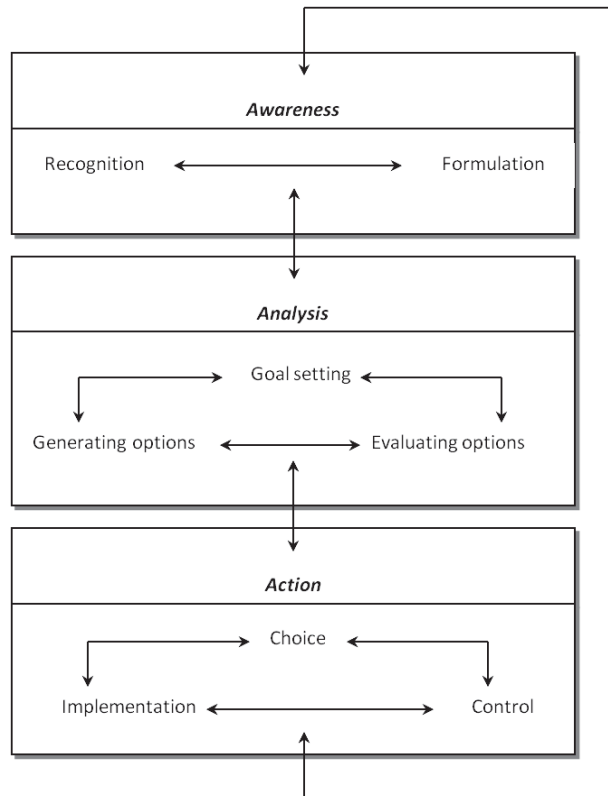
Figure 13   A conceptual decision-making process model (Source: Noorderhaven, 1995, p. 20)

These conceptualisations into phases or steps are however based on the assumption that there is a single decision-maker, but they can be used for group decision-making as well. The model gives for instance the possibility for certain groups or individuals to become aware of an issue that needs a decision and make others to become aware of the need as well. This is important as the decision-making process in the consortia on the platform layer will involve multiple actors.[42]

3.3.2.3   DECISION-MAKERS

The third perspective concerns groups or people that are involved in the decision-making process, hereafter called decision-makers. The types of decision-makers can be identified along two dimensions. The first dimension concerns the position of the decision-maker in relation to the network and the second dimension concerns whether a decision-maker has individual or collective decision-making power. These dimensions will be explained in more detail below.

Decision-makers' relation to the network[43]

The first dimension includes the three different possible relations decision-makers may have to the network. These possible relations were partially identified through the analysis of the pilot interviews and the consortium agreements and partially were identified in data from other, similar types of inter-organisations[44].

The first type of relation identified is that of a decision-maker who is a *representative* of a member-organisation. The work related to the network is in this case done for the member-organisation. This means that the decision-maker is accountable to the member-organisation and not to the network.

The second type of relation identified is that of a decision-maker who is *chosen* by the members of the network. This means that the network has nominated some decision-makers to prepare or do specified work for the network as a whole. The work, in this case, is done for the network and the decision-maker is thus accountable to the

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[42] The model does, however, need some further adjustment in order to give more attention to the specific aspects of official decision-making meetings, which are used in the consortia. These official decision-making meetings often have *specified preparation procedures* (for example setting of the agenda and preparing decision-documents) and *specific activities within the decision event* (for example chairing the meeting and making minutes). The adjustment or further development of the model in order to take these issues into account is a matter of future development.

[43] The ideas presented here are used and further developed in section 4.3.

[44] My personal experience of local, national and European student unions was especially helpful while trying to conceptualise these in more detail.

network. The decision-maker, however, can in this case still be part of one of the member-organisations and may also be located at one of the member organisations.

The third type of relation identified is that of a decision-maker who is *hired*. The decision-maker has a similar type of relation with the network as the one that is chosen. This means that the work is done for the network and the decision-maker is accountable to the network. However, the difference is that the person has applied for a job, which means that this decision-maker may be a total outsider and have no specific relation to one of the member-organisations. The decision-maker may thus be seen as, and more easily act as a network decision-maker.

Division between individual and collective power

The second dimension concerns the division between individual and collective decision-making power. A decision-maker with individual decision-making power is able and allowed to make certain decisions on their own and a decision-maker with collective decision-making power will only be able and allowed to make decisions together with other decision-makers. A decision-maker may have in certain decisions an individual and in other decisions a collective decision-making power.

This dimension makes it, for example, possible to identify the difference between a decision-maker that makes decisions concerning what to propose as a decision and in a collective makes the decision upon accepting, changing, or rejecting that proposal. This dimension is especially important in order to make it possible to identify how centralised the decision-making is in the networks.

3.3.3 THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FRAMEWORK

To conclude, the three perspectives brought together into the decision-making process framework are concerned with three different questions: (1) what is decided upon, (2) at which stage of the process, and (3) by whom. The framework, thus, combines these so that one could see who is participating at particular stages of the process of particular types of decisions (see also figure 4).

One could, for example, imagine a network coordinator having individual, chosen power in the awareness and analysis phases of deciding about new policies (constitutional), while the governing board (collective, representative power) would make the final choice, while then again the network coordinator would implement and control.
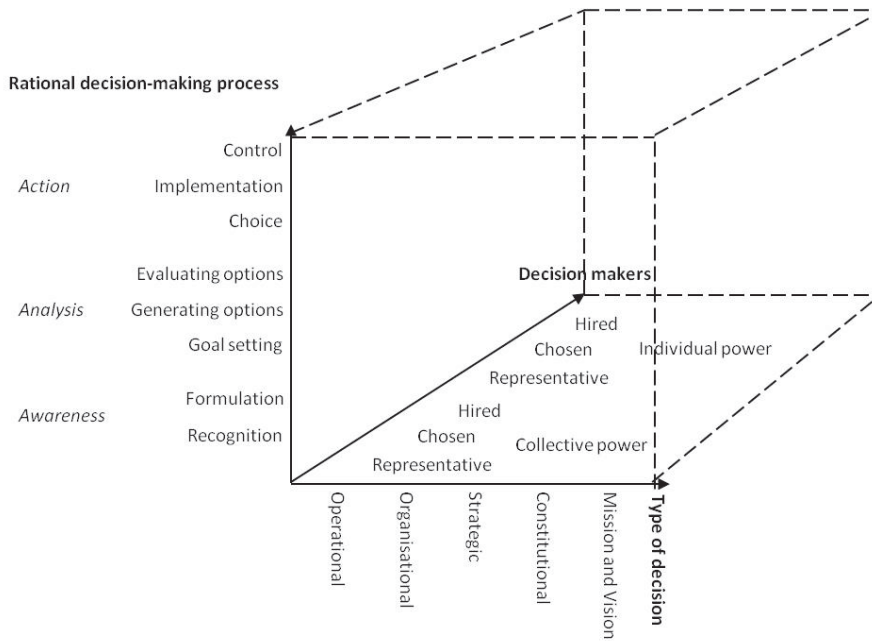
Figure 14   **Theoretical framework for better understanding decision-making in inter-organisational networks**

3.3.4   *SOME OF THE KEY RESULTS OF ANALYSING DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN THE CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT*

Three issues came up in the analysis of the consortium agreements using the decision-making process framework. First, I found that most cases had a governance group that was representative, with collective power and management groups that were almost all chosen[45], with collective power. The coordinator was in most cases chosen, with individual power and the administrators, if described in the consortium agreement, were mostly hired, with individual power.

Second, I found that in the consortium agreements often only a very limited number of decision topics were described, though sometimes these were then described in great detail. In most cases those issues described were related to the platform layer[46], such as consortium-wide policies, changes in the consortium agreement or contract,

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[45] Chosen in these expressions does not necessarily mean chosen by the member organisations, as earlier presented they can also be chosen by the participants that need to be managed, or by someone at or before the start, often the initiating member(s), who then included the list of the names of managers and coordinator in the consortium agreement.

[46] The difference between platform layer and project layer was presented in chapter 3.

changes in consortium membership, changes in the strategy or long-term plan. Decision-making processes related to issues concerned with the project level, such as how to decide on membership of a work group, the topics focused on (and topics excluded) or work division, were hardly ever described. A standard text used relatively frequently in the consortium agreements is:

> "Each (title lowest management level) shall be responsible for its own organisational arrangements, work procedures and time schedule, providing that such arrangements, work procedures and time schedule do not conflict with this consortium agreement, the annual plan of activities, or requests made by the coordinator, the (title highest management level) or the Commission."

My interpretation of this is that consortia regulate the decision-making processes related to the issues on the platform layer as when these processes are not agreed upon it would be hard to make things happen. The need for regulating the decision-making process on the project layer is lower, as through decisions on the platform layer, these processes can be influenced.

Thirdly, the consortium agreements give a generalised process description, whereby it is most commonly described that in a consortium the highest management level prepares the decisions of the governance group. Interestingly, in most cases the coordinator is responsible for preparing the meetings and decisions of the highest management.

The responsibilities of the coordinator that are mentioned in the consortium agreement are in most cases misleading, as most often only the financial/ administrational/ organisational tasks are mentioned in detail (often even in such detail as to mention that the coordinator is to be responsible for keeping updated the address list of the member organisations). In a second reading however, one realises that the coordinator is responsible for preparing the meetings and decisions of the highest management, is a voting member of the highest management, and most often is also responsible for preparing the meetings and decisions of the governance group and is (as representative of its organisation) a voting member of the governance group. The list of responsibilities of the coordinator is thus more extensive than what is explicitly described if one takes the participation in other groups into account.

3.3.5   REFLECTIONS

The decision-making process framework was developed to inform the analysis of the consortium agreements. In addition, the framework formed the basis for what I wished to know from the cases and thus influenced the questions and focus of the interviews. The gathering of this data will be presented next. The framework also informs the initial analysis of the case data presented in section 3.4.5.

3.4   CASE STUDIES

3.4.1   INTRODUCTION

Case studies, from rather early on in the research process, were considered useful for analysing the data as this means it would be possible to combine and compare multiple data sets while trying to answer the research questions. Case studies could give insight into the differences both inside a consortium, for instance between formal and informal structure or division of tasks, and across consortia.

Although the choice of case studies was made relatively early, this did not mean that the specific data-gathering methods were decided upon. Several methods for gathering the case study data were considered. I discuss several of these and argue why I finally chose for interviews and documents and not observation, diaries, or questionnaires.

After clarifying the choices of method, I discuss the selection of the cases and the choices that were made during this selection. In the section following I describe the process of gaining access to the case and inviting of interviewees to participate. This section is followed by an overview of the results in terms of the number of cases, the data gathered per case and the time-frame within which this was done.

Thereafter, the description of how the interviews were conducted will be given, including the procedures followed. The closing part of this section presents some of results of initial analysis of the case data, the interviews in particular.

3.4.2   CHOICE OF METHODS FOR GATHERING SPECIFIC CASE DATA

Different methods were considered for gathering specific case data, including observation, documents (formal), diaries (kept by informants), interviews and questionnaires.

As I wanted to know more about the management structure, the management tasks and the decision-making processes, all these methods were thought to be potentially useful. The structure I had seen as both something that was formally agreed upon as well as something that crystallises over time. In addition, tasks could be partially formalised through agreements and contracts and would also form and change through interaction in practice. Finally, decision-making processes were also thought to have two sides, the formally agreed upon process and process steps and the steps that would be followed in practice. Thus, I was searching for ways to collect data about both sides; the formal and the informal.

The formal aspects I had covered to a great extent by collecting consortium agreements. I was thus mainly looking for ways to collect data that would give me insight into the informal structure, task division and decision-making processes. Due

to the character of the data I was seeking, I considered observation, diaries and interviews to be most suitable.

Documents, such as minutes of meetings, would give some insight, but usually more in formal, agreed upon, final terms or form and would thus probably say little about the informal side. Questionnaires were considered, especially open question based questionnaires, but it was expected to be both time consuming, impersonal and 'distant' for informants and too much restricting in terms of issues. Clarifications would also be difficult to get.

More consideration was given to possibilities of observing, diaries and interviews. Observation as a method was considered, for example meetings of the consortia members could be used to gather the observations. Although I considered this to be possibly very interesting, I chose not to use observation as a method, for various reasons. As most of the work and interaction would not happen in one place, observation would be limited to the formal meetings. The process of the decision-making however would be also a result of exchanges between various members via email, telephone and video-conferences beforehand.

In order to get information about the interactions along the whole decision-making process, I would need to get access to interactions that have taken place between the members of the network. This was thought to be both very sensitive and would need to include some record of the interaction. As complex and emotionally loaded issues were expected to be tackled more on a one-to-one basis, more via telephone or face-to-face diaries were considered as a method. The time investment for the participants would however be so high, that this was considered to have a too high a risk of causing difficulty in gathering this data. Furthermore, although this would give potentially very interesting data on the informal decision-making processes, the issues of structure and task division would get much less or no attention or at least would be more difficult to include.

Interviews then were considered a safer and more reliable method, with the expectation that participants would be more easily willing to participate. Moreover, with interviews issues could be clarified as needed, and within a case I would be able to follow up on particular issues that came up in earlier interviews. This meant that I chose semi-structured interviews, asking about particular topics but also being able to follow clues and issues, ask more clarifying questions, and explore issues that were perhaps initially not considered essential.

As at the time, I was still mainly interested in management, I decided to interview those involved in the management, expecting that they also could describe the involvement of other organs. I, however, also wanted to interview administrative support staff, as I thought their role may be overlooked. Furthermore, I expected the

administrative support staff to have a more 'observing' perspective as they would participate without needing to represent an organisation and without needing to have a stance. I also chose both managers and administrative support staff as I expected these interviewees to be well-informed about a variety of issues and could possibly know also something about processes they are not directly involved in.

Thus, for each case, I wished to have at least a consortium agreement and a set of interviews with managers. I also decided to collect all possible additional data available that could potentially support the understanding of a case, such as the technical annex to the contract the consortium signed with the Commission, webpage information, reports and documents that were publicly available.

Due to time and financial considerations I choose to conduct interviews by telephone. As had been noticed in the pilot interview, this may have consequences for the opportunity to gain access to additional documents. This was however considered acceptable, as in all cases the consortium agreement was already available and it was expected that a lot of documents would be publicly available on the websites of the cases.

3.4.3   SELECTION OF THE CASES

The selection process of the cases was long and included various possible combinations of criteria. First, the most important selection criterion was that I had been able to obtain access to the consortium agreement as I wished to be able to make comparisons between the written and the observed structures of the consortia.

Secondly, I wished to follow a replication-logic (Yin, 2003) in the selection of the multiple cases to be able to predict similar results because of similar circumstances. The circumstances are similar due to the fact that all the consortia were funded as Networks of Excellence, but to create further similarities in circumstances I chose consortia from one field of research (as defined by the Commission) and a similar size of consortium in terms of member organisations.

Thirdly, I used theoretical sampling (Yin, 2003) to make the final selection of the cases. The type of organisation structure was seen as an important criterion for variation. For this criterion the consortium agreements were analysed in terms of the extent to which the organisational structure appeared to be centralised or participatory (decentralised), at least at the level of formal statements[47]. Cases with both centralised and participatory organisational structures were to be included. Due

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[47] This analysis was presented in more detail in the previous chapter.

to this, the size of consortia was to be relatively small as with large consortia the possibility of coming across participatory structures is rare.

Only two fields of research emerged with enough cases that were of similar size and included both centralised and participatory structures. I decided against using the field of information society technologies as this field may have a greater focus on the use of advanced technologies which may influence the way in which decisions are made and the tools that are used in governance and management.

In the end a list of six cases matched the selection criteria. Three of the cases had centralised and three had participatory organisational structures.

3.4.4 *ACCESS TO THE CHOSEN CASES, INTERVIEWEES AND OTHER DATA*

Access to the cases was requested from the coordinators of the selected consortia. As I already had been in contact concerning the consortium agreement, I referred to this contact and explained I would be happy if they as a selected case would be willing to further participate in the study. In the email I asked for the coordinator's participation and requested the contact details of the members of the management as in most cases this information was not available on the web.

If I did not get a reaction from the coordinator within one and a half weeks, I called the coordinator. On the phone I asked if they had received my email, if they were willing to participate, and if they could send the contact details of the members on the highest management level. The members of the management were then also first contacted by email, and if they had not reacted within a week or two, I called them to verify if they were willing to participate and to make an appointment that would suit them best.

Five of the six selected cases were willing to participate. I have named them the Friendship Case (case 1), the Cross-Discipline Case (case 2), the Long-Term Collaboration Case (case 3), the Social Network Case (case 4) and the Funding Agency Case (case 5)[48]. Within each case four to eight interviews were held.

Almost all interviewees had multiple hats on within the consortia. In the Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case and the Long-Term Collaboration Case all members of the management group were also members of the governance group and thus represent their organisation. This was not the case in the Social Network Case, as they

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[48] During most of the study the cases were referred to with a number. As this makes reading the thesis, especially the analysis, more difficult I have chosen to use names. The names refer to something strongly linked to the case, but I do not wish to make the claim that this is the only or the most important aspect of the case.

have no governance group, nor the Funding Agency Case, as they have a combined governance/management group. In addition, interviewees would also all be active participants within work groups, sometimes in multiple work groups. In the Long-Term Collaboration Case, one of the administrative staff interviewed was also a member of the governance and the management group with voting rights. In all other cases the administrative staff participated into both management and governance meetings without voting rights.

One of the consequences of the multiple hats interviewees had on is that the analysis of the interviews was sometimes difficult. I will discuss this later, especially in section 4.3 in more detail.

Table 6   **Overview of case data**

	Friendship Case	Cross-Discipline Case	Long-Term Collaboration Case	Social Network Case	Funding Agency Case
Access assured	March 2006	April 2006	April 2006	May 2006	December 2006
Interviews conducted	03.2006	03.-04.2006	05.2006, 11.2006-01.2007	05.2006, 11.2006-03.2007	12.2006-03.2007
Number of interviews	6	6	8	5	6
Average length of interviews	38 min	37 min	45 min	36 min	44 min
Number of documents	9	5	8	8	4

3.4.5 DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW DATA GATHERED

The interview guide was developed taking both the analysis of the pilot interviews and theoretical issues into account. The interviews were to cover four main themes[49]. First, they covered the nature of the co-operation, which included both the history of the co-operation and the changes that had been occurring since the co-operation as a consortium had started. The second theme covered the consortium rules and structure, whereby interviewees were asked to reflect on the difference between the formal rules and structure as prescribed by the consortium agreement and their

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[49] The whole interview guide can be found in the appendix.

practice. The third theme concerned involvement and steps in planning processes. The fourth and last theme covered different decision-making areas or topics and the decision-making process related to these areas, for example who is involved in deciding on particular topics during which step of the process.

The interviews generally lasted between 30-45 minutes, though some, often the first interview conducted per case, lasted about an hour. The interviews were tape-recorded with a digital recorder. In addition to the tape-recording, I made reflecting hand-written notes before, during, and directly after the interview.

The interviews in the Cross-Discipline Case were all conducted by Kees Boersma, post-doctoral researcher at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. These interviews were done using the same interview guide. Furthermore, to get further similarities in the collected data, Kees prepared himself by reading transcripts of interviews already held and we also discussed the interview guide in detail.

The recorded interviews were saved under an anonymous code. These records were then transcribed. The transcripts were double-checked and imported in to NVivo. In addition, the file was also kept in a folder in print and digitally together with the other data relating to each individual case.

For more information about the cases, such as general descriptive information on the cases, see chapter 7. A detailed description of the cases is presented in chapter 8.

3.4.6 INITIAL ANALYSIS OF THE CASE DATA

3.4.6.1 THE APPROACH TO THE INITIAL ANALYSIS

The initial step in the analysis was to read through the different interviews a few times while listening to the tapes of the interviews. Whilst listening to the interviews, notes were made on issues that stood out and were remarkable, interesting or somehow strange. After this initial step, the case interviews as well as the consortium agreements of the cases were coded along a coding scheme based on the decision-making framework developed earlier in this chapter. This therefore included coding for different groups (governing board, management and administration) as well as for different types of tasks in relation to the decision-making. The coding was done using NVivo. This made it possible to more easily retrieve text coded at both particular groups and tasks across cases.

3.4.6.2 SOME KEY RESULTS OF THIS INITIAL ANALYSIS

The initial analysis gave some interesting new insights that influenced the direction of the research project. Three issues were of importance: the role of the Commission, the

multiple hats of interviewees, and reflections on the decision-making framework. These will be discussed below.

One of the issues noted in the initial analysis of the case data was that the Commission played an important, though mainly passive, role in the decision-making of the consortia. Decisions were, for example, influenced by the amount of paperwork that would need to be done for the Commission if a particular decision were to be implemented. If this was expected to be high, this could be a reason not to implement a decision. The Commission was also, in certain cases, unclear as to what could be done and how, which meant that decisions were put on hold. An example of this is the decision by one of the cases to add new members, but being unable to get clarity from the Commission on how this was to be done until the members thought it to be too late to add new members. The data also shows that the expected or possible viewpoint of the Commission was used as a way to influence decision-making or justify decisions made. This happened, for example, in relation to the allocation of funding and in relation to decisions made in the initiation phase related to the members selected. Due to these observations from the data, I became interested in understanding better what the Commission thought it did to influence the decisions of the consortia. This resulted in an interview with a Commission official about this. This interview will be discussed in more detail in section 4.2.

The initial analysis of the case interviews also showed difficulties in analysing interview data as interviewees had multiple hats. This meant that they were able to respond from different positions. In cross-interview analysis with the cases it became clear that it was ambivalent what was actually described by particular interviewees. The use of 'we' and 'us' while unintentionally switching from talking about one group to talk about a different group with which the interviewee identify him/herself with was considered the main reason. This situation requires the development of methodological tools that would help to deal with this challenge. The work done in this respect is presented in section 4.3.

Finally, and most importantly, the initial analysis of the case data showed a wide variety in the way the consortia were governed, managed and administered. Some key features that arose while listening to the interviews will be briefly highlighted (for a detailed description and analysis see chapter 8 and the appendices 5-10). The initial analysis showed that decision-making in the Friendship Case was centralised to the management team (five participants) and even within the team to two participants particularly. Although the governing board did assemble, their task was seen to be to accept the decisions made by the management team. Similarly, the decision-making in the Social Network Case was centralised to the management team (five participants) and in this case no governing board was assembled. In this case, however, the decisions made by the management team were, however, of a very

different nature – more administrational – than the decisions made by the management team of the Friendship Case. In the Cross-Discipline Case the decision-making was more decentralised, or more precisely a larger number of people was involved. Those responsible for a particular theme (always two representatives) were to agree with the participants on suggestions to be put forward for decisions. Similarly, in the Long-Term Collaboration Case the decisions were made by a larger group. However, in this case those participants involved in the preparation of a particular decision played a central role in making these decisions. This case seemed to have an underlying principle or norm that not being involved in preparation of decisions means that you have a less legitimate right to critique and decide against them. Finally, the Funding Agency Case had all representatives involved in the decision-making in similar ways, while the coordinator of the consortium was in a central role influencing the decisions, especially through the preparation.

The decision-making framework which was prepared to assist the more detailed analysis was unable to help clarify these initial differences noticed. The types of decisions, although not intended, indicate more the hierarchical level at which decisions are made than the actual type of decision made. This occurs as in the analysis when using the framework the decisions of the governance board became automatically more strategic, while those made by a sub-project group became more operational. This means that the conceptual tools developed reproduce the expectation of a hierarchical structure: the higher on the hierarchical ladder, the more strategic the decisions are. Therefore, the influence of various participants and groups within the consortium on the decisions does not become clear. If the participants of a sub-project decide what is going to be done in their part of the project, they decide on their operations. When this is then written down and brought to be decided upon by the governance board, this in the analysis is of a different nature and becomes strategic, or even possibly a decision in relation to the control of the mission and vision. Although such differences in the nature of the decisions can exist, the initial notes on the differences in the cases question this view.

In order to get a better understanding of what the difference in nature is, I returned to the literature with the aim of clarifying the difference between governance, management and administration. I chose to focus on clarifying these concepts through the role and/or tasks of governors, managers and administrators. This attempt at clarifying the differences in the concepts is presented in section 4.4.

3.5 REFLECTING ON PHASE TWO AND LOOKING AHEAD

The decision-making framework presented in this chapter was built to guide the analysis of both the consortium agreements and the case study material. I expected, with the help of the framework, to be able to analyse the main

differences concerning the decision-making across cases and within each case in terms of change over time as well as in terms of differences between the consortium agreement and the practice.

The initial analysis of the case data, however, showed that this was neither straight forward nor simple. As already pointed out in the presentation of the initial analysis of the cases, the decision framework unintendedly provides a rather hierarchical view of decisions. There were differences based on the initial reading of the cases was very clear, the analysis based on the framework was unable to show or highlight such differences.

In addition to these theoretical challenges, the initial analysis had also brought to light some methodological challenges about the way of analysing interviews with people having multiple hats on as well as opened up some questions on the role of the Commission. These challenges met created a move to a new phase – that of finding a way to deal with these challenges, which will be presented in the next chapter.

4 GAINING UNDERSTANDING 3: METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL CHALLENGES ARISING FROM THE ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Personal overview of phase three

One of the first things I did during this phase of gaining understanding, which started when I returned from motherhood and parental leave, was to work out how to deal with the methodological challenge I had met in analysing the case data.

At the same time, I organised an interview with a Commission official to get an understanding of their participation in the decision-making of the consortia they funded as Networks of Excellence. This was very positive, and provided me a very different picture of the Commission than I previously had. I had considered, somewhat naively, that the Commission funding these networks would have a clear idea of the overall goal for these networks and also clear evaluation criteria for the networks. In many ways the interview showed the opposite and was a great eye-opener.

The theoretical challenge of reproducing a hierarchical view about the decisions made in the consortia which created a rather centralised picture of the decision-making process, contradicted the initial reading of the interviews which had shown that most cases were decentralised in their decision-making. In order to get better tools to look at the decision-making process, over and above the position of nominated decision-makers, I set out to clarify the concepts of governance, management and administration. This work was difficult and slow. I somehow could not find a way to prevent the reproduction of hierarchical thinking nor was I able to combine this work with the work I had done on structure and decision-making processes. This was at times frustrating. I somehow could 'see' how parts fitted together, but these did not want to form a whole on paper; they did not form in words.

Timeline

2008   *- Transforming the rolling thesis synopsis into a thesis document*
          - Drafting chapter on IOR and my positioning in the field
          - Drafting Methodology chapter
          - Gaining access to Commission
          - Interviewing a person from the Commission
          - Written paper 'The formalisation process in R&D collaboration' with Kees

Boersma (Presented at EuroMOT 2008)

- Transcription of the interview with the Commission person

- Analysis of all data

2009 *- Drafting the theoretical parts of chapters on governance, management, and administration*

- Written paper 'Studying inter-organisational networks: Some of the challenges' (Presented at Nordic Workshop on Inter-Organizational Research 2009)

2010 *- Redrafting the earlier written theoretical parts into one theoretical framework combining structure, tasks and decision-making with governance, management and administration*

- Revising paper ´The management of formalisation processes in R&D collaboration' with Kees Boersma (Bor & Boersma, 2010)

- Revising an earlier draft of the methodology chapter

- Drafting an interlude on the cases

- Revising paper ' Methodological challenges due to multiple social identities in inter-organizational relations setting'

- Written paper 'Some Reflections on Choices in Developing Collaborative Networks' (Bor, 2012)

- Drafting chapter on Network administration

2011 *- Written developmental paper 'Adapting concepts of structure to Inter-organisational Networks' for doctoral symposium at BAM 2011*

- Re-organised thesis to follow the perspectives instead of the organisational parts (governance, management, administration)

- Written new chapter on Network structure

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with three important issues. First, the initial case analysis revealed a need to better understand the view of the Commission on its involvement in the decision-making process. This resulted in the decision to gather more data which would give more insight into the administrative procedures of the Commission. The data-gathering and its analysis will be presented in section 4.2.

The initial case analysis also showed a need for developing methodological tools for clarifying what interviewees were actually referring to when they answered with 'we'. As it could stay unclear who the 'we' was that was referred to as interviewees occupied several functional positions and thus had several response positions.

Thirdly, in order to analyse the case data, there was seen a need to developing a conceptual framework on governance, management and administration. This was first of all needed to link the, until then still, loose concepts of management structure,

management tasks and decision-making processes. The results of this conceptual work is presented in section 4.4.

4.2 INTERVIEW WITH A COMMISSION OFFICIAL

4.2.1 BACKGROUND AND AIMS OF THE INTERVIEW WITH A COMMISSION OFFICIAL

From the initial analysis of the case interviews it had become clear that the Commission influenced and actually somehow (passively and actively) took part in the decision-making processes of the consortia. Comments of interviewees suggested that the Commission was an important actor. The following quotes taken from the case interviews illustrate this very well.

> *"They make simple things (...) a major pain in the neck. (...) Although one of the partners, for example, simply has no time, he is never there and doesn't participate, etcetera and should be removed. The money should be reallocated. For us, that would be a very easy decision, but we are probably not going to do it for the reasons I just told you." (Interviewee from the Social Network Case)*

> *"I mean the other thing is I guess you have to think how the rather very, very rigorous conditions and administrative requirements of the EU, how that shapes things, because (...) I believe it is entirely alien to (our) way of doing things, that is much of the EU practice of course.(...) For instance, (example national research) network, it is about the size of the EU network (...) has a grant probably many times that of the EU [network], but the coordination is very informal, and people cooperate as needed to fulfil what they feel are important tasks. The EU [network] is very centrally-driven, and it is a very, very different way of doing science." (Interviewee from the Cross-Discipline Case)*

In my case interviews, I had not specifically asked about the role of the Commission as I had not understood the importance of getting insight from the interviewees on its role. In order to still get some additional insight into the role of the Commission in the decision-making of the consortia, I set out to gain data on this topic in the consortia funded as Networks of Excellence.

4.2.2 THE SEARCH FOR AN INTERVIEWEE OR INTERVIEWEES

The scientific officers responsible for the cases on behalf of the Commission were thought to be most valuable as their views could then be matched with the case data. This was, however, also a reason for concluding that interviewing these scientific officers could be potentially harming the anonymity of the cases which was viewed as important to get interviewees to talk freely about their case without the feeling that future funding may be at risk.

The search for an interviewee who could give insight into the role of the Commission during the funding of the consortia as Networks of Excellence started from a contact of a colleague at the Commission. This person included another person in the discussion, as this person was involved with an expert group looking into the future of Networks of Excellence. This contact, however, did not react.

Then a new search started with another contact of my colleague, met at a Framework Programme 7 preparation meeting. This person advised to contact another person who knew about Networks of Excellence. This person reacted and was willing to be interviewed, but was not willing to respond formally in writing and wanted to keep anonymity.

4.2.3   *DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW WITH A COMMISSION OFFICIAL*

The interview concentrated first on the evaluation of the Network of Excellence funding scheme undertaken by an expert group for the Commission. In the evaluation of the Network of Excellence instrument[50] one of the most important issues noted is the variety in the way it was implemented across the different thematic areas. *"(…) there are tremendous differences in the way an instrument which is supposed to be one single instrument has been de-facto implemented in the different areas"* (Commission interviewee).

Durable integration was seen as the main objective of the Network of Excellence funding to overcome fragmentation and create critical mass (European Commission, 2003), but most Network of Excellence consortia focused on science and research activities and not on organisational change toward organisational integration (Bonaccorsi, Horvat, Maimets, & Papon, 2008). These consortia saw alignment of concepts, methods, standards and coordination as 'integration', while others worked towards structural change and organisational integration which in some occasions even lead to new joint legal entities (Bonaccorsi et al., 2008).

This difference also reflects the difference in understanding of integration across the Commission. As the Commission is structured such that they specialise along thematic themes, each theme developed their own understanding of the key concept 'integration'. The interviewee noted *"(…) at least so far, the Commission has not developed a very clear reply on how important this integration aspects is and how we really define it, because of course you can define integration in many different ways: you can integrate in an intellectual sense and you can integrate in a very formal legal way and these things are miles away from each other"*. One reason why

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[50] See also the publication of the expert group (Bonaccorsi, Horvat, Maimets, & Papon, 2008),

differences in interpretation are possible and why they are maintained is that, as the Commission interviewee notes, *"(the Commission) doesn't have a mister or miss NoE in this house (...) to my knowledge there is no such animal"*. This means that there is nobody responsible for the implementation of the instruments across the different thematic areas and thus nobody makes sure that the instruments are implemented in the same way across the different thematic areas. As I had selected cases from one thematic area, this does not impact on the analysis. It does mean, however, that some of the administrational practices set up by the Commission in the thematic area in which I have chosen the cases may not apply to the Network of Excellence consortia set up in other thematic areas.

The second issue discussed was the role the Commission played, after a consortium had been selected for Network of Excellence funding. As can be read in the quote below, the Commission interviewee explains the Commission's internal procedure. This procedure is such that external experts are asked to review on-going work of the consortia and this review is used by the Commission to (1) negotiate changes in the work plan of the consortia if needed and (2) as a back-up when signing the launch of the yearly funding.

> *Commission interviewee: When a NoE has been launched and the contract has been signed, there is the rule that every year they have to adopt or agree on a new 18 month rolling work plan and this is done on the basis of an evaluation – of a review of the first 12 months by one, two or three external reviewers. These are external experts, not Commission colleagues. The reviewers check if the objectives have been met, the final objectives still can be reached and about the cooperation: are the partners on board, etc., etc. This is not very original, it is the standard questions you ask about a project. And what normally happens is that this review report is then taken as also the starting point for the negotiations with the NoE consortium to see what needs to be addressed for the next phase of the work programme. So the review report has a very important role in the whole process in the sense of not just looking backwards but also highlighting the things that need to be tackled in the next period in order to bring the project if needed back on track. (...) What is, I think, very important to note is that strictly speaking the Commission itself does not evaluate the projects while they are ongoing (...)*
> *Sanne: Do I understand right that the Commission thus does not evaluate the projects... ?*
> *Commission interviewee: Well, let's say, the Commission does not carry out any formal evaluation. We, however, have a system where the responsible project officer and in a sense also the responsible head-of-unit have to sign the payment order for the annual payments. And they have to sign a declaration that the work of the project went grosso-modo ok. So*

that is one reason why we use also these reviewers because it gives us an additional layer of control or check that this is ok. But there are also cases where the Commission colleagues were hesitating to make this signature and to launch the payment because they saw major problems in the progress of the report. Now I would not call this evaluation in the closest possible sense of an evaluation definition but of course it is a kind of a critical assessment and you know control mechanism.

In addition, when asked how the Commission evaluates the integration process, as this was the main objective of the Commission, the Commission interviewee responded that it is "*somewhere in the nowhere area because it is a question that strictly speaking has been never asked to us. (...) The fact that we don't have that on our radar is maybe one explanation for the situation where we are now*".

Then more specifically, I asked if somebody in the Commission would be knowledgeable about consortium agreements and especially why some types of agreements have been supported or advised. The response was: "*This is for us a clear no-go area. This is your responsibility, do whatever you want as long as you respect the basic human rights*". Thus, although they demand each Network of Excellence to be a consortium, they do not want to interfere in the content of the agreement.

4.2.4   KEY THINGS LEARNED

One of the main difficulties, as discussed in the Bonaccorsi et al. report (2008) is that the Networks of Excellence applications were made by scientists and academics without much involvement from their institution. The preparation and later involvement in the Network of Excellence was thus more on an individual and sometimes group level than on organisational level. Thus, the Network of Excellence consortia were built because individuals of the different organisations wanted to work together and thought this would lead to scientific integration, while in addition in order to be eligible for the funding they had to become a consortium, seen as legal integration, which not all wished to do of their own will. This difference is important when we look at the different cases. Only in the one of the cases were member organisations as a whole involved. This seems to have as a consequence that the representative on the governance board is provided with more power than in the cases whereby a particular individual or group of the organisation is involved.

In addition, when the Network of Excellence consortia combine only a small part of each member organisation, integration is understood as scientific integration, on an individual or group level. When a key individual of a member organisation leaves, this can lead to the exit of that member organisation as a whole, voluntarily or a forced exit by the other members. The way the consortia deal with the changes in personnel in member organisations can thus tell a lot about how integration was understood.

Although the main aim of the Commission was to created durable integration, all the Network of Excellence consortia had included in their consortium agreement a lifespan fixed to the execution of the tasks set out in the contract with the Commission. The consortia structures were thus not created to be durable. Why the Commission did not demand a longer-term commitment, stays unclear. However, the difficulty, faced by the Commission, is that the relation between the partners, their structure and organisation, was the concern of the partners involved and the Commission had no right to interfere in this. The Commission was to be concerned with that what was agreed upon in the contract with the consortium. Demands beyond the limits of the contract could not be made.

The Commission, however, was able to influence the decision-making of the consortia through the individual project officers. These project officers had to agree on the activity plan and the budget to be funded for the following period. The Commission used external experts to evaluate the progress and the activity plan of each consortium every year. This evaluation formed the basis for the discussion between the Commission and the consortium concerning the next period of funding. This gave the Commission (as well as the external reviewers) tools to influence the planned activities of the consortium.

4.3 MULTIPLE FUNCTIONAL POSITIONS OF INTERVIEWEES AS A METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGE

4.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Various methodological challenges related to studying inter-organisational relations have been recognized and discussed over the years. A methodological challenge commonly noticed is that the type of study needed to develop the field, studies comparing multiple networks with a longitudinal set up, is very time-consuming and costly (Cropper et al., 2008c; Halinen & Törnroos, 2005; Provan et al., 2007). Other issues discussed are the difficulties of setting the network boundary in metaphoric networks studies, as connecting relationships extend a network without limits and make any network boundary arbitrary (Easton, 1995; Halinen & Törnroos, 2005; Provan et al., 2007). Furthermore, the complexity of networks in all type of inter-organisational network studies, makes the creating of case descriptions difficult (Evan, 1965; Halinen & Törnroos, 2005). Another challenge is change and thus time in inter-organisational network studies, especially in metaphoric network studies (Halinen & Törnroos, 2005) because even when change is not the focus of the study, the network of relationships are expected to reconfigure at such a rate that it needs to be considered when planning such study. Dealing with the level of analysis in the study of inter-organisational relations is also not straightforward as the text by Klein, Palmer and Buhl Conn (2000) illustrates. They identify six levels of analysis in inter-organisational relations: (1) inter-organisational network as a homogeneous whole.

(2) inter-organisational dyad within the network, (3) inter-organisational dyad as a homogeneous whole, (4) the organisation within the inter-organisational dyad, (5) the organisation as a homogeneous whole, and (6) individuals and groups. Each of these levels has its methodological benefits and drawbacks. I will not discuss these here, but wish to add that multilevel studies are argued to be needed to overcome the drawbacks of using a single level of analysis (Ibarra, Kilduff, & Tsai, 2005; Klein et al., 2000).

One issue that seems not to have been discussed is the methodological consequences of multiple group memberships and relations by individuals partaking in inter-organisational networks. While analysing the case interviews I realised that I needed to deal with the methodological challenge of unravelling who was talking. Not in terms of which individual as I had been only doing individual interviews, but in terms of which position or even positions each of the interviewees had taken while responding to the questions. Interviewees choose actively or passively to respond from one of the multiple positions they occupy. The position interviewees choose to respond from could differ from question to question and the chosen response position could even change while the interviewee was responding to a single question. In the interview transcript this change is sometimes is obvious and even made explicit by interviewees, but often there was not an explicit choice made and the response position as well as the changes therein were unclear.

I argue that the position chosen by the interviewee matters to the interpretation of what is said, because it influences the way in which the interviewee approaches the questions. What is revealed to the researcher is thus a view of the inter-organisational reality from a specific position. When selecting interviewees one tries to locate the people that could say something useful and informative related to the current research questions. Often one also selects a person because the person is expected to look at the phenomenon or answer the questions from a specific position. For instance, to get a management perspective on a growth process in the organisation, the person to interview would be a manager. If one however would like to know what a growth process means in terms of changes in personnel, one would talk to a human resources manager. When we want to know the consequences of the growth process for the personnel, one would naturally talk to the personnel. Expectations and interests related to the interviewee's position can, however, be misleading in situations where the interviewee occupies various positions simultaneously, as the people involved in an inter-organisational network most often do.

In the following sub-sections, I discuss and illustrate the challenge of multiple positions of interviewees in more detail and then turn to the question of how to deal with this challenge. I develop and discuss procedures and frameworks which may help to identify the multiple positions of an interviewee. *First*, I present a framework

of the various possible positions interviewees in inter-organisational networks can have. This framework contributes to understanding of the multiple functional positions of people in inter-organisational networks. *Secondly*, I look into the possibilities of gaining more insights through social identity theory especially the work of Ashforth and Mael (1989) and Johnson, Kosgaard and Sapienza (2002) concerning organisational identification. Thus, as one can occupy different positions in an inter-organisational network, what may influence the way in which the interviewees identify themselves with a particular position and thus speak from this position. *Thirdly*, I discuss the possible effects the different types of individual relationships between the members of the inter-organisational network can have on the positions chosen by interviewees from which to answer interview questions. Finally, I discuss both procedures that can be followed in order to unravel the positions when they are unclear and procedures that can help to prevent the situation of having to deal with these questions when transcribing and analysing the data.

4.3.2 *THE METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGE OF INTERVIEWEES OCCUPYING MULTIPLE FUNCTIONAL POSITIONS*

During the transcribing and especially during the analysis of the case interviews, I recognized that the interviewees occupied various positions. I will illustrate with the hypothetical example below, how the position taken by an interviewee reveals different views on reality. I use a hypothetical example as the data itself does not contain examples that would illustrate all the different positions; the data only provides examples whereby two or maximum three different interpretations are possible.

The interviewee is a member of the management team of the network. She is responsible for the group within the network developing a shared methodology. In her university, she is the head of a research team which will be affected by the outcomes/results of the network and she also represents this team in relation to the network. Furthermore, she represents the network and the decisions taken by the network towards the research team.

When asked the question how the research plan for the network was formulated, she may answer:

1. **As a member of the management team**: We sat down and went through who would write which part of the research plan. After this we wrote these parts and then sent them around for comments. Mostly we then changed the text based on the comments we got. If there were very different ideas of what needed to be included we discussed first one on one and if no agreement was found we asked everybody's opinion.

> 2. **As a representative of the methodology group**: We emailed back and forth with the members of the group discussing the various issues people had brought up to be included into the plan. In the end the ideas were brought together on paper and discussed via a teleconference call. Based on this discussion a last version of the plan was made.
>
> 3. **As a member of the research team**: We sat down with the team to generate ideas and discuss what the most important issues are for us that need to be included in the plan.
>
> 4. **As a representative of the research team**: It was a very difficult process, there were many issues we wanted to be included, but others were not very receptive to our ideas.

Each of these is thus a possible answer that could have been given by this interviewee. Each answer reveals a part of the process and each answer is informative about a particular part of the process via which the research plan was compiled. The problem with each of the answers presented above is that – standing alone – each answer can be given from at least one other position. Below two examples will be discussed.

If we interpret statement 2 as a statement of a member of the management team instead of as a representative of the methodology group, we could conclude that the management team is the level at which the planning takes place and that thus the network has a rather centralised planning process in which participants of the groups managed seem to have little influence. As a statement of the methodology group, the interpretation could be that the process is decentralised and that the members of the group were actively involved in planning their activities.

If we interpreted statement 4 as a statement of a representative of the methodology group, the statement could be interpreted such that there are tensions within the network and that the methodology group had been unable to get the activities that they wished to undertake accepted by the network. As a statement of a representative of the research team, it however can be interpreted such that there are tensions between the member organisation and the network, that the research team of the member organisation is not able to get the members of the methodology group to accept their ideas.

The challenge is thus how to interpret the statements and know from which position the interviewee possibly has been approaching the question and thus to be able to present the right interpretation of what goes on in the network.

4.3.3   IDENTIFYING POSSIBLE POSITIONS IN INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL SETTINGS

Van de Ven, Emmett and Koenig (1975) have recognized three functional levels within inter-organisational networks. They describe the principle functions of these levels (Van De Ven et al., 1975, pp. 30–33) as:

- Primary instrumental productive units or organisations that are members of the inter-organisational network;
- Integration of differentiated, but interdependent member organisations;
- Governance of overall goals and policies, and external legitimation and support of the inter-organisational networks domain with other collectivities.

For clarity, however, I think it is important to separate the first level further into (1) groups of a member organisation participating in the inter-organisational network and (2) the overall organisation member of the inter-organisational network. This leads to four different levels: two organisational levels (the member organisation and the units within the member organisation involved in the network) and two inter-organisational levels (the network and the units of the network).

A further important difference between the possible positions that an interviewee might choose to take is between being a participant and being a representative of a particular functional level. The important difference is that while talking from a position of being a participant of a group, an interviewee would potentially come up with individual observations that might differ from the rest of the group. And whilst talking from the position of a representative, one would be focusing on the will of the whole group thus presenting only the things the group agrees on in the broad sense.

Thus when asking questions from various people who position themselves as representatives of the group, the answers can be expected to be rather homogeneous. When people position themselves, however, as a participant of the group, they would perhaps refer to the general view, but present mainly their own.

The four different functional levels and the division between participants and representatives thus create eight possible positions in inter-organisational settings (see table 7). An interviewee participating in the inter-organisational network may thus approach a question posed from any of these positions.

Table 7 **Possible response positions from which interviewees in inter-organisational networks can approach interview questions**

	Participant of	**Representative of**
Network	Network, governance board, management team	Network
Units within the network	Integrated instrumental productive unit (network unit)	Integrated instrumental productive unit (network unit)
Member organisation	Member organisation (MO)	Member organisation (MO)
Units within member organisation involved in the network	Primary instrumental productive units participating to the network (MO unit)	Primary instrumental productive units participating to the network (MO unit)

4.3.4 *PRIORITY IN MULTIPLE FUNCTIONAL POSITIONS – LESSONS FROM SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY*

Before discussing possible strategies for clarifying the position from which particular questions may have been approached by a particular interviewee, it might be helpful to understand what may influence an interviewee to approach a question from a particular functional position as participant or representative. My expectation is that this does not to happen randomly, but rather that it has a connection to how strongly the interviewee identifies him/herself with particular functional positions.

In discussions concerning group and organisational identification, building on social identity theory, it is recognized that individuals often identify with multiple groups or organisations (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Furthermore, it is recognized that they organize their loyalty to each group based on the strength of the identification with each group (J. P. Johnson et al., 2002). Based on the theory of organisational identification, interviewees would thus be expected to have a particular order of identifying with particular positions. The ordering of group or organisational identities is claimed to depend on several factors. The following factors have been mentioned as factors that cause members to identify stronger with a particular group or organisation (George & Chattopadhyay, 2005; J. P. Johnson et al., 2002):

(1) Attractive attributes (for example high status);

(2) Distinctive attributes (for example unique culture);

(3) Material reasons (valuable career experience);

(4) Symbolic reasons (enhancing self-esteem or image);

(5) Salience of membership (frequent contact).

This perspective provides us with some insight into the possible factors why an interviewee may choose to respond from one position rather than another. One factor not discussed much in this literature, which may, however, be of importance especially in networks, is the types of bonds or relationships an individual has with others in the network.

Participants in inter-organisational networks often have varying types of relationships with other participants. The types of relationships that the interviewees in the case studies had with other members of the team and the network varied highly. I have mapped the different types of relationships (see figure 15) based on how personal the relationships were leading from contractual to collegial to personal, thus from the least personal to the most personal. Furthermore, the relationships varied from equal to unequal.

It is important to note, that the minimum relationship is contractual as all people in each case study are bound to one another at least through the network contract. After this we can add the collegial relationship, which means that people interact as colleagues and also share some of the things happening in their personal lives. In the last step we add personal relations to the collegial which means people actually also meet personally outside of work and share more things happening in their personal lives.

	Unequal		
	Dependency	Authority	Hierarchical
Equal	Friendship	Peers	Professional
	Personal	**Collegial**	**Contractual**
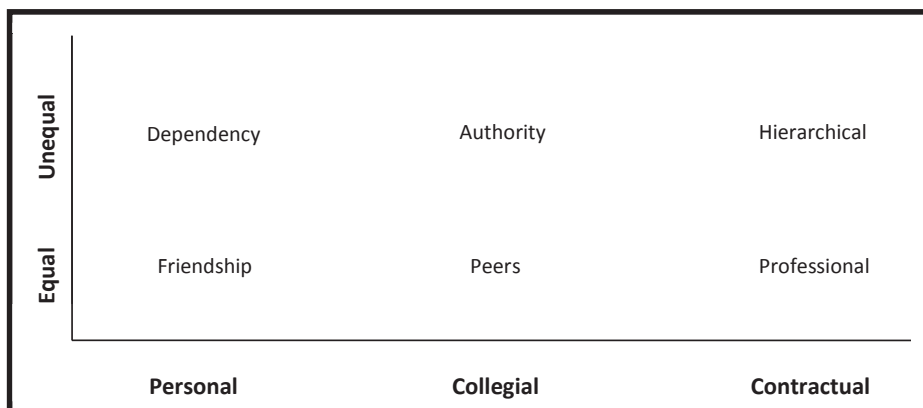
Figure 15   Types of relationships

As can be seen from figure 15, six types of relations are placed on the continuum between contractual and personal. On the equal line, professional relations are solely work relations on an equal footing, whereas peers are people with whom we have both contractual as well as some forms of personal relations. Friendships are the most personal, but in the network setting people who have a friendship relationship, also have collegial and contractual relations. Hierarchy, authority and dependency are placed on the unequal line. In addition to the equal line, each individual relationship

can have added unequal components. This can be in the form of a contractual hierarchy, a collegial authority or a personal dependency.

I suggest that the types of relationships an interviewee has with others in the network will influence the extent to which that interviewee identifies with the earlier discussed positions. I will try to illustrate this below, using the same hypothetical interviewee as before, presenting three different examples of how she is connected to the others in the network in question.

> This interviewee is a member of the management team of the network. She is responsible for the group within the network developing a shared methodology. In her university, she is the head of a research team which will be affected by the outcomes/results of the network and she also represents this team in relation to the network. Furthermore, she represents the network and the decisions taken by the network towards the research team.
>
> Example 1: The interviewee is connected to two other members of the management team as a friend having worked together a lot over the years in different projects, one other member she has been supervising a few years ago and one member she learned to know when they met as members of the team the first time. The management team had divided the work, and she agreed on leading the methodology group. She mentions that the members of the group have been working at distance, discussing mainly via email.
>
> Example 2: The interviewee got invited to become a member of the management team but only knew one other member of the management team as she supervised her Ph.D. work. During the interview she also mentions that the members of the methodology development group she leads started the work by having a 'get to know one another meeting' which created a great working atmosphere.
>
> Example 3: The interviewee is new to the network, she took over the position of her previous boss, who was very active but due to illness needed to resign. She explains that the research team she is working with is helping her out a lot with getting the work for the network done. The network administration has also been very helpful and supportive. She, furthermore, mentions that she still does not know many of the people involved.

Although the interviewees in all examples were a member of the management team, methodology group, and research team, the differences in the relationships in each

example, limits the positions from which the interviewee can be expected to speak. This will be explained in more detail below.

In example 1 we can expect the interviewee to identify rather strongly with the management team and the network as a whole. The methodology group is her responsibility, but she doesn't seem to identify very strongly with the group. We cannot say much about her connections to her research group, but if she is co-located with them, we can expect that she also identifies with them rather strongly due to frequent contact. In the interview transcript we thus expect her to respond as a representative or participant of the management and to a lesser extent as a representative or participant of the research team.

In example 2 we can expect the interviewee to identify strongly with the methodology group, stronger than with the management team and the network as a whole, though her identification with the management team may be enhanced by other factors (attractive, material and symbolic). She can be expected to adopt a participant position more easily with the management team than a representative position. As with example 1, we cannot say much about her connections to her research group, but if she is co-located with them, we can expect that she also identifies with them rather strongly due to frequent contact. In the interview transcript we thus expect her to respond mainly as a representative or a participant of the methodology group, but she may also respond as a representative or participant of her research group and to an even lesser extent as a participant and even less as representative of the management team or the network.

In example 3 we can expect the interviewee to identify strongest with her research team. After this, she can be expected to identify herself with the position as a participant of the management team, but to a lesser extent as a representative. The links to the methodology group seem very weak and therefore we may expect her not to position herself easily as a participant or representative of the unit.

The types of relationships can thus be taken as an indicator for what position is most probable, especially in cases where the identification with one level is very strong and seems far stronger than identification with the other levels (such as in example 1 the management team and in example 3 the research team). In other situations interviewees may still respond from a number of positions when the identification with these positions is relatively similar. There is thus a need to think of strategies that help to deal with situations where there is no clarity on the position adopted by the interviewee.

4.3.5 WAYS TO CLARIFY RESPONSE POSITIONS

There are various possible tools or procedures which may help to unravel unclear response positions of the interviewees. From the discussion above, it can be concluded that knowing the background of the interviewees – in terms of how they view their relation to the network, the different units within it and the types of relationships they have with others in the network – is of importance when clarifying their response positions.

Being aware of the possible response positions of an interviewee while interviewing will make the interviewer more alert to possible answers which include ambivalent response positions. Therefore, more clarifying questions can be posed by the interviewer in order to make sure she/he understands which position an interviewee is taking.

Both at the start of an interview and during the interview, the interviewer can also more explicitly ask the interviewee to approach particular questions from particular positions. Although this might help, it does not solve the whole problem, as interviewees may not be consciously aware of their response positions nor the changes in their response positions while responding.

Being sensitive to the possible response positions of an interviewee during the analysis of the interview material is also very important as it is not always possible to recognize ambivalent response positions while interviewing.

Interviewing multiple people about, for example, similar events, aspects, and processes is an excellent starting point for being able to reveal unclear response positions of interviewees. The opportunity to compare responses gives the possibility to highlight the differences in the description of events whereby one is forced to clarify the response positions and therefore the interpretation of what the interviewees has meant by the response.

Another possible strategy would be to return to the interviewees if there are cases of unclear response positions. After finalizing the analysis, interviewees can be asked to check the interpretations made based on the possible response positions they took in the interview situation. In many cases this would in principle be very helpful and could lead to a better understanding of what an interviewee tried to say. In some cases, however, the interviewee her/himself may not be able to recall what she/he meant with what she/he said and thus be unable to clarify the response position they took during the interview.

How the interview is conducted (face-to-face, via telephone, or through teleconferencing) may impact the clues the interviewee gives and clues the interviewer gets as to how to interpret certain statements. In case of face-to-face

interviews and interviews through teleconferencing facial expressions and other gestures can be observed. These may clarify and give clues as to how to interpret the response position of the interviewee. The question is, however, how well these clues get documented so that they can be used later on during the transcription and analysis of the interview.

During telephone interviews these gestures cannot be observed, but as both the interviewer and the interviewee are both aware of this, both might be more sensitive about being understood correctly and therefore explain in more detail what one means. Furthermore, in any interview situation, the interviewer may get the impression that the position taken by the interviewee is clear and it is unambiguous what the interviewee is discussing, while later on it turns out that multiple interpretations are possible.

4.3.6   REFLECTIONS

This section discussed the importance of understanding the possible positions from which interviewees in inter-organisational networks may respond to interview questions and presented eight possible response positions of those involved. Furthermore, the section identified six factors that can influence how strongly a participant in an inter-organisational network identifies with the listed eight positions. Five of these factors are derived from organisational identification theory and an additional factor was added to these. Finally, various possible tools and procedures were discussed that could help identify the response positions of interviewees. Using these tools and procedures to verify and clarify the response positions would increase both the quality and the reliability of the research done.

Although the section focused on interviewing, the ideas presented can also help whilst developing questionnaires to which people in inter-organisational settings are expected to respond. This however would demand some additional information on the different positions occupied by the respondent and the identification with these positions.

While conducting the interviews used in this thesis, I was not aware of these challenges that multiple response positions poses upon researchers in inter-organisational settings. Due to research-financial and time limitations on the research, the choice was made not to contact all interviewees to clarify the different statements that could be interpreted from multiple response positions. The framework for clarifying response positions developed in this section, however, is a very useful tool for creating clarity in the analysis of the interview data. The approach taken in the analysis is to read critically the descriptions of the courses of events by various interviewees and creating an inter-subjective description in order to map out the most probable response positions taken by the various interviewees.

4.4 CLARIFYING GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION (PART 1)

4.4.1 *CLARIFYING GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT, AND ADMINISTRATION THROUGH ROLES AND TASKS*

The initial analysis of the case study data in the previous phase of gaining understanding showed that the decision-making framework reproduced a hierarchical top-down view that I had in relation to the types of decisions defined. To overcome this, I set out to clarify the concepts of governance, management and administration. Before starting this work, the difference between governance, management and administration, for me, were broadly as follows:

- Governance is concerned with defining direction and ensuring the organisation worked towards that desired direction.

- Management is concerned with defining the implementation plans to reach what was defined through governance and ensuring the organisation worked on implementing those plans.

- Administration is concerned with supporting management in routine tasks related to the defining or ensuring of implementation whereby existing norms and rules were followed.

In seeking to clarify governance, management and administration, I focused on literature discussing the roles or tasks of governors, managers and administrators. By so doing, I hoped to find tools to define governance, management and administration as clear and separate concepts. This would help analysing the tasks described by interviewees and in the consortium agreements and would better inform what type of decision was made.

This means that other ways of thinking about governance, management and administration were considered less relevant. The literature discussing the effectiveness of governance, focusing on structures, mechanisms, tools or processes of governance was, for example, excluded. This discussion is central within the economic exchange literature (such as Grandori, 1997; Park, 1996; Provan & Kenis, 2008; Williamson, 2005), as well as in public administration literature on governance networks (see, for example, Cristofoli, Markovic, & Meneguzzo, 2014; Huxham, 2000; Klijn, 2008a; Klijn & Skelcher, 2007; Vangen, Hayes, & Cornforth, 2014). This literature is, however, not very helpful or useful for the task I set out to undertake, as it does not differentiate between governance, management and administration while it does include elements of governance, management and administration. For example, Vangen, Hayes and Cornforth (2014) include within governance directing, as well as coordinating, allocating of resources and accounting for activities. While the first was something I considered being part of governance, the other elements I considered being part of management.

This section is organised such that, first, governance, management and administration are tackled separately, before discussing them in relation to one another. This means that there is some overlap of concepts that are introduced, but I have decided to present this overlap, to be able to later (in chapter 6) discuss these similarities in the concepts and present the choices made.

4.4.2 GOVERNANCE BY GOVERNORS AND GOVERNANCE BOARDS

4.4.2.1 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE, PUBLIC GOVERNANCE AND NETWORK GOVERNANCE

In different streams of governance literature, the roles and tasks of governance boards or governors are discussed. These streams of literature are divided according to the type of organisation in which the governor or governing board functions.

In the corporate governance literature, the different roles and tasks of the board in companies with stock-owners are mainly discussed (for example, Boulton, 1978; J. L. Johnson, Ellstrand, & Daily, 1996; Stiles & Taylor, 2001). The co-operative governance literature (see, for example, Cornforth, 2002, 2004a, 2004b) discusses the roles and tasks of boards in co-operatives and focuses generally more on the consequences of the specific nature of these organisations. Concerning the public sector, as well as, concerning inter-organisational entities, the roles and tasks of governors are discussed surprisingly little. Beetham (2006) is a positive exception in this respect. In addition, Ostrom's (1990) discussion of governance of commons presents particular activities or elements of governance of an inter-organisational entity.

4.4.2.2 ELEMENTS OF GOVERNANCE BASED ON ROLES AND TASKS OF GOVERNORS

Four elements are central in the literature discussing governance roles or tasks. These are (1) framing, (2) controlling, (3) boundary-spanning, and (4) mitigating conflict. These elements will be discussed in more detail below.

Framing

One of the main tasks of governors is concerned with deciding about the overall domain of the activities as well as the direction of action to be taken within this domain. In corporate governance, this is discussed as the strategic role (Stiles & Taylor, 2001), service role (Huse, 2005; J. L. Johnson et al., 1996), or directing role (Boulton, 1978). It is not concerned with formulating the strategy, but concerned with the context of strategy in several ways.

Stiles and Taylor (2001) suggest that this is done (1) through setting and actively reviewing the corporate definition (mission, vision and values), (2) through assessing and reviewing strategic proposals and suggesting changes when deemed necessary,

(3) through encouragement of managers in their strategic aims, and (4) through the selection of directors.

In addition to the domain and direction, deciding about policies in relation to behaviour, as well as actions to be taken, is considered to be part of this element which links to the development of the ethical framework and reviewing of social responsibilities (Stiles & Taylor, 2001).

In the corporate governance literature, the strategic aims and plans tend to be seen as tasks of management, even though their assessment in the light of the domain and direction set is seen as part of governance. The functions of the parliament as discussed in the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) guidelines (Beetham, 2006) are very similar to those of corporate boards in this respect. The Beetham (2006) guidelines do add to the domain and direction decisions the reviewing and approving of constitutional changes as well as treaties. These are not explicitly mentioned in corporate governance, though one may expect that, for example, collaboration contracts are also considered an essential part of the governance element of framing in corporate governance. This can also be expected to be important in inter-organisational entities.

The design principles identified by Ostrom (1990) also show the importance of clearly defining the domain, direction and policies of collectives. She identified that commons (cultural and natural resources accessible to all members of a society) were successfully self-governed, when those concerned had clearly defined the domain (including both the membership as well as the physical space concerned), appropriation and provision rules and collective-choice arrangements to ensure collective decision-making concerning domain and direction of action[51].

Controlling

Controlling is the most discussed element of governance. The literature reviewed distinguishes between three different types of control: (1) direction control, (2) performance control, and (3) behaviour control.

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[51] This discussion on framing resonates with Hannah Arendt's discussion on power as "the human ability not to just act but to act in concert" (1986, p. 64). It is also in accordance with Göhler's (2000, 2009) discussion of intransitive power (power produced and preserved by itself). Göhler argues that in order for a community to constitute itself as a effective unit in the form of a common space of action, it needs to be symbolically present and to become institutionalised (structured and structuring) in order to be of lasting duration. From this it can be understood that framing aims at creating the power to act together (increasing the options of the actors) while at the same time limiting the power to act of individual members (decreasing the options of the actors through the limitations set by the actors).

Direction control is concerned with reviewing of the operational and strategic plans as well as budgets and determining if these are in line with the domain, direction and value definitions set. Personnel and organisational reviews as well as external and environmental reviews can be used to benchmark and identify the strengths and weaknesses of suggested plans and budgets (Stiles & Taylor, 2001). Ostrom (1990) discusses as part of the design principles of successful self-governing commons, both the monitoring of compliance to collective decisions and gradual sanctioning in case of non-compliance. This concerns both the operations as well as behaviour.

Performance control is mentioned most frequently as anelement of governance, especially in corporate governance. Performance control concerns the reviewing of progress in relation to the operational plans and budgets. Performance control not only concerns the progress, but also concerns the performance in relation to, for example, quality standards, external satisfaction and internal satisfaction (Stiles & Taylor, 2001). The goal is to identify problem areas as well as ensuring action is taken when necessary. In addition, performance control is also said to concern the ensuring of accuracy of published reports (Boulton, 1978), though sometimes this is seen as a separate auditing role of the governing board (Stiles & Taylor, 2001). In addition, corporate governance also considers the performance assessment, compensation arrangements and disciplining of directors an essential part of the control task of the board (Stiles & Taylor, 2001).

Behaviour control concerns the reviewing of conformance in relation to set behavioural policies and ensuring action is taken when necessary. This thus does not relate to performance levels set, but relates to the following of the rules set in relation to, for example, how participants, members, customers and the environment as well as information are treated and protected. This is not as extensively discussed in the corporate governance literature, although assessing the conformance to the ethical framework could be expected to be a potentially crucial role of the board. In relation to new social corporate responsibility discussions, this may also become more essential, though in these discussions it seems to be concerned more with the level of performance rather than conformance.

On important thing to note in relation to controlling is the division made by Ostrom (1990) between monitoring and sanctioning. These are two very different aspects of controlling. Monitoring is related to observing the behaviour, performance, and so forth. This does not necessarily need to be done by governors, and in companies it most often is not, as external monitors can be used. As pointed out by Ostrom, in the commons the monitoring was often a by-product of working together and therefore few external monitors were used. Sanctioning is concerned with deciding what it do if rules, procedures etc. are breached – intentionally or unintentionally.

Boundary spanning

In the literature on corporate boards the institutional (Stiles & Taylor, 2001), boundary spanning (Cornforth, 2004a), resource dependency (J. L. Johnson et al., 1996) or service (Huse, 2005) roles are seen as important elements of governance. This means that networking, lobbying, legitimating and communicating (Huse, 2005) or more generally boundary spanning is seen as service that the members of the board deliver to the organisation.

In this literature, strong relationships of the governance board with shareholders, both institutional and private, as well as with other stakeholders are seen as important to secure funding, resources and information flows, building confidence in the organisation and legitimating its existence, as well as giving opportunities to get "sounding on proposed change of strategy or major initiative" (Stiles & Taylor, 2001, p. 91).

Mitigating conflict

While mitigating or handling conflicts has generally not been discussed in the corporate governance literature, it has been discussed as a key element of governance in other streams of literature. See, for example, the definition of governance by Williamson (2005) which suggests that governance structures can be evaluated based on their effectiveness in mitigating conflict. Furthermore, mitigating conflict is central in the discussion on design principles by Ostrom (1990). In addition, handling of conflict was also seen as an important role of boards of cooperatives and mutual associations (Cornforth, 2002, 2004a). There are, however, two different sides to this. On the one hand, the tasks of defining conflict-resolution mechanisms and making sure these are functioning are discussed. On the other hand, the task of mediating (as a central conflict-resolution mechanism) is discussed. Both will be briefly highlighted.

While organisations with a hierarchical authority system have a structure for solving conflict, organisations lacking a hierarchical authority system need to find alternative ways to deal with conflicts. As Ostrom (1990) points out in relation to the governance of commons, low-cost and readily available conflict-resolution mechanisms to mediate conflicts need to be designed to make self-governance of commons successful. The framing element of governance is thus also concerned with defining conflict-resolution mechanisms and the control element of governance should also be concerned with ensuring that these systems are available and functioning. This would suggest that mediation is not a separate element of governance, but that it is integral to the other elements.

Cornforth (2002, 2004a), while discussing different roles of boards, notes, however, that boards besides the roles discussed in corporate governance also have a political role, an active mediating role. This suggests that a common conflict-resolution

mechanism used in the organisations without hierarchical authority system he studied, boards actively mediate. The corporate governance literature implicitly also discusses this in relation to control and selection or accepting of plans. That is, they are making choices between rival suggestions and thereby solving conflicts. This suggests mitigating conflict should still be considered a separate element of governance.

4.4.2.3 REFLECTIONS

An issue not yet clarified, though important, is the difference made in the governance literature on the notion of who is governing whom. Self-governance, as discussed by Ostrom (1990) and – though less explicitly – Cornforth (2002, 2004a, 2004b), means that the members of the entity created are governing the entity themselves. Governance is then concerned with '*our*' frame, '*our*' shared *mutual* control, '*our*' relation to and information from outside and the mitigation of conflicts between '*us*'. The corporate governance literature focuses more on what could be labelled external governance: the governing of how the frame accepted by us is implemented by others. This creates a basic difference in perspective, which creates a difference in focus. The most central element in external governance is control, while in self-governance it is that of framing. This, however, seems to be a difference in the importance of elements and not in the elements themselves.

Governance, following the literature discussed, includes framing (i.e. setting and revising the organisation's definition (in terms of mission, vision, boundaries, and values), controlling (i.e. making sure actions, performance and behaviour stays within the framework defined, through both monitoring and sanctioning), boundary spanning (i.e. secure funding, resources and information flows, building confidence in the organisation and legitimating its existence), and mitigating conflict (making sure mechanisms exist, as well as mediating directly).

It is necessary to note that this does not mean that all governors or governing boards are engaged with these activities. As pointed out in the corporate governance literature, there is a gap between what governance is expected to be and what governors actually do. Thus, although governance is above defined as consisting of this list of tasks – they are not necessarily all performed by a governance group.

4.4.3 MANAGEMENT BY MANAGERS AND MANAGEMENT TEAMS

4.4.3.1 MANAGEMENT FUNCTION, MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY AND NETWORK MANAGEMENT

The general management literature has extensively discussed what ought to be included in management. One approach was to define the management function, whereby Fayol's work '*Administration industrielle et générale*' was very influential.

Table 8   Management activity, roles or tasks

Management function (Fayol, 1949; Urwick, 1937)	Management activities (Gulick, 1937)	Management roles (Mintzberg, 1975)	Management activities (Mintzberg, 2009)	Network manager (Agranoff & McGuire, 2001; Kickert, Klein, & Koppenjan, 1997; Klijn, 2008b)	Alliance manager (Spekman, Forbes III, Isabella, & MacAvoy, 1998; Spekman, Isabella, & MacAvoy, 2000)	Joint venture manager (Beamish, 1988; Schaan & Beamish, 1988)	Partnership manager (Huxham & Vangen, 2005)
Forecasting/ Planning	Planning	Figurehead role	Communicating	Designing	Visionary role	Same list as Mintzberg (1975) and in addition:	*Facilitative role*
Organising	Organising	Liaison role	Controlling	Organising	Strategic sponsor role	Diplomat role	Embracing
Commanding	Staffing	Leader role	Leading	Planning	Advocate role		Empowering
Co-ordinating	Directing	Monitor role	Linking	Co-ordinating	Networker role		Involving
Controlling	Co-ordinating	Disseminator role	Doing	Facilitating	Facilitator role		Mobilising
	Reporting	Spokesman role	Dealing	Mediating	Manager role		*Directive role*
	Budgeting	Innovator/entrepreneur role			Mediator role		Manipulating the collaborative agenda
		Resource allocator role					Playing the politics
		Negotiator role					
		Disturbance handler role					

Another approach was to define the management activities undertaken by managers. This was started by Gulick (1937) who discussed Fayol's list and adapted it in order to capture better the activities that he saw performed by (top)managers. This list has since been adjusted by various authors. These lists of which activities were management activities, however, did not capture in a satisfying manner what managers actually do according to, for example, Mintzberg. Mintzberg then worked out a list of roles that managers performed (1975), which he more recently (2009) has reconceptualised dividing the types of activities into groups related to the three ways for a manager to evoke action: through information; by using influence; and through action.

Also in the inter-organisational network literature on the management of networks various attempts have been made to define what is to be considered as management. This stream of literature follows the different types of inter-organisational networks focused on. One stream discusses the role and tasks of public sector officials as network managers who manage so-called governance networks (Agranoff, 2007; see, for example, Agranoff & McGuire, 1999, 2001; Kickert et al., 1997; Klijn, 2008b; McGuire, 2003). Another stream of inter-organisational network literature discusses the role of alliance managers (see Spekman et al., 1998, 2000), joint venture managers (Beamish, 1988; Beamish & Lupton, 2009; Schaan & Beamish, 1988) and partnership managers (Huxham & Vangen, 2000b; Vangen & Huxham, 2003).

Table 8 provides an overview of the different managerial roles, activities or tasks suggested in these different streams of literature.

4.4.3.2 ELEMENTS OF MANAGEMENT BASED ON ROLES, ACTIVITIES AND TASKS OF MANAGERS

Although different perspectives on management are taken, and although different roles, tasks or activities are described as belonging to management, the literature still has large similarities. I will take Fayol's (1949) elements as my starting point for the discussion of the different roles and activities and discuss the different related views. I have, however, decided to replace Fayol's category of 'commanding' with generating, maintaining and steering of effort. First, because the term 'commanding' does match very well the modern way of relating to one another in a work place. Second, because I think this accommodates better the way in which the different authors discuss management. In addition to this change, one additional element will be discussed – that of mediation – because in particular the literature on inter-organisational networks argues that management includes mediation. This means the following elements will be discussed: (1) planning, (2) organising, (3) generating, maintaining and steering of effort, (4) coordinating, (5) controlling, and (6) mediation.

Planning

Planning following Fayol is "examining the future and drawing up a plan of action" (1949, p. 6). The plan of action according to Fayol is to indicate the manager's objective and scope, the task for each department in this, the way in which these tasks are to be coordinated and harmonised into a whole. Budgeting, which is by Gulick (1937) suggested as a separate element, could be seen an integral part of planning, albeit the financial side of the story. In the early work of Mintzberg (1975) these two were also somewhat separated, but he does so in a different way. The manager, in the role of innovator/entrepreneur, is to plan for the future, which means that it concerns long-term planning. As the resource allocator, however, the manager drafts as well as approves plans, schedules, and budgets and thereby sets priorities. This indicates more a short-term or implementation related planning. In the later work of Mintzberg (2009), planning has become an integral part of 'controlling through decision-making'. This includes defining (and diagnosing), developing possible courses of action, and deciding on the preferred course of action.

Both Fayol and Mintzberg, especially in his earlier work, present a goal-directed approach to planning. This approach assumes that "goals can be stated and accepts a narrowing of focus in order to efficiently use energy" (McCaskey, 1974, p. 282). Thus, it is the manager who gathers information, processes it and decides (rationally) on the future of the organisation, while others will implement this. In the inter-organisational management literature this is a possible perspective, especially in literature discussing the management of asymmetric inter-organisational networks with a clear lead organisation. In literature on the management of symmetric inter-organisational networks, however, the perspective shifts towards collective decision-making. This, however, often relates to the creation of a shared vision; the planning of implementation is not discussed in much detail, if at all.

In the initial analysis of the cases I noticed that the planning in most cases was an activity performed by the participants from the member organisations in a shared manner or by the member organisations separately. The direction agreed upon was used as a guide for those wishing to contribute. The planning then became more one of sharing what was planned by the member organisation and seeing if this could be done as part of the consortium and possibly in a concerted manner. Everything that could be fitted within the frame of the consortium was collected into the plan, which then was harmonised in order to send the plan to the Commission. This resembles much more the directional approach of planning as described by McCaskey (1974). The domain in which the organisation wishes to work and the direction in which it wishes to move are thereby central. Both the domain and the direction are argued to be determined intrinsically without reference to external goals, based on the wishes and capabilities of the organisation. Along the path in which the organisation is

moving, goals may be chosen, but these goals can be substituted for other goals as long as these lie on the general path of the agreeddirection.

The end result of planning is most often argued to be a written, formulated plan. Such plans can, as Hales (2001) points out, differ in their time horizon (annual, short-term, long-term), the area of work to which they apply (for example concerning particular operations such as the production of goods and services, financial, commercial or the means for these operations such as personnel, material) as well as their level of generality (for example, a plan can be made for a specific activity, a group of activities, a unit, or the whole organisation).

<u>Organising</u>

Fayol defines organising as "to provide it [the organisation] with everything useful to its functioning: raw materials, tools, capital, personnel" (1949, p. 53). Organising involves the creation or changing of the material organisation and the human organisation. The human organisation includes both the composition (horizontal and vertical subdivision) as well as staffing (recruitment and training). The material organisation includes the streams and allocation of (raw) materials, tools and capital to ensure the organisation is equipped with all it needs.

The resource allocator role (Mintzberg, 1975) strongly links to this element of organising. This role assumes, however, that the manager has the authority to decide on the allocation of resources. The difficulty in inter-organisational entities is, however, that the personnel and often also the material are provided by the member organisations. This means that the authority over these resources by the entity is limited. This means that the managers in these inter-organisational entities will need to mobilise and activate necessary and relevant resources from the different member organisations for the undertakings of the inter-organisational entity (Agranoff, 2007; Agranoff & McGuire, 2001; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). The facilitative role as presented by Huxham and Vangen (2005) is thus a way of thinking about how this organising can be done in this type of organisation.

In addition to these more internal focused roles, the roles centred on contact with people and organisations outside the organisation are also especially related to the creation and maintaining of the material organisation. For example, Mintzberg's liaison role (1975) and Mintzberg's element of linking to people outside the unit (2009) are related to this. Negotiating contracts for raw materials or tools can be seen as an aspect directly related to the material organisation, while creating a good image can be seen as indirectly related to ensuring both material and human organisation (Mahoney, Jerdee, & Carroll, 1965). This external focus is not much discussed in connection to the management of inter-organisational entities.

Generating, maintaining and steering of effort

Following Fayol, this element is "to set going the services defined by planning and established by organization" (1937, p. 103). It is about "maintaining activity among the personnel" (1949, p. 6), "to get the optimum return from all employees (...) in the interest of the whole concern" (1949, p. 97). Follett (1942b) calls this *leadership of position* and, as in the previous elements, has the underlying assumption that the manager has authority. Thus, it is the manager who directs and motivates subordinates, such as, for example, suggested by the leader and negotiator roles discussed by Mintzberg (1975).

A different view on leadership is that presented by Follett, whereby authority goes with knowledge and experience. This is a co-ordinating and co-operating form of leadership and is assumes the existing of multiple leaders. The leader in this view on leadership is one "who knows how to relate the different wills in a group so that they will have a driving force" (Follett, 1942b, p. 282) and for this to be possible this leader "must understand the situation, must see it as a whole, must see the inter-relation of all the parts (...) [and] must see the evolving situation" (Follett, 1995b, p. 169). This type of leadership was assumed in the earlier discussion about organising within inter-organisational entities through mobilising and activating member organisations. The discussion about this, however, stays on organisational level

On the individual participant level the perspective is slightly different again. As boundary spanners between their organisation and the inter-organisational entity, participants have multiple, even conflicting accountabilities (Williams, 2002). In order to cope with these, participants need to generate, maintain and steer their own efforts. This resonates with Follett's (1942c) argument that employees "tend to perceive what the situation requires and tend to do [what is needed] whether the boss exerts influence to have it done or not" (1942a, p. 31). Follett assumes thereby a relative high degree of intrinsic motivation and ability of self-steering in groups and views employees as intelligent and active participants instead of passive objects that need to be motivated and steered in order for action to take place.

Hales (1993) suggests three motivational mechanisms which are to generate, maintain and steer effort. These are: (1) rewards, (2) rules, and (3) rationales/ ideologies. Rewards are used to influence behaviour by granting, promising, withholding or threatening to withhold rewards. This mechanism assumes someone with authority is acting to motivate. Rules are used to influence behaviour by persuasion or demonstration. This mechanism assumes that those preparing and deciding on the rules actively consider the consequences in terms of motivation. Rationales or ideologies are used to influence behaviour by moral force or inspiration. This mechanism assumes both the participation by all involved in carrying and

spreading particular views, as well as the type of leadership based on knowledge and experience.

<u>Co-ordinating</u>

Fayol defines co-ordinating as "to harmonize all the activities of a concern so as to facilitate its working, and its success" (1949, p. 103). Follett (1937) understanding co-ordination in a similar way discusses four aspects of coordination: (1) coordination as the reciprocal relating of all the factors in a situation; (2) coordination by direct contact of the responsible people concerned; (3) coordination in the early stages; and (4) coordination as a continuous process. These will be discussed in more detail below.

Reciprocal relating is "the interpenetration of every part by every other part and again by every other part as it has been permeated by all" (Follett, 1937, p. 162). Follett argues that this reciprocal relating should be the goal of all attempts at co-ordination, but recognises that this goal will never be wholly reached. This reciprocal relating cannot be enforced on us. Reciprocal relation also does not require sacrifice on the part of the individual. On the contrary, the individual is essential in contributing to and creating the whole.

Coordination by direct contact of responsible people concerned is the second aspect. Follett argues that co-ordination is needed across the organisation, where activities have consequences for other activities. Direct contact between people involved in these activities is a way to ensure coordination between them. This aspect links to the need for an informal social structure, which supports the interrelating of all the parts of the organisation.

The third aspect is that coordination should start in the early stages. Follett here discusses the development of plans, arguing that throughout the process of planning coordination is needed. When coordination is left until departments have finalised their plans, it is difficult to find agreement on how to harmonise these plans. Thus if integration is the goal, adjusting needs to start in the formation stage, as when plans are finalised, adjustments can only be made through domination, bargaining and compromise.

The fourth aspect is that coordination is a continuous process, it must be done all the time and not only when difficulties arise. She argues that continuous machinery for coordination is needed, whereby the line "from planning to activity and from activity to further planning" is not broken. That is, adjustment is needed constantly. As Follett describes it "the process of adjustment changes the things to be adjusted (…) it is a fallacy to think that we can solve problems – in any final sense (…) what we need is some process for meeting problems" (1937, p. 166).

Follett (1995a) argues that three things will help in coordination: an understanding of integration as a method of settling differences, some system of cross-functioning, and a sense of collective responsibility. "We cannot get rid of our joint obligation by finding the fraction of our own therein, because our own part is not a fraction of the whole, it is in a sense the whole. Wherever you have a joint responsibility, it can only be met jointly" (1995: 197).

In the inter-organisational network literature, coordination is argued to be one of the main reasons for the existence of the inter-organisational networks. This means that in inter-organisational entities generally everything done is indirectly aimed at coordination. This makes it possible to understand why those writing about the management of inter-organisational entities do not discuss coordination much, if at all.

<u>Controlling</u>

Following Fayol, control "consist[s] in verifying whether everything occurs in conformity with the plan adopted, the instructions issued and principles established. It has for its object to point out weaknesses and errors in order to rectify them and prevent recurrence. It operates on everything, things, people, actions" (1949, p. 107).

Hales (1993) discussed four different aspects of control. First, he argues that the focus of control can be on the inputs, the processes, the outputs and/or values (notions of what is important and desirable). Second, Hales argues that the locus of responsibility for control can be given to those involved as individuals (self-control) or as a group (mutual-control) or may be given to people not involved (external-control). This resonates with the differences in view as presented in the other elements of management. Third, Hales argues that control can be personal (direct supervision) or impersonal (distant supervision through rules, procedures, standards and measurement systems). Fourth, Hales argues that control can be formal (through reports[52], appraisals, etc.) or can be informal (through interpersonal contacts).

Fayol argues that control, besides being necessary to rectify and prevent errors to reoccur, can harm as well. Therefore he argues that powers of control must be defined at the outset as precisely as possible, whereby limits of the power are clear. These powers also need constant and sustained attention, to see if the control is doing what it was set to do, that is to indicate weaknesses on time and to strengthen the operations of the organisation.

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[52] Gulick (1937), for example, especially focuses on this form of control, and presents it as a separate element.

Mediating

Mediating is concerned with ensuring that conflicts are dealt with. The literature focusing on inter-organisational network management and the tasks of network managers consistently adds mediating as an element to management. In this literature it is argued that the manager in inter-organisational networks is to play an important role in mediating between the different member organisations to find solutions for conflicts as no authority exists that could decide for these organisations; they need in a shared manner solve their conflict. The manager is seen as the person that could help them find a solution. Some examples follow. The network manager is to mediate between members to ensure they achieve the purpose of the network (Kickert et al., 1997). The alliance manager is to mediate between the partners, especially in the phase in which the alliance is being re-evaluated (Spekman et al., 2000). The joint venture manager is argued to have a diplomat role, accommodating and maintaining commitment from both parent organisations and dealing with contradicting messages from them (Beamish, 1988). In more general management literature this mediating role of management is also recognised. Mintzberg (1975), for example, discussed it as the disturbance handling role, which he later related to the element of doing (Mintzberg, 2009).

4.4.3.3 REFLECTIONS

One of the recurring themes, when discussing the different management elements, was the differing locus of responsibility. From Hales' discussion of control, we can learn that the different management elements can be concerned with the work I do, the work we do and the work they do. The first two are forms of self-management (of the individual and of the group) while the last could be called external management. These different foci did not, however, change which elements were to be included, but did change the focus and the way of approaching these elements. The literature, also that of concerning the management of inter-organisational entities, mainly takes the 'the work they do' approach in describing what the manager needs to do (which is in relation to the work others (need to) do). Follett (see, for example, Follett, 1937; Graham, 1995; Metcalf & Urwick, 1942), often as an exception, talks about management in more inclusive terms as related to 'work we do'. In addition, she also often takes managing as something done by us. The realisation of this is especially important as it resonates with the initial analysis of the data in which the different ways of managing were being discussed interchangeably.

Another issue is that in relation to control it is mentioned that control can be impersonal, that is, it can be exercised through rules, procedures, instructions and principles. Interestingly, however, only Fayol (1949, pp. 53–54) mentions as a side issue of organising, (in his list of managerial duties) the creating of rules and regulation. Thus, although as part of control the existence of rules and regulation is

assumed, the responsibility for creating, assessing and revising these rules is not argued strongly to be part of management.

Management thus includes (1) *planning* (i.e. defining goals as well as which activities will be undertaken, how, when and where), (2) *organising* (i.e. establishing the material and human organisation needed to implement these plans), (3) *generating, maintaining and steering of effort* (i.e. through motivational mechanisms and instructing), (4) *coordinating* (i.e. making sure that each element (planning, organising and generating, maintaining and steering of effort) is coordinated, that these elements are unified together as well as that the results of the effort are coordinated), (5) *controlling* (making sure that weaknesses are noticed and acted upon), and (6) *mediating* (making sure satisfactory solutions are found to conflicts).

4.4.4 *ADMINISTRATION BY ADMINISTRATORS AND ADMINISTRATIVE TEAMS*

4.4.4.1 *ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS AND WORK OF ADMINISTRATIONS*

Administration, however, as a term has in the past and in some organisations still is being used for that what was discussed as governance and management. The title of Fayol's work '*Administration industrielle et générale*' is an example of this. Also, the term administration is used for the government of the USA and more broadly in the name of the academic discipline of public administration. The term is also still common in organisations, where it largely refers to those responsible for keeping records (financial administration, study administration, personnel administration). The term is in, for instance, universities also used to refer to a broader set of functions, which are centrally steered and not handled by the faculties themselves (the central administration).

As mentioned earlier, when starting this work I understood administration as activities concerned with supporting management in routine tasks related to the defining or ensuring implementation whereby existing norms and rules were followed. Administration made me think of procedures and practices. In addition, administration involved a lot of paperwork as well as serving others.

In an article on public administration, Stivers (2003) when considering the root of administration in 'to minister' notes that it has the meanings of "to serve (food and drink); furnishes something necessary or helpful; communicates, makes known; applies something healing; dispenses justice; guides or directs; and executes the duties of an office". In addition, he mentions that in Latin and old French it has had the meaning of the "one who serves (a master) or to act as a servant", but in modern times has acquired the meaning of "to manage or have executive charge of". These different meanings are clearly reflected in my early understanding of administration.

Administration, in the way that I understood it, is discussed very little in the literature and gets very little attention in research. Only a few publications in the field of management studies[53], which are mostly practice-oriented course books, tackle administration in the way I understand it. Administrators and administrative work, seems thus to be very much overlooked. Most interesting is the seeming lack of attention to administration in inter-organisational relations, as I expected those staff hired first to work for an inter-organisational network to be hired to undertake administrative tasks.

4.4.4.2 *ROLES AND TASKS SUGGESTED FOR ADMINISTRATORS AND ADMINISTRATIVE TEAMS*

Three types of activities are central in the literature discussing administration. These are (1) implementing or executing policies, (2) handling of information, (3) assisting, serving and keeping things running. These elements will be discussed in more detail below.

Implementing and executing policies

In order to discuss the literature whereby administration is understood as implementing or executing policy, it is useful to first discuss what a policy is (as opposed to strategy), before discussing the literature. Lewis (2010) suggests the following difference between policy and strategy. A *policy* is concerned with *how* things should be done or should not be done, whereas a strategy is concerned with *what* should be done. A policy can be concerned with direction, in terms of how to solve a particular 'problem' or how action should be taken, as well as behaviour, in terms of how to act. *Strategy* is on the other hand is concerned with direction as to what should be reached, but it does not describe how these are to be reached. Lane (1994) suggests that policy is to make implementation predictable and uniform in order to enhance anticipation and responsibility, while strategy gives space to discretion, flexibility and adaptability while implementing.

In administrative studies or literature on public administration, administration is most often concerned with implementing policies. Lowi (1972) suggests four types of policy in the public sector: *distributive policies* which are concerned with granting of some sort of benefit to a small beneficiary group (through tariffs, subsidies), *constituent policies* which are concerned with setting up of agencies for taking particular action, *regulative policies* which are concerned with regulating the conduct

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[53] There is more extensive literature in management studies on specific aspects of administration (such as book keeping, accounting, personnel administration), and there is also work done on the history of the office. These literatures, however, do not provide much insight into administration in the way I wish to discuss it.

of business, markets, and individuals and aim to protect public welfare and interest, and *redistributive policies* which concern the transfer and redistribution of resources and the allocation of wealth, property, personal or civil rights or some other valued item among different societal groups.

These types of policies are often not differentiated between and thus administration in the public sector is concerned with all action taken (from service given by agencies to regulating and enforcing regulation). This can also be seen in the quote below.

> "(...) policy choices are nothing but a wish without an administration to implement them. An administration is composed of individuals and organizations that are directly involved in the implementation of military, financial, legal or other policy choices (e.g. a professional or citizens' army, militias, tax farmers, the IRS, feudal lords, self-governed provinces and cities, tribes, and lineages). An effective administration has the organizational capacity to execute policy choices by acting on the ruler's behalf (e.g. assembling an army, advancing loans, collecting taxes, or dispensing justice), making policy choices publically known, monitoring behavior, and punishing deviators. Among its other tasks, an administration is a means to retaliate against those refusing to comply with policy choices." (Greif, 2007, p. 1)

The way in which policies should be implemented, in terms of organising administration has been discussed widely. Weber (1978) extensively describes the bureaucratic organisation of administration. This bureaucratic apparatus is concerned with the implementation of decisions, whereby clear rules and procedures are developed to aid the implementation of these decisions.

> "The fully developed bureaucratic ap1paratus compares with other organisations exactly as does the machine with the non-mechanical modes of production. Precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs – these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic administration, and especially in its monocratic form." (Weber, 1978, pp. 973–974)

At the end of the 20th century, this bureaucratic way of organising administration was challenged by suggestions of organising administration differently, along ways in which companies where managed, the management approach or new public management. Lane (1994), when comparing the administration approach (rule-based organising) and the management approach (goal-oriented organising) to administration, argues that some advantages in terms of efficiency and cost reduction may be achieved, but this would come with a price in terms of, for example, procedural instability, neglect of means, loss of tenure. Thus, the implementation of

decisions differs as not the criteria of the decisions are given to be implemented, but the goals to be reached with freedom to choose how this is to be implemented.

<u>Handling information</u>

In order to understand administration as handling of information we need to make clear what information is and how it differs from data and knowledge as well as what type of information is handled when we talk about administration. Let us start by drawing a distinction between data, information and knowledge. *Data* refers to recorded traces (words and numbers) about objects, people, events, whereas *information* refers interpretation of this data in a "useful context for specific end users, at a specific point in time, for a specific purpose and presented in a specific format" (Ferreira, Erasmus, & Groenewald, 2010, p. 4). Data is something that resides in a system or on a paper, information resides in the consciousness of a human being. It is the state of knowing something about something. *Knowledge* refers to information, which has been converted into meaningful interpretations of the environment or a general state of affairs.

Administration may consider both the handling of information as well as data. That is, it is also concerned with collecting data, checking the quality of the data, handling of the data and converting data into information. It is important to note that here administration is linked to the work of a clerk as a person who works in an office performing such tasks as keeping records, attending to correspondence, or filing[54].

Ferreira, Rasmus and Groenewald (2010, p. 3) define administrative management for instance as "the processes and resources required to collect, manipulate, maintain, protect and retrieve information used in an organisation. It includes storage and release of information by means of computerised management information systems, as well as bookkeeping, cost accounting, archive control and general office organisation".

It is important to note further that it has become increasingly more difficult to define what administration is in the sense of handling information as in modern times large groups of people also handle information in production. It thus becomes necessary to define more clearly what information is then 'administrative information'.

I suggest that administration could be seen as concerned with information collected, stored, communicated, etc., in order to be able to do four things:

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[54] This links to the work done on the rise of the office, bureaucracy, secretaries and assistants.

(1) execute policies: for example, paying salaries (employee, bank account, income, hours worked, etc.), paying of bills (deliveries, contracts, bank account, etc.), quality insurance (claims made, etc.);

(2) evaluate goal attainment: for example, records of implementation decisions by management, records of produced items (quantity/quality), records of costs, records of customer satisfaction;

(3) evaluate conformance to policy: for example, records of non-conformance and actions taken, records of grievances in relation to unclear policies; and

(4) inform internal and external stakeholders and general public: for example, (potential) customers about product details, quality standards.

Note that policies may commonly exist in relation to the handling of information as it concerns stable and repetitive aspects of work processes, but they need not to. In addition, norms and common ways of handling information are included in the training of administrative professionals, which compensates for the potential lack of policies in organisations.

Assisting or serving

In the last part of definition of administration by Ferreira et al. (2010) presented earlier, they switch from administration as handling of information, to administration as assisting or serving. This they do when they include the general office organisation. This is also common in other texts concerning administration which view administration as assisting or serving.

The basic starting point in this literature is that administration means to serve or assist a person or unit in all it needs, which means that all kinds of activities are included from implementing of policies and handling of information, to obtaining facilities, services and materials as required, marketing, organising travel, etc.

The assisting or serving task which has not yet been discussed as part of one of the previous tasks is that of arranging all that is needed for the work. This links to the organising task of management, whereby management may be deciding and planning what is needed for the organisation. Then making sure that it is actually available when it is needed is called administration.

This arranging of the means needed to do the work or take action is central and impacts on the work directly as it will make the effectiveness and efficiency of the work itself higher or lower.

4.4.4.3   *REFLECTIONS*

In relation to administration, one of the most interesting observations is the lack of attention given to it. Based on the literature discussed, administration includes (1) *implementing and executing policies,* (2) *handling of information* (i.e. collecting, manipulating, maintaining, protecting and retrieving information needed for governance and/or management),and (3) *arranging* the means needed to operate.

The discussion of these different elements makes clear the importance of administration. As administration is linked to and supportive of governance and management, managers and governors will notice its importance most clearly. This was also noticed in the initial analysis of the cases. Comments about the administration were frequently made. In those cases that had very experienced administrators, interviewees stressed the importance of a good administrator as well as happiness or luck having such good administrative support. In cases with less experienced administrators, interviewees expressed agony with the immense administrative burden.

4.4.5   HOW TO BRING GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION TOGETHER?

The initial definitions of the concepts of governance, management and administration created based on the literature discussed overlap to a large extent[55]. In part the overlap is integral in the concepts, for example governance and management are both seen as deciding about what happens and how in an organisation, whereby governance is often seen as concerned with the 'final' decisions while management is often concerned with the preparation and implementation of these 'final' decisions. The focus on the tasks of governors, managers and administrators also caused more overlap between the concepts, because those tasks that are undertaken by the different individuals or groups are included in the different concepts.

In order to bring governance, management and administration together into one conceptual framework, there is a need to choose which concept the overlapping elements fit best with. In addition, there is a need to clarify how the different concepts, after having been clarified, are linked to one another. The insight into how the concepts could be clarified and linked together only came later on in the research process. This means that this work will also only be presented in chapter six[56]. In

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[55] These were as follows. Governance includes framing, controlling, boundary spanning, and mitigating conflict. Management includes planning, organising, generating, maintaining and steering of effort, coordinating, controlling, and mediating. Administration includes implementing and executing policies, handling of information, and arranging

[56] Those readers wishing to understand how these concepts are clarified and linked are thus advised to turn to chapter 6, before reading chapter 5.

chapter six I present and discuss the overlap of the concepts. In addition, I present the choices in relation to the overlap, clarifying the different concepts. Finally, I present how governance, management and administration are linked.

4.5 REFLECTING ON PHASE THREE AND LOOKING AHEAD

In this phase of gaining understanding, my instinct said that governance, management and administration ought to be combined, and that they are linked in important ways. I was, however, unable to conceptualise it such that the governance, management and administration concepts formed a coherent whole which was disconnected from the positions. This frustrated me as well as made me wonder how I could create a framework combining the concepts, preventing three parallel stories in the thesis: one about governance focusing on governance boards, one on management focusing on the management team and one on administration focusing on the administrators in the cases. I saw governance boards managing and administrators governing, but I could not find theoretical tools to present this. This created a period in which I got stuck, unable to get forward.

It was at this point that I read the book '*Meta-organizations*' by Ahrne and Brunsson (2008). This book with its way of conceptualising helped me to clarify at least one part of my conceptual puzzle – it helped me see how consortia fitted into a larger set of organisations. This was a great way out of the feeling of being stuck, though actually it just made me avoid working on creating furtherconceptual tools for understanding governance, management and administration.

The next chapter will discuss the phase of gaining understanding in which meta-organisation as a concept was found and helped to clarify some of the structural issues in relation to the consortia. The book also made me take a side step away from governance, management and administration. I will return to governance, management and administration after this phase in which I concentrated on meta-organisation theory

5 GAINING UNDERSTANDING 4: FINDING META-ORGANISATION THEORY

Personal overview of phase four

This new phase of gaining understanding was stimulated by and started by reading the work *Meta-organisations* by Ahrne and Brunsson (2008). Most importantly, the book gave me a language to talk about inter-organisational phenomena I had been studying in far more direct and tangible ways. As mentioned in section 2.6, although the literature consisted of all kinds of conceptual tools to make distinctions between inter-organisational networks, there was no term that would specify exactly what I was interested in, which I thought to be a broader phenomenon than consortia alone.

The phenomena I had been describing in very complex ways[57] now had a name. It also had been conceptualised in a way that resonated fully with what I had intuitively tried to do but had not succeeded in. There, however, were some conceptual issues that I thought were not developed far enough or which I thought needed further sharpening.

Because of the book I became interested in understanding the concept of power better. Initially I saw this as a possible way to help clarify the decision-making processes and the differences related to governance, management and administration in these organisations compared to more hierarchically organised organisations. Then, however, I became so fascinated about the concept that I decided it should be the main focus of the thesis. Temporarily, I cut the work I had done on governance, management and administration out of my thesis. I worked for a while, but then realised that Jeff (my supervisor) was right when he said that this was not a good idea. This, however, created somewhat of a feeling of crisis, as I had given up the concepts of governance, management and administration, the question was how to go on.

As will become clear in the next phase, this side step was important, because the insights I gained later helped clarifying and creating the conceptual framework of governance, management and administration. I have, however, decided not to present a review on the power literature I was working during this period as this would be too much of a side step. In the conclusion chapter of the thesis, I will, however, address how Göhler's (2000, 2009) concept of power can help in

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[57] See 3.6 for an example.

further developing an understanding of the different relationships in meta-organisations in the concluding chapter.

Timeline

2011   *- Reading the book Meta-organizations*

- Writing down the ideas as to other elements that differentiate meta-organisations from other organisations

- Including meta-organisation into the thesis

- The stream of thoughts initiated by the concept of meta-organisation pointed at a need for understanding power better

- Reading on power and writing about power

- Decision to fully change focus of thesis in the direction of theorising power and meta-organisations

- Re-analysing of some of the data

- Preparing and teaching a course on inter-organisational relations

- Crisis – what am I doing, where is this going, is there never an end to this, what should this thesis tackle?

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the concept of meta-organisation, created by Ahrne and Brunsson (2008). This concept replaces the concept of inter-organisational network in this thesis. As discussed in section 2.4, I was interested in inter-organisational networks from a network-as-unit approach. What I had not realised before reading the book, *Meta-organizations*, was that this meant that I looked at inter-organisational collaboration from an organisational perspective. This is a novel approach both in the field of inter-organisational relations and in the field of organisation studies. In the field of inter-organisational relations, organisational economic, network and institutional perspectives are most common (which becomes clear from the review article by Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011; and the perspectives presented in *The Oxford Handbook of Inter-Organizational Relations* edited by Cropper et al., 2008c). This is also true when the focus is on whole networks (such as Provan et al., 2007) or on goal-directed networks (such as Provan & Kenis, 2008)[58]. The organisation perspective differs in its focus from the network and institutional perspectives; the main focus in the organisational perspective is on decided social order (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) while the focus in the network and

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[58] The formation process has, for example, been studied extensively (see, for example, Doz, Olk, & Ring, 2000; Ebers, 1997; Ring, Doz, & Olk, 2005; Ring & Van De Ven, 1994; Sakakibara, 2002).

institutional perspectives is on emergent social order (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011). The approach is also novel in organisation studies, as here inter-organisational relations have been treated mainly as the study of the environment of organisations (relying on perspectives such as transaction cost theory, resource-based view, resource dependency theory and stakeholder theory). The starting point for these perspectives is the participating organisation, resulting in mainly ego-centric or dyadic perspectives on the inter-organisational relations (Provan et al., 2007; Shenkar & Reuer, 2006).

The book by Ahrne and Brunsson (2008) is, thus, an important step in developing an organisational perspective, which I, without clearly noticing, had had on inter-organisational relations. The work by Ahrne and Brunsson therefore provided me with tools for discussing Network of Excellence consortia as organisations. Network of Excellence consortia could be fruitfully studied from other perspectives, viewing them as expert networks, as scientific organisations, as ICT-enabled organisations, as social networks, or as an outcome of a political process, for example. The idea behind the whole study, however, was to understand the way in which the organisation steers itself. It was for this reason that reading the book and finding meta-organisation theory was such a revelation.

In this chapter I will briefly present the outline of the theory, after which I will present my critique of the theory as developed and show the shortcomings of the theory in its current state. In order to overcome the shortcomings of the theory I suggest adding a further dimension to the theory. I present this new dimension as well as the conditions specific to meta-organisations which become visible through this dimension. I claim that this new dimension creates a more complete theory and therefore strengthens the usability of the theory.

In addition to the theory of meta-organisation, the concept of power played a central role in this phase of gaining understanding. Although it is a crucial concept in gaining a better understanding of dynamics in meta-organisations, I have decided not to focus on power. In the concluding chapter I will, however, discuss some of the ideas in relation to power which have been developing during this time period.

5.2 META-ORGANISATION

5.2.1 A SHORT OUTLINE OF META-ORGANISATION THEORY

Meta-organisations, defined by Ahrne and Brunsson (2008), are associations which have other organisations as their members. They argue that meta-organisations differ from other organisations, due to the fact that the members are organisations.

"The members of meta-organizations may be states, firms, or associations. The members have considerable autonomy. They have applied for membership by choice and they are free to leave at any time. They cannot be forced to become members or to be purchased. And as members they keep most of their autonomy and identity as independent organizations. Furthermore, in meta-organizations, as is typical for associations, members are equals."

Their theory of meta-organisation is based on two fundamental arguments. First, based on standard organisation theory, they argue that

"organization makes a difference. It matters whether or not human interaction and communication are arranged under a formal organization. When meta-organizations are formed, organizations create a new order amongst themselves. If the included organizations have previously been in contact; they have been involved in an order other than that offered by a formal organization. They have, in organization theory terms, constituted an environment for each other" (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008, p. 43).

Second, they argue that

"it is important to differentiate between the individual and the organization. Meta-organizations work under different conditions than other organizations because their members are organizations rather than individuals" (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008, p. 43) .

In relation to the first argument they make two assertions[59]. The first assertion they make consists of a list of fundamental differences between individual and organisation. These are:

   a) "Organizations have their own capacity and access to their own resources and their own members. (...)
   b) Organizations, in contrast to individuals, can create and shape organizations. (...)
   c) Organizations do not age or die in the same way individuals do and their life spans are more difficult to predict. (...)
   d) It is not possible to meet with an organization. (...)

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[59] Ahrne and Brunsson (2005, 2008) use the term assertion rather than assumption or proposition. I have decided to use this same term in this thesis. I prefer assertion over assumption as assertion indicates a more firmly argued for statement or declaration. The term proposition could have been used as well, but also here assertion is preferred as it is used to form the basis on which propositions in relation to possible conditions are made.

e) Organizations have no personal sphere." (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008, pp. 142–143)

The second assertion they make is that "organizations are more differentiated than individuals" (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008, p. 144). They argue that organisations are often seen as fundamentally different based on their size, their form, their purpose, their resources, their structures, and their members and that this difference is essential for their survival.

The third assertion which they add to their theory is linked to their second argument and reads that "there is a fundamental similarity between a meta-organization and its members: they are all organizations". (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008, p. 145).

5.2.2   *THE CONCEPT OF META-ORGANISATION*

As becomes clear from the outline of the theory of meta-organisation above, a meta-organisation is a formal organisation of organisations. This means the following.

Firstly, meta-organisations are formal[60] organisations. The essential elements of formal organisation, according to Blau and Scott, are:

1. Designed and formally established status structure that defines the relation between the members.
2. Designed and formalised goals to be achieved.
3. Designed and formalised rules that the members of the organisation are expected to follow (Blau & Scott, 1963, p. 5).

Secondly, meta-organisations have members; they thus are an association. In organisation literature, formal organisations can be divided into three major types (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008; Mintzberg et al., 2005): (1) public organisations – governments or public organisations; (2) private (economic) organisations – businesses; and (3) social (cooperative) organisations - associations. Each type has different ownership structures. Public organisations are owned collectively, by the public. Businesses are owned privately, by individuals or shareholders. Associations however differ; they can be member-owned (as is the case of meta-organisations) or non-owned (such as Greenpeace). Mintzberg et al. (2005) link each type of organisation to a specific sector (public, private, third/social). Although this may be functional for most, I think this is misleading in the case of meta-organisations as these types can be found in all sectors and even across sectors.

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[60] Formal is here understood as agreed upon and confirmed, often in written form (such as a signed contract, agreement or memorandum of understanding).

Thirdly, meta-organisations are a specific type of association as they only have organisations as their members. They differ from associations with individual members as well as associations with mixed members, as meta-organisations only have other organisations as their members. This is the main pillar on which Arhne and Brunsson built meta-organisation theory.

The concept of meta-organisation refers to a formal organisation with multiple member organisations (three or more members) and thus excludes formal organisations with two members. Although Ahrne and Brunsson do not explicitly discuss this, the examples presented by them all consist of multiple organisations. As has been discussed earlier in the chapter on inter-organisational literature, multiple organisations create a different nature of collaboration than two organisations do, for example, due to the generalised social exchange (see Das & Teng, 2002). I therefore wish to add this condition more explicitly into the definition of meta-organisation.

Taking all aspects together, a meta-organisation is thus an established and designed network of social relations between multiple organisations which is owned by the member organisations collectively and have defined a status structure, goals to be achieved and a formalised set of rules that the members of the organisation are expected to follow.

5.2.3   *THE CONCEPT OF META-ORGANISATION IN THE RESEARCH LITERATURE*

The literature review as presented in chapter three focused on finding the literature which discussed what Arhne and Brunsson call meta-organisations. Although not all literature discussed in chapter three explicitly focuses on this specific type, the key insights from the literature presented also apply to meta-organisations.

When looking at the frameworks presented in chapter 3, meta-organisations are the 'bureaucratic networks' in Grandori and Soda's framework (1995). Meta-organisations are, for example, also whole networks as reviewed in the work of Provan et al. (2007), many of the collaborative service provision networks reviewed by Sandfort and Milward (2008), some of the voluntary and community sector partnerships reviewed by Mandell and Keast (2008), some of the supply networks identified by Harland, Lamming, Zheng and Johnsen (2001). As well as some of the international institutions reviewed by Koremenos, Lipson and Snidal (2001). In these studies we can make a distinction between (1) studies that focus on centralised collaborations, those with a mission close to or aiming at serving one of the member

organisations, and (2) studies that focus on parity-based collaborations, which have a shared mission[61].

Centralised collaborations are mainly addressed in public sector organisation or public administration studies (such as Kickert et al., 1997; and van Bueren, Klijn, & Koppenjan, 2003). In these studies a public sector organisation is the 'owner' of the mission, while the other members are invited to contribute to reaching this mission. These studies deal with similar questions and issues as those addressed in business studies focusing on centralised collaboration, such as supply networks discussed by Gadde, Håkansson and Persson (2010). A key problem identified by researchers is how to manage these networks, such as, for example, by Klijn (2008b). This includes issues of how to find a balance between capabilities, needs, wishes and demands from the central member and the other members and how to create a situation in which all members take their responsibility, are motivated to contribute and wish to remain a member of the network. The literature on management of the centralised collaborations thus assumes the representative of the central organisation to be the manager of the meta-organisation.

The literature which focuses on parity-based collaborations also struggles with the question of how to manage the collaboration (Beech & Huxham, 2003; Huxham & Vangen, 2000a, 2000b, 2005; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). This stream of research, however, focuses more on questions of how to cope with the complexity created by the parity structure, and the tensions created by the complexity which needs to be dealt with in practice.

5.3 CRITIQUE ON THE EXISTING META-ORGANISATION THEORY

Ahrne and Brunsson (2005, 2008) argue that the essential elements of organisations are that organisations have (1) members, (2) a hierarchy, (3) autonomy, and (4) a constitution. Organisations, they argue, "distinguish between those who belong to the organisation and those who do not" (2008, p. 45). Based on March and Simon's classic book *Organizations* from 1958 they claim that members make a difference – members are necessary if the organisation is to exist and to act, and they to some extent determine what organisations do. In addition, Ahrne and Brunsson (2005, p. 431) continue, "members also represent constraints: they cannot be made to do anything, and they have other things to do besides participating in the organization".

The members in meta-organisations are organisations, rather than individuals. This difference means that they "work under different conditions than other organizations"

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[61] As Grandori and Soda (1995) do in their review of inter-organisational firms.

(2008, p. 43).The differences in condition Ahrne and Brunsson base on the assertions they make about the differences between individuals and organisations.

> "We trace the differences between meta-organisations and individual-based organizations back to differences between organization and human beings. That there are such differences may seem obvious, but we assert that some of them are particularly important in the context of the differences between organizations and meta-organizations" (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2005, p. 432).

This starting point creates, however, one serious problem. Ahrne and Brunsson do not distinguish between hierarchical membership (such as employees and subsidiaries) and constitutional membership (such as individual members of associations and organisational members of meta-organisations). The concept 'members' in firms and conglomerates refers to individuals and/or organisations, contractually linked in a hierarchical manner. They operate in a system whereby formal authority makes the influence of most members relatively small, while for a smaller amount of other members higher on the hierarchical ladder the influence gets larger. In contrast, the concept of 'members' in associations and meta-organisations refers to the 'owners' of the organisation, the individuals or organisations which constitutionally form the organisation. The members, although possibly needing to follow rules collectively decided upon in the organisation, stay independent and autonomous; they can leave the organisation at will. In addition to the constitutional membership, associations and meta-organisations also have hierarchical membership; they all have employees or participants hierarchically forming the agent of the meta-organisation and they can also have daughter organisations, e.g. subsidiaries.

The United Nations (UN) has, for example, a large number of employees and also quite a large number of sub-organisations such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), all daughter organisations of UN. These daughter organisations are not constitutional members of the UN, but are contractually linked in a hierarchical manner. With the assertions made by Ahrne and Brunsson (2005, 2008) which differentiate individual and organisation, no distinction can actually be made between a firm[62] and an

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[62] Although only firm is mentioned, this also refers to (semi-)public organisations or state-owned companies with only employees.

association (both only individual members) or between a conglomerate[63] and a meta-organisation (both individual and organisational members).

It is important to point out, however, that the conditions Ahrne and Brunsson hypothesise are in many ways influenced by the fact that they studied organisations with constitutional members. They only have not made this explicit in their theory. In order to overcome this problem and work on creating a better basis for meta-organisational theory, we need additional assertions which create a clear difference between organisations which have constitutional membership and those organisations that do not.

Table 9   Types of formal organisations

	Hierarchical membership	**Constitutional membership**
Organisational members	Conglomerate	Meta-organisation
Individual members	Firm	Association

Table 9 shows how the two dimensions discussed earlier – constitutional membership or not, and organisations or individuals as members – create a four-field of formal organisations. The assertions and conditions created by constitutional membership will be presented and discussed before reviewing the assertions and conditions developed by Ahrne and Brunsson based on the difference between individual and organisation.

Three assertions in relation to constitutional membership will be presented in the next section. The first assertion is that organisations with constitutional membership have closed boundaries instead of open boundaries. The second assertion is that organisations with constitutional membership have low stratification of their constitutional membership. The third and last assertion is that organisations with constitutional membership have the potential to utilise indirect resources, the resources of their members, besides the possibility of utilising direct resources. These assertions as well as the conditions they imply will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

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[63] Conglomerate in this text will also refer to (semi-)public organisations with daughter organisations, such as state-owned companies.

5.4 THE NEW DIMENSION TO META-ORGANISATION THEORY: CONSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP

In relation to constitutional membership I have considered three assertions to be of importance to spell out in order to provide meta-organisation theory with a more sound basis. The presentation relies heavily on the insights presented by Ahrne and Brunsson (2005; 2008). Although they do not develop nor make explicit assertions related to constitutional membership, their work does give a lot of insights supporting the assertions. In addition, the section relies on the work of Gulati, Puranam and Tushman (2012)[64] as the two of the assertions follow from the dimensions discussed in their work. Each of the three assertions concerning constitutional membership will be briefly introduced below and the consequences of or the conditions created by these assertions will be discussed.

5.4.1 CLOSED (MEMBERSHIP) BOUNDARIES

The term closed boundaries as used by Gulati et al. (2012) means that membership of the organisation is regulated, that decisions are made as to who belongs to the organisation and who does not. The choice of members is thus seen as clearly demarcating the organisation in terms of who is inside and those outside. The boundary is closed[65], as acceptance of new members demands a decision by the organisation. Boundaries are thus not approached as a domain of study (such as suggested by Heracleous, 2004; Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005), though the conditions, as will be hypothesised, could be seen as linking to the different conceptions of

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[64] I have two different critiques of the article by Gulati et al. (2012). First, and this is most important for understanding quotes used and reference made to this work, Gulati et al. use the term 'meta-organisation' to refer to networks of individuals and/or organisations with a system-level goal. Their use of the term meta-organisation I find misleading and unfortunate as this term does not refer to an organisation of organisations, it does not even specifically refer to an organisation. It refers at large to networks. The term goal-directed network (Kilduff & Tsai, 2003) would have been far better suited to their concept. The concept which comes closest to what is being discussed in this chapter as organisations with constitutional membership is what Gulati et al. call 'closed community' but notice that this includes both associations of individuals and of organisations. Second, Gulati et al. address many similar issues discussed at length by Ahrne and Brunsson (2005; 2008), Gulati et al. have, however, failed to reference the work of Ahrne and Brunsson on meta-organisations. This is surprising, especially because they use the term meta-organisation which has been little used in the literature beyond the literature explicitly building on the work of Ahrne and Brunsson.

[65] The word closed is intentionally chosen to distinguish from an open boundary. The closed boundary can be compared to a locked and guarded gate (as Ahrne, 1994 does). Only constitutional members have the key and may decide to let people in. In order to get a key, one needs to become a constitutional member. Other members as well as non-members may get access to the organisation following a decision by the constitutional members, but these other members and non-members cannot chose to let others in.

organisational boundaries as identified by Santos and Eisenhardt (2005): efficiency, power, competence, and identity.

Constitutional membership means that those who are members constitute the organisation; members collectively own the organisation; each member has a say over the organisation. In order to become a constitutional member, however, one needs to have been accepted. This creates a boundary between members and non-members, which can only be crossed after a decision by the members. This leads to the first assertion to be added to meta-organisation theory: *Organisations with constitutional membership have closed (membership) boundaries.*

The decision on membership in organisations with constitutional membership is combined with the question of ownership, because each member has a say in the organisation. This means that if new members are accepted, the power of existing members' vote reduces and thus their ownership over the organisation diminishes. This effect is, however, less strong the more members have already been accepted. This may mean that new members are accepted more easily if there is already a large number of existing members, than when there is a small number of existing members.

Closed boundaries demand a system[66] is put in place for approving/disapproving membership applications, and that criteria need to have been specified for membership (Gulati et al., 2012). Meta-organisations as well as associations have a constitution (which may also be called differently (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) such as agreement, treaty, memorandum or articles), which defines its most important boundaries including these issues concerning membership.

The closed boundaries give the organisation "the right to enforce compliance with [its] commands and rules" (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008, p. 46). This limits the autonomy of the members. The constitutional members, as the collective owners of the organisation, are, however, to decide and thus able to influence the commands and rules of the organisation. In addition, if a constitutional member is unable to reconcile itself with the commands or rules of the organisation, it will always have the right to leave the organisation and thereby escape from the obligation to comply with the commands and rules of the organisation (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).

In addition, the closed boundaries and the system of member selection give the member the possibility to carry the label 'member of', or as Ahrne and Brunsson (2008, p. 94) describe it, "when an organization joins a meta-organization, it acquires

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[66] System is understood as a combination of rules, processes and structures.

a last name (…)". This so called last name can be used by members to differentiate themselves from non-members as well as pointing out similarities members have with the other members (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). Belonging to the meta-organisation often plays a positive role such as giving the member higher esteem, a particular image, or a quality insurance label (see for a diverse set of examples of positive effects Ahrne and Brunsson, 2008, chapter 5). Thus, closed boundaries "provide a basis for members' identification with the collective and the collective's differentiation from others" (Gulati et al., 2012, p. 576). On the other hand, belonging to the meta-organisation can also have negative consequences. The constitutional membership may lock the member into a particular corner, the member may get stigmatised and the actions and opinions of the organisation may damage the image of the member. In these situations the member may choose to leave the organisation or may choose to be silent about its membership.

Gulati et al. (2012) also argue that closed boundaries are associated with a smaller number of members especially when compared with structures utilising open boundaries. Although this may be true, I am not sure if this is directly related to the closed boundaries. Ahrne and Brunsson (2008) for instance argue when discussing the difference between individual and organisation members that having only a few organisation members is often enough for the meta-organisation to be able to be effective. This is because the resources of the organisations are larger than those of individuals. However, Ahrne and Brunsson also argue that closed boundaries may make recruitment more difficult as the organisations need to be willing to accept the loss of autonomy linked to membership.

In relation to closed boundaries Gulati et al. (2012, p. 577) furthermore argue "closed boundaries typically go hand in hand with an explicit and, more importantly, tailored definition of tasks and of relationships to other members. Each member's specific role in the meta-organisation is negotiated from the start, and the duration and timing of exit is also negotiated." Although this may be true for the range of goal-directed networks Gulati et al. discuss, I am not convinced that this is typically the case for meta-organisations, especially when reviewing the variety of meta-organisations discussed by Ahrne and Brunsson (2008).

Finally, Gulati et al. (2012, p. 577) claim that closed boundaries are associated with "active management of members' diversity in order to facilitate inter-organisational coordination". This, however, seems not to be the case in meta-organisations which build more on similarities between member organisations than diversity. Ahrne and Brunsson (2008, p. 164), for example, compare networks and meta-organisations claiming that "most networks are based on diversity (…) [while in] most meta-organisations (…) the members take similarities as their starting point." This would indicate that the management of member's diversity in terms of abilities and skills,

for example, through the tailored definition of tasks discussed above, would be a condition specifically found in goal-directed networks and not (necessarily) in meta-organisations.

5.4.2 LOW STRATIFICATION

As previously mentioned in relation to closed boundaries, constitutional membership means that membership and ownership is combined. As the constitutional members constitute the organisation, normally not many different statuses exist beyond full and associate member. As all types of members need to be defined in the constitution of the organisation, and as for each member type their rights and obligations need to be specified, it can be expected to be rather difficult to have a large number of membership types. Furthermore, as the organisation needs to recruit and/or make sure it retains members, the membership options need to be clear and meaningful to make it possible for the members to identify with the organisation and be willing to become a member (Gulati et al., 2012). These reasons make it less likely for an organisation with constitutional members to differentiate between members and if the organisation does differentiate between members it can be expected that only a very limited number of membership types exist. The second assertion therefore reads that *organisations with constitutional membership have low membership stratification*.

Clarity on the division of votes is necessary in order for the members to be able to make collective decisions. A 'one member one vote' is a common way of arriving at collective decisions in associations. This 'one member one vote' division does not differentiate between members; giving all members the same rights. As organisations are, however, much more differentiated than individuals (in terms of power, resources, influence, etc.) equality is likely to be questioned (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). Systems with some internal levels of decision-making authority or a division of votes based on other criteria, such as the size of the member organisation, contribution made to the meta-organisation or the duration of membership, may be considered. Not all decisions are as important to all members and not all decisions will affect all members in an equal manner, this can also cause disagreements and conflicts. As many different views are possible to estimate the importance of a member for the meta-organisation or the members, we can expect that even when the division of votes has been set, this division will be a continuous potential source of disagreement and conflict in meta-organisations (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).

Furthermore, Gulati et al. (2012) discuss the consequences of low stratification at length. They claim that "a low degree of stratification is likely to support the emergence of a 'community of equals' in which members are simultaneously principals and agents of the collective. (...). More egalitarian designs are associated with heterarchical coordination mechanisms whereby all members have similar or

overlapping rights and responsibilities to promote alignment of activities within the collective. This often involves extensive multilateral negotiations and consensus-building efforts. Alternatively, supervisory tasks may be temporarily assigned to particular members, depending on the capabilities and the specific tasks in question" (2012, p. 578). In addition to expecting that low stratification has an influence on the coordination mechanisms used, Gulati et al. also expect there to be a consequence related to motivation. They claim that "low stratification contexts enhance member's sense of ownership of and commitment to the meta-organization[67]. This may, however, also discourage cospecialization and make it more difficult and time consuming to arrive at community-level decisions and resolve conflicts." (2012, p. 579).

The claims made by Gulati et al. (2012) do not, however, all apply to meta-organisations in the same way. As can be read from the quotes above, the members referred to are more likely to be members of an association or network which has individuals as members. This becomes clearer when they assume membership, ownership and participation to be fully overlapping which means they do not differentiate between the organisation of the ownership and the organisation of activities. In meta-organisations, however, the organisation of ownership, for example, by having a governance board with a system of one vote per member organisation does not as such limit the way of organising the meta-organisational activities. Meta-organisations can, for example, have a mixture of structures as can be seen when looking at FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) which has an hierarchical structure for the organising of activities undertaken by direct resources within the FIFA administration, while having a more heterarchical structure in the standing committees with a selection of people from the member organisations or a more expert type of structure in the ethics committee.

In addition one can expect that the consequences of low stratification in meta-organisations related to the membership/ownership decisions structure are valid on community, collective, and ownership levels, but may not be valid for the organisation of activities.

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[67] It is important to remember while reading these quotes that Gulati et al. (2012) do not make a distinction between individual and organisations as members and thus the reference in this quote refers to any network (of individuals or organisations) whereby the network members are not linked via a framework of formal authority associated with employment contracts but whereby the network does have a system-level goal.

5.4.3 DIRECT AND INDIRECT RESOURCES

One important aspect of constitutional membership is that the members can contribute to the organisation beyond the input given as members (owners). This contribution of members (as participants) may be very simple, such as paying a membership fee, or much more complex such as participating in the meta-organisation's activities and thus contributing resources. In a national sports association, for example, the clubs that are members of the organisation may provide the organisation with its experts to create new game rules, train referees, or work out an acquisition plan. It also may provide the organisation with a space to meet, tools or other resources. These different resources provided by the members will be called *indirect resources*. The organisation itself may also, utilising membership fees or external funding, have bought or hired resources such as office space, personnel to take care of organising meetings, managing projects, administering meta-organisational issues, or tools/materials needed. These will be referred to as *direct resources*. As an organisation with constitutional members potentially can utilise both resources, the third assertion in relation to constitutional membership is formulated as follows: *organisations with constitutional members can utilise direct and/or indirect resources*.

That organisations with constitutional members would utilise indirect resources was taken for granted by Ahrne and Brunsson (2005, 2008)as well as Gulati et al. (2012). Ahrne and Brunsson (2008, p. 142), for example, claim that "members of meta-organisations can supply it with a great capacity for action and access to resources right from the start", that "meta-organisations become strongly dependent on their members in order to obtain resources, and many members have more resources than the meta-organisation, making it difficult to exclude members", and that "because it is the member organisations that account for capacity for action, it is the members rather than the meta-organisation that can be successful". In addition, Gulati et al. (2012, p. 578) claim that a low stratification would support the emergence of "a 'community of equals' in which members are simultaneously principals and agents of the collective". All these claims can be correct only when the resources of the members are to be utilised. In addition, when the meta-organisation utilises the indirect resources and the contribution given by members is the only capacity for action, the meta-organisation becomes dependent on its members.

The utilising of direct resources, however, is a way of making the resource-base of the organisation more certain, it gives the organisation a capacity for action non-dependent on the ability and willingness of the member organisations to contribute resources. Ahrne and Brunsson, for example, claim that "together with resource concentration, constitutions give organisations a "life of their own" and a certain stability" (2008, p. 48).

Organisations which utilise both indirect and direct human resources might need to deal with tensions and conflicts, which can be expected between those working directly for the meta-organisation and those working indirectly for the meta-organisation, especially due to a different status as well as a different relation with the organisation.

5.4.4 *CONCLUDING CONSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP*

Constitutional membership, I have argued, makes a difference and is important for understanding the meta-organisation. Having constitutional members leads the organisation to have closed boundaries, which in turn means the organisation needs a system for accepting members and it means that the organisation can enforce commands and rules upon the members. Having constitutional members also leads to low stratification among members in terms of ownership structure, which in turn means that the decision-making on community, collective, or ownership level involves extensive multilateral negotiations and consensus-building efforts. Finally, having constitutional members also leads to the possibility of utilising indirect and/or direct resources, which have different consequences.

The assertions presented are valid for organisations with constitutional members which are individuals as is the case in associations and for those with organisations as members as is the case in meta-organisations.

In the next section, I focus on the difference between organisational and individual members. The original meta-organisation theory by Ahrne and Brunsson was created on assertions related to this difference. I take this work as the starting point. The aim is to review the assertions and to evaluate which assertions as well as hypothesised conditions actually distinguish between associations and meta-organisations. Those which clearly do will be included into the list of assertions and hypothesised conditions at the end of the chapter.

5.5 THE EXISTING DIMENSION OF META-ORGANISATION THEORY REVIEWED: ORGANISATIONS AS MEMBERS

Meta-organisations not only differ from other organisations because they have constitutional members, they also differ as the members are organisations and not individuals. This dimension has been extensively discussed by Ahrne and Brunsson (2008) and although no explicit difference was conceptually made between constitutional members and members of the work organisation, the discussion of their assertions and the conditions are often combined with non-explicit assertions of constitutional members. In this section, I present and discuss the assertions made by Ahrne and Brunsson (2008) and the conditions they hypothesise in relation to the assertions. Conclusions are drawn on the inclusion of the assertions and the link between these and the ones drawn based on constitutional membership.

5.5.1   FIVE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ORGANISATION AND INDIVIDUAL

The first assertion of Ahrne and Brunsson consists of a list of differences between individual and organisation as was presented in the brief outline of meta-organisation theory earlier in this chapter.

The *first difference* that they discuss is: "Organisations have their own capacity for action and access to their own resources and own members" (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008, p. 142). I agree with this difference, and more importantly it creates differences between associations and meta-organisations. It, however, only creates a difference when a meta-organisation is utilising indirect resources. Meta-organisations which utilise direct resources do not depend on the resources of the member organisations. Some of the big sports associations, such as, for example, FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association), are able to generate a lot of money due to selling of broadcasting rights. This organisation does therefore not rely fully on its members to gain capacity to act. The conditions hypothesised in relation to this first difference thus say something only about conditions related to indirect resources. Condition (c) and Condition (f), however, are considered exceptions and will be discussed after the presentation of the list of conditions.

a) "Members of meta-organisations can supply it with a great capacity for action and access to resources right from the start.

b) A few members are often enough to enable a meta-organisation to be effective and to gain influence and attention.

c) Recruitment of members is facilitated by the fact that organisations find membership to be relatively cheap relative to their own resources.

d) Meta-organisations become strongly dependent on their members in order to obtain resources, and many members have more resources than the meta-organisation, making it difficult to exclude members.

e) Because it is the member organisations that account for capacity for action, it is the members rather than the meta-organisation that can be successful.

f) The fact that members have members and managers of their own weakens the authority of meta-organisations because the managers of the member organisations must be able to make their own decisions." (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008, p. 142, numbering a-f added)

Condition (c) is a difference between meta-organisations and associations. Organisations will due to their normally larger own resources find membership to be relatively cheap, while for individuals this is far less the case. This condition is important as this leads to low turnover discussed below as the third difference.

Condition (f) discusses an important issue, which does not relate to indirectly resourced meta-organisations only. This issue, however, strongly links to the last difference discussed on page 138 and will be considered then.

The *second difference* presented by Ahrne and Brunsson (2008, p. 58, and in other words on page 143) is: "Organisations, but not humans, can be created and designed by individuals or organisations". This leads them to hypothesise that meta-organisations can create their own members and can design these created members such that they resemble already existing members. This last is expected to facilitate control and decision-making. I agree with them that indeed meta-organisations are able to create or at least initiate the creation of new members and that the meta-organisation, if involved in the creation of new members, might be able to influence the way in which the new organisation is designed. One major difference with conglomerates, which have the same possibility, is that the moment a member organisation is created, the meta-organisation will need to accept the choices made by this new organisation and will not be able to decide for the new organisation. That is, the new organisation in a meta-organisation is a constitutional member and thus will have an ownership relation to the meta-organisation, while in a conglomerate the new organisation is a hierarchical member and thus the conglomerate has a larger say in the new organisation. Organisations created by meta-organisations are autonomous and will be able to leave the meta-organisation at will. If this were not the case, the created new organisation would not be a constitutional member, but daughter organisation. I therefore question the extent to which control and decision-making will be facilitated by the creation of member organisations, especially over time. This assertion is thus seen to consider the conditions of hierarchical members and not those of constitutional members and will be excluded from meta-organisation theory.

The *third difference* presented by Ahrne and Brunsson (2008, p. 143) is that organisations have a lifespan not related to age while humans do. In general, Ahrne and Brunsson distinguish between employees and constitutional members, which as discussed earlier is a comparison that does not hold. Employees are similar in this sense to the participants in meta-organisations, whether direct or indirect, and do not differ from those in other organisations. The issue which they try to discuss is, however, important. "Turnover in many meta-organizations is extremely low, even non-existent" (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008, p. 117). Turnover is expected to be low due to the combination of two things: membership is experienced as cheap and the possibility for influence is only possible as a member and having this possibility is considered important. This means that organisations may "remain members in order to safeguard their interest, even if they are not particularly interested in – even opponents of – the activities of their (...) meta-organization" (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008, p. 117). The turnover in meta-organisations is also not influenced by individual factors (such as aging and connected changes in life situation), as can be expected to

be the case in associations, and thus turnover is also less predictable. Associations, however, can still have a low turnover and thus the difference between meta-organisations and associations may not be extremely large. The condition that low turnover creates over time is important. As member organisations at the start have collectively agreed on the mission and vision, over time these members go through changes. When all members go through these changes, the mission and vision may be changed along with the needs of the members, but these changes need not to occur at the same time, or into the same direction and need not necessarily lead to similar needs. This means that conflicts in relation to the mission and vision of the meta-organisation as well as the way in which these are implemented are likely to be inherent to older meta-organisations. These crises can be solved by, for example, member organisations leaving, by adjusting the mission and vision, or by creating sub-organisations, but may also keep dragging on for years if no good solution is found to solve the question, and if none of the members wishes to leave the meta-organisation. These conflicts can furthermore be expected to be cyclical; they return when, over time, member organisations change again and therefore change their view on the value the meta-organisation could bring. Thus, the combination of low turnover and low stratification leads to returning ownership questions and possible conflicts related to the purpose and direction of the meta-organisation.

The *fourth difference* asserted, but not extensively discussed by Ahrne and Brunsson (2008) is that one cannot meet an organisation. This leads Ahrne and Brunsson to hypothesise that member organisations are difficult to persuade, which hampers conflict resolution. Ahrne and Brunsson (2008), however, in their chapter on conflicts and decision-making problems extensively discuss how representatives play a central role. I therefore suggest changing this difference to read that one meets a member organisation through its representatives. This creates important differences in the conditions between meta-organisations and associations, as convincing a representative of a member organisation does not mean that the member organisation as a whole is convinced, and thus decisions may, after convincing a representative, still not gain acceptance in the member organisation. In addition, in case a different representative of a member organisation is sent, this can change the focus of the member organisation on different issues and may even change the stand of the member organisation on particular issues. The meta-organisation also needs to deal with possible differences in opinion between representatives of members which participate in the preparation or implementation of decisions and those which represent the member organisation as owner.

The *fifth and last difference* is also not extensively discussed. Ahrne and Brunsson argue that organisations have no access to a personal sphere, which individuals do. This, they claim, leads to the condition that an organisation's identity is threatened by its membership in the meta-organisation and that this can easily lead to conflicts over

the role each has. In their chapter on similarity, dissimilarity, and identity formation they discuss how similarity between the members is needed in order for the meta-organisation to be meaningful, but that this should illuminate some of the dissimilarities between the members as the specific combination between similarities and dissimilarities make that an organisation can present itself as unique. This is actually linked to the first difference, that organisations have their own capacity to act. If a member organisation is to maintain this capacity for action, it needs to maintain its uniqueness. This creates important conditions for the meta-organisation, which will be highlighted in the third assertion related to organisations as members.

5.5.2 *ORGANISATIONS ARE MORE DIFFERENTIATED*

The second assertion presented by Ahrne and Brunsson reads: "organizations are more differentiated than individuals" (2008, p. 144) which they specify in terms of identity, power and resources. This assertion leads to a long list of hypothesised conditions. The main conditions related are:

> "a) The fact that organizations have more varied identities than individuals affects member recruitment and the relationship between the organization and its members (...)
> b) Power and resource access differences among organizations are considerably larger than the corresponding differences among individuals, which influences how meta-organizations work (...)" (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008, pp. 144–145)

The conditions and consequences related to the varied identities were not discussed before. They have not featured as part of the issues arising directly from constitutional membership, but they do make a clear distinction between associations and meta-organisations. I will therefore retain this assertion as such. The issues related to power and resources are linked to and complicate further the conditions and consequences discussed as part of constitutional membership, mainly low stratification.

5.5.3 *MEMBERS AND META-ORGANISATION ARE ORGANISATIONS*

The last assertion presented by Ahrne and Brunsson (2008) reads that "meta-organisations are fundamentally similar to their members – they are all organisations". They argue that this creates competition between the meta-organisation and its members over autonomy, authority, and identity in several ways. A similar claim was, however, also discussed in relation to the first assertion of Ahrne and Brunsson both in relation to the first differences and the last difference between individual and organisation as member. These claims lead to the consideration of similar conditions and consequences. I therefore suggest combining these into the following assertion: in order for member organisations to maintain their capacity for action, they need to maintain their uniqueness.

The consequences and conditions presented by Ahrne and Brunsson linking to member organisations maintaining their uniqueness include the following:

- "The fact that the members have members and managers of their own weakens the authority of the meta-organization because the managers of the member organizations must be able to make their own decisions." (2008, p. 143)
- "An organization's identity and sovereignty is threatened by its membership in the meta-organization. Conflicts can easily arise over the role and responsibilities of the members and the organization." (2008, p. 144)
- "It leads to uncertainty and conflict over the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making power of the meta-organization or the member organizations.
- Meta-organizations attempt to solve conflicts over these roles by reducing and specifying the sphere within which they will make decisions. (...)
- Meta-organizations have problems reaching decisions by methods other than consensus; in order to maintain their authority, the member organizations cannot easily be steamrolled or voted out.
- It is common in meta-organizations for rules to be formulated as standards, making it possible for a member organization and its managers and members to decide if they wish to comply with a rule." (2008, p. 145)

These conditions and consequences will be maintained and combined under the reformulated assertion.

5.6 META-ORGANISATION THEORY WITH TWO DIMENSIONS

Meta-organisation theory was built on assertions considering the difference between individual and organisation as members. In this chapter this was shown to be insufficient, as the theory neglects the difference that constitutional membership makes. In relation to constitutional membership, three assertions were presented and the consequences and conditions related to the assertions were discussed. After this, the assertions of Ahrne and Brunsson concerned with the difference between individual member and organisation member were discussed. Some of these differences were seen to link to the difference constitutional membership makes. Some of the differences were considered not relevant to meta-organisation theory. And some of the differences were seen to bring out additional conditions. In table 10 an overview is presented of the seven assertions and the conditions or consequences hypothesised.

Table 10   Assertions and related hypothesised conditions of meta-organisation theory, having two dimensions

	Assertions	Hypothesised conditions
1	Organisations with constitutional membership have closed membership boundaries (formulated based on ideas from Gulati et al., 2012).	This leads to a need for a system for approving/disapproving membership applications and for specifying membership criteria (Gulati et al., 2012).
		This gives the meta-organisation the right to enforce compliance with its commands and rules (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).
		This gives members the possibility to utilise the label 'member of'; receiving the meta-organisation's last name (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).
		This provides a basis for the members' identification with the meta-organisation, which facilitates the recruitment of members and demands clarity in terms of rights and obligations (Gulati et al., 2012).
		This provides a basis for the meta-organisation to differentiate itself from other (meta-)organisations (Gulati et al., 2012).
2	Organisations with constitutional membership have a membership with low stratification (formulated based on ideas from Gulati et al., 2012).	This demands clarifying the division of votes to be able to come to collective decisions (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). Differences between member organisations (such as resources, power, interests, and input) can lead to the equality of members being called into question (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) - This makes it uncertain what the appropriate forms of decision-making and voting rights are. (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) - This makes the importance of votes a common source of conflict and negotiation. (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008)
		This leads to extensive multilateral negotiations and consensus-building efforts between the members (Gulati et al., 2012).
		This enhances member's commitment to the meta-organisation (Gulati et al., 2012).

Assertions	Hypothesised conditions
	Utilising *indirect resources* means that: - Members of meta-organisations can supply it with a great capacity for action and access to resources right from the start. (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) - A few members are often enough to enable a meta-organisation to be effective and to gain influence and attention. (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) - Meta-organisations utilising indirect resources dependent on their members in order to gain capacity for action, which makes it difficult to exclude members. (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) - As the members account for the capacity for action, it is the members rather than the meta-organisation that can be successful. (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) - Member organisations become simultaneously principals and agents of the meta-organisation (Gulati et al., 2012).
3 Organisations with constitutional membership can utilise indirect and/or direct resources.	Utilising *direct resources* means that: - The meta-organisation gets a life of its own (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) which may lead the situation in which the meta-organisation loses sight of the needs and wishes of the member organisations
	Utilising *both indirect and direct resources* means that: - The division of labour between participants from the member organisations and the employees of the meta-organisation needs to be clarified. - Conflict and tensions can rise due to differences (such as status, power, identification, responsibility and experiencing of consequences) between participants and employees.

	Assertions	Hypothesised conditions
4a	*There are fundamental differences between individual and organisation (1):*Member organisations compared with individuals as members have a large own capacity for action; they have access to a larger pool of own resources and have their own employees and/or members (reformulated, based on Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).	This leads to the situation that membership of a meta-organisation is considered relatively cheap, which facilitates recruitment and contributes to low turnover of member organisations (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) The low turnover in turn leads to the situation that the changes in the mission and vision of the meta-organisation are a recurring difficult and potentially contentions topic for discussion in meta-organisations (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008)
4b	*There are fundamental differences between individual and organisation (2):*Member organisations can only be met through its representatives, while individuals can be met directly (reformulated, based on Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).	This leads to the situation that representatives of member organisations need to convince the member organisation of the correctness of decisions made in the meta-organisation (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). This leads to the situation that stands of the member organisation may differ, depending on the representative talked to.

	Assertions	Hypothesised conditions
5	*Organisations are more differentiated than individuals:* Organisations have more varied identities than individuals do (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).	This leads to the situation that in meta-organisations, potential members are predetermined and their numbers are limited (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). - This facilitates the establishment of meta-organisations (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). - This leads to meta-organisations tending to have few members (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). - This makes it more difficult to replace members if they leave the organisation (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). - This leads to the meta-organisation becoming dependent on each member's decision to join and stay, which in turn leads to a reduced authority of the meta-organisation (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). - This leads to the situation that it becomes difficult to solve conflicts by exit (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). - The small number of potential members in a meta-organisation can easily lead to a monopoly situation (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). This leads, together with having the meta-organisation's identity and status being dependent on the identity and status of its members, to the situation that meta-organisations become particularly dependent on some of its members (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). - This increases the difficulties of solving conflicts (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).
6	*There is a fundamental similarity between a meta-organisation and its members: they are all organisations:* Member organisations in order to maintain their own capacity for action, need to maintain their own uniqueness (reformulated, based on Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).	This weakens the authority of the meta-organisation because the managers of the member organisations must be able to make their own decisions (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). This creates uncertainty and conflict over the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making power of the meta-organisation or the member organisations. One way of solving this is by reducing and specifying the sphere within which they will make decisions (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). This creates problems for meta-organisations to reach decisions by methods other than consensus; in order to maintain their authority, the member organisations cannot easily be steamrolled or voted out (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). This makes it common in meta-organisations for rules to be formulated as standards, making it possible for a member organisation and its managers and members to decide if they wish to comply with a rule (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).

5.7 **REFLECTING ON PHASE FOUR AND LOOKING AHEAD**

In this phase further theorising and thinking about meta-organisations became central to my thesis. The work on meta-organisation theory provided me with a language to clarify the organisational perspective on inter-organisational relations, which was central to my way of approaching the Network of Excellence consortia. This had as a consequence the implication that the initially assumed importance of understanding the role of the Commission became obsolete[68]. Although the Commission has an influence on these organisations through the contractual and financial bond with the organisation, the thesis excludes this from the analysis as it is seen as part of the organisations' environment. Thus, pressure from the environment can be used as a convincing argument in the steering of the meta-organisations, but the actors in the environment are seen as 'external' to the organisation.

Although, power was a central theme in trying to gain a better understanding of the dynamics in such organisations and especially the relationships or links within a meta-organisation (see, for more details on this, section 10.4.3), the data already gathered would not provide enough insight to present a clear view on this. The decision to move back to the focus on governance, management and administration, is part of this realisation. The data had been gathered with the question in mind of how the Networks of Excellence manage (or steer) themselves. I, however, still did not have an understanding as to how to approach this self-steering. This started a new phase of gaining understanding: that of developing the conceptual framework to be able to present how these meta-organisations steer themselves.

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[68] From the other perspectives, such as a shareholder perspective, stakeholder perspective, resource dependency perspective or network perspective, the role played by the Commission could be seen as central – as an owner, as a key stakeholder, as a principal, or as member of the network. Viewed from an organisational perspective, the Commission is part of the environment – even an important part -, but although this dyadic relationship can have an important impact on the organisation, it is not seen part of the organisation.

6 GAINING UNDERSTANDING 5: GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION AS A SYSTEM OF STEERING PROCESSES (PART 2)

Personal overview on phase five

This period started after having been rather distraught over the Christmas holidays of 2011 as I felt that I should have a thesis ready, but I was not even sure anymore what the thesis was to be about exactly.

On the first working day after the holidays I started by orienting with the question what I would like to know if I came across a meta-organisation. With that I started to write. Three main questions seemed central: (1) How is the governance, management and administration organised? (2) What are the consequences of organising governance, management and administration this way? (3) What kinds of 'systems' are relied on to support decision-making and prevent inertia and how does this link to the way of organising governance, management and administration?

If this was actually what I wanted to say something about, I thus needed to go back to the theme I had put aside when becoming interested in meta-organisations and of power in this setting.

My perspective on governance, management and administration had somewhat changed, because of the understanding I had gained in phase 4. The work I had done on power had confirmed to me that I had not been able to see governance, management and administration as fully separate activities compared to formal organisational positions. The role of individuals that were not in these positions had thereby become invisible.

When working on the relations within meta-organisations, individuals had come to the forefront. This confronted me with the bias I had especially when thinking of governance and administration. While my thinking on management was least bound to the management team or managers, governance and administration were in my thinking bound to governance group and administrators or assistants respectively.

I re-organised my text, looked up my earlier writing on governance, management and administration, and then started to work on defining the concepts in such way that (1) governance, management and administration were as concepts not bound to a particular position, and (2) that the concepts would form a totality without overlaps and gaps and would have articulated links to one another.

Thereafter, I concentrated on identifying the elements of governance, management and administration that had an overlap and potential holes that made the concepts incomplete. The knowledge about the overlaps and holes lead to a series of choices about the elements. Two questions were important: (1) which element would belong to which concept, and (2) how do the concepts relate to one another.

Timeline

2012   - *Crisis thinking session concerning thesis – the final click?*
- Working out a system of definitions concerning the process of steering, including governance, management and administration
- Building up the theoretical argument of the thesis in three chapters: meta-organisation, governance, management and administration, and the presentation of the framework
- Radically updating the introduction and methodology chapter to reflect the changes made

6.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the way in which I clarify the concepts of governance, management and administration, ensuring that these concepts do not overlap, though link to one another. This chapter thus presents how governance, management and administration are understood in the remainder of this thesis. The way of understanding these concepts includes two important elements. The first element is the perspective developed on governance, management and administration; they are viewed as generic[69], intertwined steering processes. The second element is the conceptual framework of governance, management and administration including their general definitions and the definition of the elements considered part of the elements.

The chapter starts by explaining the perspective on governance, management and administration. This means the chapter starts with an explanation of what it means to view governance, management and administration as generic intertwined processes. After establishing this, I introduce the conceptual framework, building on the work presented in section 4.4. First, the elements of the concepts that overlap are

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[69] Generic is understood in this thesis as common or universal, and indicates that the activities linked to the processes are viewed as common or universal activities related to undertaking action and not as specific activities undertaken by particular groups or individuals.

presented and discussed. Second, I present the choices of which elements will belong to which concepts. Third, and lastly I present how the different concepts link to one another into generic, intertwined processes of steering.

6.2   GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION AS GENERIC INTERTWINED STEERING PROCESSES

Governance, management and administration are seen as generic intertwined processes of steering. This perspective has two important consequences for understanding governance, management and administration. First, governance, management and administration are seen as intertwined processes. This means they influence each other while they together steer actions and processes, directly or indirectly. Activities that are part of the process of governance can influence the activities that are part of the process of management and administration, while the activities that are part of the process of administration can influence the activities that are part of the process of management and governance. And likewise activities that are part of the process of management can influence the activities as part of the process of governance and administration. They together make possible and steer actions and processes – of individuals, of groups, of the whole organisation. This intertwining of governance, management and administration does not mean, however, that they need to form a homogenous or even a harmonious unity. The intertwined processes can still push or pull actions and processes in different directions. This is possible due to the way in which the governance framework is formed as well as due to the way in which the governance, management and administration processes link to one another and how the process is organised.

Secondly, governance, management and administration are seen as generic processes. This means that they have the following qualities:

(1) The processes are spread throughout the organisation. Actions and processes can be governed, managed and administered by those taking actions or contributing to a process, which results in self-governance, self-management or self-administration. And they can be governed, managed or administered by others that do not directly take the actions or contribute to a process directly. This then results in (external) governance, (external) management and (external) administration.

(2) The activities undertaken by certain individuals or certain groups always form only a part of the processes. Entrepreneurs, those undertaking action alone, may perform all of these processes themselves, though even they often will outsource part of the actions and activities and the related governance, management and administration.

(3) The processes are not linked to particular positions. Governance, for example, is not the work of the governance board, but it is a process to which the governance board contributes, besides contributing to other processes such as administration and management.

Viewing governance, management and administration as generic intertwined processes means that the concepts of governance, management and administration cannot overlap. The literature reviews on governance, management and administration presented in chapter five did contain elements which were considered both governance and management, management and administration or governance and administration. The literature on governance, management and administration of inter-organisational networks was especially prone to this, as here definitions were, for example, built on the tasks performed by network managers.

6.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF STEERING PROCESSES

6.3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section I present the conceptual framework of steering processes. In order to build a useful framework that fits with the perspective chosen, the framework needs to be generic: that is, not explaining what the work of governing boards, managers or administrators is or ought to be, but what the processes of governance, management and administration entail. In addition, it is important to define specifically how the concepts relate and link to one another.

When constructing this conceptual framework there are two additional aims. The first aim is make the conceptual difference between governance, management and administration as clear as possible by not allowing or at least minimising overlap in the elements of the different concepts. If, for example, the setting of the mission is part of governance, it will not be part of management or administration[70]. The second aim is to make the framework as complete as possible, thus finding a place for the various governance, management and administration tasks identified in chapter 4 within the elements of the governance, management and administration processes.

This section will therefore discuss the overlap that can be found in the concepts of governance, management and administration as was discussed in section 4.4. Below I will recapitulate what, based on the literature review, was included in governance, management and administration.

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[70] In practice, activities undertaken may contribute to the processes of governance, management and administration at the same time if only on different levels or related to different actions or processes. This will be discussed in more detail in section 7.3.4.

Governance, as discussed in section 4.4.2, included (1) *framing* (i.e. setting and revising the organisation's definition (in terms of mission, vision, boundaries, and values), (2) *controlling* (i.e. making sure actions, performance and behaviour stays within the framework defined, through monitoring and sanctioning), (3) *boundary spanning* (i.e. secure funding, resources and information flows, building confidence in the organisation and legitimating its existence), and (4) *mitigating conflict* (making sure mechanisms exist, as well as mediating directly).

Management, as discussed in section 4.4.3, included (1) *planning* (i.e. defining goals as well as which activities will be undertaken, how, when and where), (2) *organising* (i.e. establishing the material and human organisation needed to implement these plans), (3) *generating, maintaining and steering of effort* (i.e. through motivational mechanisms and instructing), (4) *coordinating* (i.e. making sure that each element (planning, organising and generating, maintaining and steering of effort) is coordinated, that these elements are unified together as well as that the results of the effort is coordinated), (5) *controlling* (making sure that weaknesses are noticed and acted upon), and (6) *mediating* (making sure satisfactory solutions are found for conflicts).

Administration, as discussed in section 4.4.4, included (1) *implementing and executing policies,* (2) *handling of information* (i.e. collecting, manipulating, maintaining, protecting and retrieving information needed for governance and/or management),and (3) *Arranging* the means needed to operate.

These initial definitions were still rather bound to the position of governors, managers and administrators, see, for example, the framing element of governance, and will need to be adjusted as to become generic definitions. The definitions also still start more from activities to be undertaken than processes, see, for example, the boundary spanning element of governance and will need to be adjusted to become process definitions. Although discussing overlap these two issues will be taken into account, it will be the starting point when redefining governance, management and administration in section 6.3.3.

6.3.2   OVERLAPPING ELEMENTS IN THE CONCEPTS

6.3.2.1   INTRODUCTION

In the following section I present and discuss overlapping tasks I identified in the review of the research literature presented in section 4.4. Concerning each overlapping task identified, I explain to which concept the overlapping task belongs in the conceptual framework, as element or sub-element. I also discuss where overlap remains due to the generic nature of the processes.

For example, one can think of the governance, management and administration of one group. The conceptual framework needs to specify the concepts such that governance, management and administration processes are not the same thing – if, for example, the process of governance is concerned with setting goals, it cannot also be included in the process of management. The overlap existing across hierarchical levels cannot, however, be resolved fully, as will be explained and discussed in detail in section 6.3.4.2.

In the process of clarifying to which concept particular tasks belong, I first worked with or relied on my intuitive understanding of governance, management and administration. This intuitive understanding is grounded in literature I read, in particular, in research literature focusing on governance, management or administration; it is grounded in the data gathered on the consortia; it is grounded in discussions with colleagues, friends and practitioners on the topic; and it is grounded in experiences of participating in governance and management of organisations. Intuitively for me, governance is concerned with defining and maintaining a framework for action. My intuitive understanding of management is that management is concerned with bringing about concrete action to reach the goals set in the framework with the limitations given by the framework. Finally, my intuitive understanding of administration is that it concerns operational work needed to make governance and management processes possible. In most of the cases, the choices in clarifying the concepts were based on this intuitional understanding of the concepts. If the intuitive definitions did not suffice in creating a clear-cut decision, I then went back to the different sources on which they were grounded. In addition, when particular elements logically belonged together, they were, where possible grouped together.

The identified overlap in the concepts of governance, management and administration, as based on the review of this research literature earlier, is presented in the following sub-paragraphs.

6.3.2.2 FRAMING AND PLANNING – THE QUESTION OF DEFINING DIRECTION

The literature review presented in section 4.4 and the recapitulation of the definitions above show that both governance and management are concerned with the setting of direction. The governance literature reviewed saw governance as concerned with defining the organisation in terms of mission, vision, boundaries and values, while in the management literature reviewed, management was concerned with setting goals to be reached.

Due to the need for a generic framework, which is not bound to the organisational level, the setting of goals for individuals and groups is considered the same as defining the organisation's mission and vision, albeit on a lower level. As setting of

direction is of central concern to governance, more so than it is in management, I have decided to include the defining of the action field as well as the direction as a component of the framing element of the governance process.

In the governance, management and administration framework developed, planning will thus not be concerned with goal setting. Planning, however, was as shown in the literature review considered broader than goal setting alone. The planning element of management thus still exists, albeit still needing redefining. Without goal setting, planning is concerned with deciding which actions shall be undertaken to reach the goals set and how, when and where this will be done.

6.3.2.3   FRAMING AND ORGANISING - THE QUESTION OF MEMBERSHIP

As above, there exists an overlap between the concepts in relation to the question of membership. In the governance literature reviewed, membership of the organisation is especially discussed in inter-organisational governance literature but is also discussed in corporate governance literature concerning CEOs. In the review of the management literature in section 4.4 membership of groups was discussed as part of the element of organising as it was concerned with choosing which human resources will be made available for which activity. Although these two issues seem to be very different, they are qualitatively different as they are concerned with different organisational levels, though both are concerned with questions of membership.

Similarly as above, I will include all membership questions – all questions of who belongs to a group, a committee, as well as the organisation, but also questions of exclusion or dismissal – who is no longer a member of a group, committee or the organisation – as part of the framing element of governance.

The element of organising, however, will still include the division of labour as well as the financial and material resources. Thus the question 'who is going to be doing what' is part of management, while 'who is a member of which group' is a question of governance.

6.3.2.4   DEVELOPING AND SETTING POLICIES: WHERE DOES IT BELONG?

Policies were discussed in the literature reviews in chapter five extensively as part of administration, where it was to execute and implement policies. The developing and setting of policies, however, was not discussed explicitly.

It was however, implicitly discussed as part of management. This is most clear when looking at how Fayol argued control to be the "verifying whether everything occurs in conformity with the plan adopted, *the instructions issued and principles established*" (1949:107, emphasis added). Although, the management literature, including Fayol, does not discuss in much detail how such instructions or principles are developed, it

seems to be implicitly part of organising as well as steering of efforts. Furthermore, developing and setting of policies could also be seen as part of the framing element of governance, as values were to be set by the governance, but it was not explicitly discussed.

In the conceptual framework, developing and setting policies will be seen as part of framing.

6.3.2.5   CONTROLLING AND CONTROLLING: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

In the literature both governance and management controlling has been a central task or element. In the governance literature direction control was aimed at making sure that the organisation's defined mission and vision are respected. This overlaps with the control of management aimed at making sure that the goals, rules and procedures etc. defined are respected. In addition, both governance and management are concerned with performance control. Governance literature discussed performance control especially in relation to the performance of the top-manager and the whole organisation, while in management it was concerned with each group or individual. In addition, behaviour control was discussed on both governance and management literature. Whereby governance literature discussed the importance of the values and making sure the boundaries were followed – whereby the top-manager was seen as the one to set example by doing. While in management literature it is mentioned as part of control in general, that is to make sure instructions and policies are respected.

As the setting of goals which is linked to direction control was earlier defined to be part of governance, *direction control* will belong to governance as well.

Performance control, however, seems to be concerned with two different types of control. On one hand, performance can be controlled in order to know if the activities undertaken have contributed to the reaching of the goals set. This type of performance control will be defined to be part of governance and will be called *progress control*.

On the other hand, performance can be controlled in order to know if the planned activities are within schedule, in order to identify problems in relation to the planning and in order to check if adjustments need to be made. This type of performance control will be defined as part of management and will be called *monitoring*.

Behaviour control is concerned with checking if behavioural policies are followed and effective. As the setting of policies was defined as part of governance, so will *behavioural control*.

6.3.2.6   CONTROLLING AND STEERING OF EFFORT – THE QUESTION OF DIRECTION CONTROL

Another topic that has been tackled in both governance and management literature is that of direction control – or steering of efforts in the desired direction. The steering of effort, as discussed in relation to management, was linked to control. As this has now moved to governance, the steering of effort should also move. The steering of effort is naturally embedded in the framing element – it is the desired result of framing. This seems to indicate that there would be no need for a specific element of steering of effort.

There is also, however, as part of governance a process of deciding what to do with the results of control, what I will call the element of 'granting'. In relation to direction control the question is what to do if this control shows that the plans presented do not fit the framework set (enough). In relation to progress control the question is what to do if this control shows that the implementation of the plans is not contributing (enough) to attaining the goals set or in the time-frame set. Furthermore, in relation to behaviour control the question is what needs to be done if this control shows that policies, rules or procedures are not (enough) followed. The steering of effort is here more explicitly present – though also here it will not be understood as a separate element, but a result of this process.

6.3.2.7   CEO COMPENSATION, ORGANISING, AND GENERATING, MAINTAINING AND STEERING OF EFFORT: THE QUESTION OF ACTUAL GRANTING OF RESOURCES

In the corporate governance literature CEO compensation was considered to be a part of the controlling tasks of governance boards. CEO compensation was seen as key in generating, maintaining and steering the efforts of the top manager. In management literature it was discussed as part of organising (which resources will be given to which activities) as well as within generating, maintaining and steering of effort (promising, withholding or threatening to withhold rewards or threatening with or giving punishments).

This process of deciding what to do with the results of control, as discussed in the previous section will be a new element of the governance process, the element of granting. The generating and maintaining of effort, be it the effort of the CEO or that of anybody else, will stay part of management but will be called the element of motivating.

6.3.2.8   MITIGATING CONFLICT AND MEDIATING

Governance and management are both considered to be concerned with handling of conflicts between member organisations. Management, in addition, included the need for handling of conflicts between departments, groups or employees. Both mitigating

conflicts and mediating have a connection to framing and controlling. They are therefore considered to fit best as an element of governance.

6.3.2.9 BOUNDARY SPANNING, ORGANISING, SERVING: ENSURING THE NECESSARY MEANS TO OPERATE ARE AVAILABLE

Governance, management and administration are all seen as concerned with organising the necessary means to undertake work. Through the boundary spanning element the governance board was seen as engaged in securing the material organisation (funding and resources) as well as human organisation (knowledge and skills), through the organising element of management, managers were seen as engaged in securing material and human organisation, and through the assisting element of administration, administrative staff were seen as engaged in securing material and human organisation.

I see an essential difference between the process of planning and deciding about the needed financial, material and human resources and the process of searching, selecting, and arranging these financial, material and human resources. The first process is the organising element of management, while the second process is the arranging of means element of administration. The securing of financial and material resources that was part of boundary spanning will thus be seen as concerned with administration.

6.3.2.10 BOUNDARY SPANNING AND HANDLING INFORMATION: THE QUESTION OF INFORMATION FROM THE ENVIRONMENT

The boundary spanning task as discussed as part of governance included the obtaining and sharing of information from the environment. Obtaining and sharing of information is, however, also included in the handling of information element of administration. As the framework will not be bound to positions, the obtaining and sharing of information from the environment will be seen as part of handling information.

6.3.3 DEFINITIONS FOR GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

In the figure below, an overview is given of the different elements of the different processes. The definitions of these processes are presented in sub-sections below.
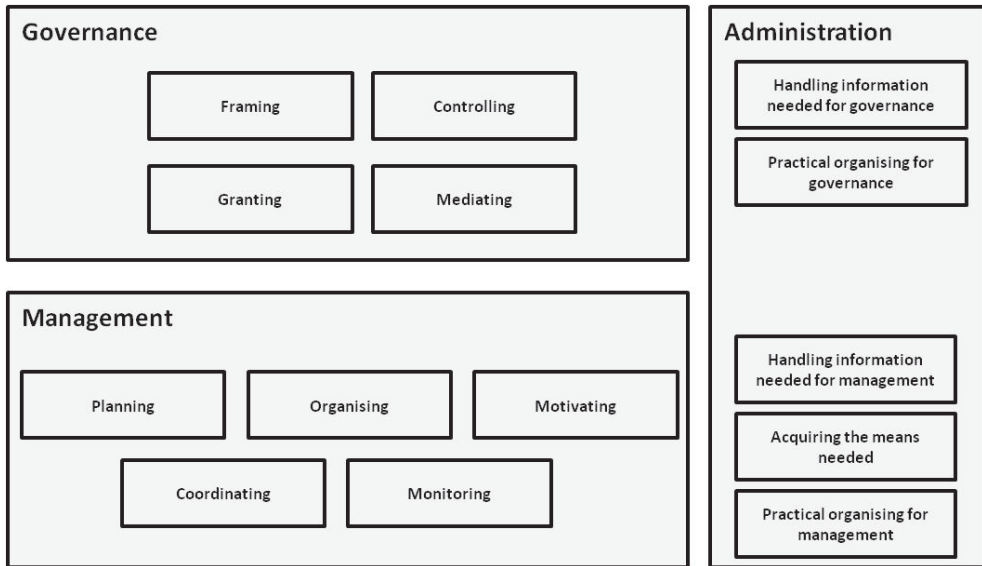
Figure 16   **The main elements of the steering processes**

6.3.3.1   DEFINITION OF GOVERNANCE

Following the ideas for redefining discussed in the previous section, governance will be defined as the function of defining and maintaining a framework for action while thereby guaranteeing that the invested resources result in the desired outcomes. Governance is a generic process that appears throughout the organisation and consists of the following four elements: framing, controlling, granting, and mediating. These different elements will be explained in more detail below.

Framing[71]

The element of framing concerns the defining of the governance framework. The governance framework includes the definition of the field of action (the mission), the goals to be reached (in the short, medium and/or long-term), and the boundaries to the choice of possible action. These boundaries include (1) the limitations to the action possibilities (through, for example, values, policies and principles), (2) the financial resources available; and (3) participants or members (with whom the goals set are to be met).

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[71] Framing is, in social sciences, used to refer to a concept and perspectives on the phenomenon of constructing a particular perspective on a particular event or issue by an individual, a group, or by society. The literature concerning framing theory, although interesting, is not reviewed in this thesis. This literature is very interesting, however, for anyone wishing to further develop and deepen the concept as presented in this theoretical framework.

Framing is the activity of developing, deciding upon as well as reviewing and changing these decisions. Thus, through the process of framing the governance framework is created as well as maintained. A governance framework can be meant for, for example, a particular individual, a particular group, a particular department or the whole organisation. In the case of meta-organisations, the governance framework can also be created for the member organisations[72].

The framework or parts of it can be created and maintained to guide 'others' (external governance) or the framework or parts of it can be created and maintained to guide myself or ourselves (self-governance). In addition, the framework created for, for example, a department is often also to guide the groups and individuals belonging to the department, directly or indirectly. There can be policies and principles that would be expected to be followed directly, while the goals may be translated and thus influence indirectly.

<u>Controlling</u>

The element of control concerns the evaluation of past activities and plans for future activities. The aspects that are to be controlled are direction, progress and behaviour. This element includes setting the specific criteria, defining the data to be gathered and evaluating the data against these criteria.

It is worth noticing, however, that conclusions and decisions made based on the evaluation are not seen as part of controlling. The conclusion and decision on what to do is part of the following element, granting. The gathering of the data is also not included, as this is part of administration, the element of handling information.

Direction control is concerned with evaluating if plans developed, concerning the action to be taken as well as concerning the material and human organisation, fit the governance framework of the organisation, a particular group or an individual. Progress control is concerned with evaluating the progress towards the goals set in framing of the organisation, a group or an individual. Behaviour control is concerned with evaluating if existing policies are being followed.

Controlling can, like framing, be an internal or external process as well as mixed. Those involved in developing the governance framework can be expected to be involved especially in setting criteria. In some cases advice is requested from third parties concerning the evaluation, and as will be discussed below concerning the conclusions and possible decisions based on the evaluation. Third parties can be expected to be used, for example, (1) when external resources are used, (2) self-

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[72] This was discussed earlier in terms of governance capacity (Traxler, 2007).

governance can lead to internal conflicts which are difficult to solve as no higher authority is available, and (3) in situations whereby a self-governed system needs legitimacy.

<u>Granting</u>

The element of granting concerns the process of deciding on action based on the control evaluation. This includes drawing the conclusions from the control evaluation, thinking through the different options for possible actions and deciding what should be done.

There are various options of action. One option is to decide to reframe the governance framework – the mission, the vision or boundaries. This can be positive or negative for those concerned (adding, removing or confirming resources available, adding or removing boundaries, changing the definition of the action field or goals). Another option, especially in relation to direction control, is to have plans redrafted. This means (directly or indirectly) that resources are granted for redrafting of the plans. Another option is that a promise or threat is made to reward or punish or that rewards or punishments are actually given.

The decision will thus result in starting a governance process (framing), a management process (replanning or reorganising), or an administration process (implementing rewards or punishments through handling of information for example). The consequences of particular results of the control evaluation can also be decided upon in advance (such as rewards or punishments), but even further the reframing may also be decided already (such as additional resources). In this case, the implementation follows directly from the evaluation conclusion. It thereby seems to become administrational in nature – the granting decisions, however, were in these cases already made in advance.

<u>Mediating</u>

The element of mediating concerns handling conflicting interests of the members of a group, a department or an organisation. The conflicting interests arise as the governance framework of one or more members conflicts with the governance framework of one or more other members, whereby the shared governance framework does not give enough clarity as to how to solve the issue.

Mediation is thus necessary in at least two situations. First, mediation is needed when the actors involved are unable to solve their conflict themselves in a satisfactory manner. Second, mediation is needed when the conflicting interests concern issues that also need to be treated consistently in the future. In both situations, the adjustments will be made in the shared governance framework as well as in the governance framework of at least one of the members.

Reflections

The governance function as defined above can be performed through self-governance, external governance or as a combination of both. Self-governance is exercised by the members of the affected group only. External governance is ultimately exercised by outsiders, even though some members of the group or the group as a whole may be able to influence or may participate in the governance. The external governance can also be performed by actors outside the organisation, such as, for example, key funders.

A combination of both self-governance and external governance occurs when some issues are governed through self-governance while other issues through external governance. This last option creates the possibility of potential contradictions as well as potential holes in the governance framework for that group or individual and may thus lead to conflicts.

In addition, a particular group may intentionally fail to follow the policies set on the meta-organisation level, when these policies are not integrated into their governance framework. In addition, a group may also choose to intentionally not follow the governance framework that has been set externally, when the group-identity produces a conflicting governance framework.

6.3.3.2 DEFINITION OF MANAGEMENT

Following the ideas for redefining discussed in the previous section, management will be defined as the function that is concerned with bringing about concrete action needed to reach the set goals. Management is like governance defined to be a generic process appearing throughout the organisation. Management consists of the following elements: planning, organising, motivating, coordinating and monitoring.

Planning

The element of planning concerns the future activities needed to reach the goals set in the element of governance defined as framing. Planning can be done through formal procedures, but can be emergent as well. Furthermore, planning may follow a bottom-up process, a top-down process or an interactive both direction process.

Organising

The element of organising is concerned with the necessary means to undertake the activities planned. Organising concerns thus the necessary material and human resources. Organising is the activity of deciding about the means needed for reaching the goals along the plans made, assessing the available means and making sure that the missing means can be acquired or developed. In addition to this, organising is the

activity of creating a composition for the available or desirable means in relation to the goals set.

The material resources include raw materials, tools or equipment, facilities and capital. The human resources include the personnel with the knowledge and skills needed.

Deciding about the needed means includes assessing what is needed and making choices in terms of quality or knowledge and skills, quantity and costs. Making sure that the needed material and human resources can be acquired or developed includes, for example, building favourable contacts and creating development and training plans for personnel.

Creating the composition concerns the horizontal and vertical subdivisions of the human organisation as well as the composition of offices, tools, etc. of the material organisation.

Motivating

The element of motivating concerns generating and maintaining of effort to accomplish a task or to perform a process. The activity of motivating is mostly communicating. It is the act of making the knowledge of the governance framework, the already decided possible rewards and punishments, and the plans present and taken into account in the process of the execution of the work.

The element of motivating can, for example, be exerting influence through making sure that participants receive their responsibilities as something they enjoy, that participants consider the capabilities and tools as adequate for doing the work they are responsible for or that they see the work that they are performing as meaningful and important because of the mission and vision that the work relates to.

It is, however, worth noticing that the concrete adjustment of the components mentioned in the examples is defined to be either coordinating or organising. The element of motivating is thus about bringing about an awareness of circumstances that are created as a result of activities in other elements of the functions of governance and management.

Coordinating

Coordinating concerns the integration of operational work as well as managerial work. Coordinating aims at integrating the results of the work executed by making sure that the different tasks and actors interrelate and interact in a way that enables reaching the goals set in the governance element defined as framing.

In order to reach the goals set, the managerial processes also need to be coordinated. This means integrating the different aspects within each management element as well as the different management elements through mutual adjustment.

It is worth noticing that there is a difference between organising and coordinating. Organising brings about a structure while coordinating is the act of adjustment that is carried out as a continuous process. Creating two departments in an organisation falls thus under the concept of organising, whereas clarifying the division of responsibilities between these when needed is an activity that is seen as coordinating in this framework.

Monitoring

Monitoring is concerned with checking the execution of the work in relation to the plans made. It aims at uncovering weaknesses and errors in the execution of the work in order to rectify them and prevent recurrence and thereby make it possible to reach the goals set in the governance element defined as framing.

Monitoring also concerns the managerial process itself and thereby can result in changes in managerial practices or existing plans for execution.

Reflections

Similarly as in governance, management can be self-management as well as external management. Self-management refers to the managing actor making managerial choices within the governance framework in relation to the work area one is personnallyresponsible for. External management refers to a situation where the managing actor is making managerial choices within the governance framework in relation to the work area for which other participants are responsible. A mix of both self-management and external management is possible, when particular aspects or issues are self-managed whereas others are externally managed. Overlap as well as gaps can occur in this case, whereby particular issues or areas are managed by several actors simultaneously or are not managed at all.

One aspect not separately addressed in this framework is that of leadership. Leadership could, within this framework, be placed as actions taken within the element of coordinating. Thus, those that are able to show how problems of coordination can be solved are taking leadership in solving these problems.

6.3.3.3   DEFINITION OF ADMINISTRATION

Administration will be defined as the function of facilitating the processes of governance and management. The administration function is concerned with those parts of preparation and implementation of governance and management processes for which explicit rules and formal procedures can be established.

This includes handling of information needed for the different elements of governance and management, arranging the means lacking in the material and human organisation, as well as practical organising to make governance and management work possible.

<u>Handling of information</u>

The handling of information concerns collecting, processing, maintaining, protecting and retrieving information in order to support the governance and management functions. The handling of information is a common way of implementing decisions made in the governance or management processes.

Control, for example, requires handling of information in order to be exercised. Direction control requires information concerning the goals to be reached, activities planned to attain those goals, and the organisation envisioned to implement the activities. For progress control one may keep records of implementation decisions, records of produced items/service (quantity/quality), records of costs, records of customer satisfaction etc. For behaviour control one may, for example, keep records of non-conformance and actions taken or records of grievances in relation to unclear policies. In addition, in the implementation of granting decisions, a common result is that information needs to be handled such as changing records (as to which group a particular individual belongs, budget adjustments, etc.).

The managerial activities of planning and organising also require handling of information. For planning and organising one might need to know who the participants are, their qualities and knowledge, their availability, etc. For making sure that the means will be available information would need to be handled in relation to internal and external stakeholders and the general public, such as informing (potential) customers about product details, quality standards, etc. For the arranging of the means one would need to handle additional information such as information about employee, bank account, income, hours worked, etc. to pay salaries or an overview of costs incurred by member organisations, or acquisitions made and delivered, contracts, bank accounts, etc. to be able to pay bills.

<u>Arranging</u>

The element of arranging is concerned with making sure that those resources lacking in the material and human organisation, such as raw materials, tools or equipment, facilities, capital and personnel, will be available when they are needed. Arranging in administration is thus concerned with the implementation of the decisions made as part of organising in management.

Practical organising

The element of practical organising is concerned with making governance and management work possible. This element includes such things as organising meetings, and sending out the required documents.

Reflections

Administration can also be self-administration or external administration. Self-administration is done by people who undertake the element of governance or management processes for which the information/means/practical organising is needed. External administration is done by somebody who does not participate in the undertaking of the element of governance or management processes for which the information/means/practical organising is needed.

6.3.4   THE LINKS AND RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CONCEPTS

6.3.4.1   AN OVERVIEW OF THE STEERING PROCESSES FRAMEWORK

As presented in section 6.2, the functions of governance, management and administration are considered processes that are spread throughout an organisation. Now that the concepts of governance, management and administration have been defined, it is important to look more closely how these concepts function together.

Many of the links and relations within and between the concepts have been already addressed in the course of defining governance, management and administration. One example is the link between controlling (governance), handling of information (administration) and granting (governance), whereby the first was concerned with defining the criteria for control and the data to be gathered as well as the evaluation of the data, the second was concerned with gathering, storing and making available the control data, and the third was concerned with deciding what to do with the results.

Another example is the relation between framing (governance), planning (management) and organising (management) and controlling (governance), whereby framing set the action field, goals and boundaries, which then could set the frame for thinking about the actions to be planned. In the organising activity,the means needed were thought through. These plans and the means expected to be needed then would be looked at in terms of direction control. It is important, however, to note that plans that are seen as not fit, do not necessarily need to be decided against – they can also be a reason for reframing.

There is one issue, however, that has not yet been addressed. This issue concerns the overlap of the different concepts when considering different hierarchical layers within

an organisation. This will be discussed, addressed and illustrated in the next sub-sections.

6.3.4.2 *FRAMING – PLANNING/ORGANISING: THE SIMONIAN-OVERLAP*

In the framework one important issue that deserves a little more attention is the overlap between the lower order level governance frameworks, which in part are produced through management planning and organising at higher order level. This is similar to what Herbert Simon discussed in relation to decision-making, as can be read below.

> "The fact that goals may be dependent for their force on other more distant ends, leads to the arrangement of these goals in a hierarchy – each level to be considered as an end relative to the levels below it and as a means relative to the levels above it" (1961, p. 63).

This means that on each level the planning and organising is an end – which frames the lower levels, while at the same time they are the means for the levels above. This is important for understanding the framework. When thus through the governance process of framing ends are defined, we will choose through the management process of planning the means to reach these ends. These means, however, at a lower level are the ends for which new means need to be found to reach them. The same thing also happens when considering the granting of resources and organising of the granted resources, which then at the same time is the granting of resources at lower level.

This process, however, is not only going from high to low, from top down, but can also be the other way around as well as much more fuzzy. Thus, when a group decides on what the group wishes to do, and through controlling and reframing these activities define the goals for the group, these goals then at a higher level order are means which need to be fitted into the ends. Simon furthermore points out an important issue.

> "Instead of a single branching hierarchy, the structure of conscious motives is usually a tangled web or, more precisely, a disconnected collection of elements only weakly and incompletely tied together; and the integration of these elements becomes progressively weaker as the higher levels of the hierarchy –the more final ends – are reached" (1961, p. 63).

This means that the governance framework of a group or individual needs not to be produced as a result of the management planning and organising at the higher order level, but can also be a result of self-governance. Furthermore, also higher order levels governance frameworks can also apply to the lower levels without interference of in between levels. In most cases a mixture of these can be expected to be found, as

some issues are set by general policies, while others are bound to the planning and organising of the group above, and some are decided upon by the group itself. This means that the frame can be contradictory, unclear and fuzzy. Understanding how the governance frame is produced for a particular group will help to understand weaknesses within the processes as well as may uncover contradictions and lack of clarity.

The definitions of the different processes, as well as the presentation of the Simonian-overlap, make it possible to define steering processes. Steering processes refer to a totality of intertwined processes (governance, management and administration) that have active or visible as well as passive or less visible components and that involve all activity except the actual operational/productive work.

6.3.4.3   *ILLUSTRATING THE SIMONIAN-OVERLAP IN META-ORGANISATIONS*

In the figure presented below, the elements of the governance, management and administration processes are presented on the meta-organisational level, meta-organisational group level, and meta-organisational individual participant level.

On the one hand, the lower order level governance frameworks are created through management planning and organising at a higher order level. The goals as well as the boundaries in terms of budget and participants are thus the other side of the coin of planning and organising. Through management planning and organising the groups are formed, their mission and vision stated as well as their boundaries defined.

On the other hand, the management planning and organising on a higher order level can be influenced by the planning and organising on lower order levels. In the framework this process goes through the controlling and reframing at the lower level. When the goals of a lower level order are changed, this automatically redefines the means at the higher order level as these are connected. On this level these means will need to find a place – a goal or different goals for which these are the means or part of the means. Through control and reframing of the goals at this level, again a higher order level may be influenced, which in the end may lead to a different mission or vision for the meta-organisation as a whole.

	Meta-organisation	Meta-organisational work group	Meta-organisational individual participant
Governance	Framing of the meta-organisation	Framing of the group	Framing of the individual action
	Controlling direction, performance and behaviour of the meta-organisation	Controlling direction, performance and behaviour of the group	Controlling direction, performance and behaviour of an individual participant
	Granting concerning the meta-organisation	Granting concerning the group	Granting concerning the individual participant
	Mediating the interests of members, of members and meta-organisation, as well as of groups	Mediating the interests of group participants and of possible sub-groups	-
Management	Planning actions to reach the meta-organisational goals	Planning actions to reach group goals	Planning actions to reach individual goals
	Organising the means needed to undertake the meta-organisation actions	Organising the means needed to undertake the group actions	Organising the means needed to undertake the individual actions
	Motivating the meta-organisation to undertake action	Motivating the group to undertake action	Motivating the individual participant to undertake action
	Coordinating the meta-organisation actions and management	Coordinating the group actions and management	Coordinating the individual actions and management
	Monitoring the meta-organisation actions	Monitoring the group actions	Monitoring the individual actions
Administration	Handling information needed for meta-organisation governance and management	Handling information needed for group governance and management	Handling information needed for individual participant governance and management
	Acquiring the lacking means needed by the meta-organisation	Acquiring the lacking means needed by the group specifically	Acquiring the lacking means needed by the individual participant specifically
	Practical organising to make meta-organisation governance and management possible	Practical organising to make group governance and management possible	Practical organising to make individual participant governance and management possible

Figure 17   Steering processes interlinking on different levels

6.4   REFLECTING ON PHASE FIVE

This chapter addressed the development of the conceptual framework which will be used to analyse the data about the Network of Excellence consortia. An important first step in the development of the framework is the review of governance, management and administration as presented in section 4.4. As pointed out in

section 4.4, the overlap in the concepts still needed addressing. Based on the lists of tasks for governance, management and administration, the overlap of concepts were identified. After this I (1) used logical reasoning, (2) reflected on the data gathered, (3) reflected on other situations in which governing, managing and administrating take place, and finally (4) reflected on the choices made with both practitioners and colleagues. The overlapping tasks through in this process were allocated to one of the processes; they were redefined or even omitted. This made it possible to define steering processes as generic intertwined governance, management and administration processes which together make reflected and directed action possible. The way in which particular elements of governance and management are one and the same when crossing hierarchical levels is addressed and discussed.

The framework as presented in this chapter is used to guide the analysis of the Network of Excellence consortia data. The way in which this analysis was done and what this analysis resulted in will be presented in the next chapter. The usability of the steering processes framework and possible further developments needed are discussed in the last chapter of the thesis.

PART THREE DEVELOPING META-ORGANISATION THEORY

Personal overview of phase six, the last phase in the research process

This phase of gaining understanding was mainly concerned with analysing, writing, re-analysing, editing, writing, re-analysing, writing and more editing, writing and analysing. It seemed a never-ending process, and the thesis although gaining many, many pages of text, did not seem to improve in clarity. At the point that the thesis got closer and closer to 500 pages and I still needed to write up the cross-phase analysis and the cross-method analysis, the discussion and conclusion I realised this was not going to be any good.

But what to do? How would the thesis get a better focus? If the focus was on the steering processes, one could not just take the presentation of this analysis out of the thesis, but it was this analysis that had become extremely large and detailed due to the fact that the framework covered many different issues which all gave insight into an element or sub-element. I considered several options, such as, for example, presenting only the analysis of the operational phase.

Meanwhile, I had been working on a paper which concentrated on the development of meta-organisation theory. The arguments I developed in the paper, I also integrated again into the chapter on meta-organisations. This paper was, however, lacking the explicit insights from the cases. It was written in a speculative fashion although it relied heavily on my insights from the cases, insights from my previous work for meta-organisations and the insights I gained from talking and discussing with others about their experience of meta-organisations.

When these two processes came together one day I finally saw how the insights of the analysis of the steering processes contribute to further developing meta-organisation theory. I saw how the analysis of the steering processes said a lot about meta-organisations. This realisation brought enormous speed, trust and joy into the writing process and helped finally with finishing the manuscript for pre-examination after some tight deadlines with the end.

Timeline

2012   *- - Writing an abstract for MOPAN 2012 on power and different connections in meta-organisations*
- Re-analysis of data
- Rewriting the data chapters, one on governance, one on management and one on administration, whereby the analysis was based on definitions and framework created
- Adding a chapter to introduce and position the cases in relation to other

Networks of Excellence

- Drafting a discussion and conclusion chapter

- Participating in MOPAN 2012

- Problems in getting the presentation of the thesis and data clear.

- Re-organising of the thesis in two important ways (1) changing the building up of the theoretical argument along the phases of understanding I earlier discussed in the methodology chapter, (2) changing the presentation of the data from topic (governance, management and governance) to be case (case 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) organised

2013   *- Writing and presenting a paper on meta-organisation theory for BAM 2013, IOC track*

- Writing and presenting a paper on the intertwining processes of governance, management and administration for BAM 2013, Organisational theory track'

- Writing an abstract on the micro-level challenges and consequences of participating in meta-organisations for MOPAN 2013, not further developed

- Making the final changes to part two and finalising the case analysis chapters

- Choice to focus on theorising meta-organisations

- Moving all case analysis and cross-case analysis to the appendix

- Creating a case description chapter from the already prepared case descriptions which were in the separate case analysis chapters

- Writing the findings chapter with a focus on theorising meta-organisations

- Writing the discussion and conclusion chapter

- Finalising the thesis

This last phase of gaining understanding I went through during this research process was important for making the move from seeing inter-organisational networks and later meta-organisations as the setting, to the understanding of the potential of the study for contributing to meta-organisation theory itself. This realisation ended a rather long period of struggling with the end of the thesis, with the actual contribution. The analysis of the steering processes was able to give valuable insights, but the analysis also led to extensive descriptions in which these insights got lost. One could argue that the framework was put to work without a clear goal, in a way the description became the goal in a way, but that was not what I had meant to do in the thesis. The goal to contribute to meta-organisation theory explicitly, and not as it had been as a side product, gave more meaning to the analysis as well as to the thesis as a whole.

In the next, and last, part of the thesis, the focus is on the analysis of the cases and the findings relevant to meta-organisation theory. This part includes three chapters. First, chapter 9 presents the reconstruction of the key events and structure of the

cases. Second, chapter 10 presents the findings of the study. And then third, chapter 11 concludes the thesis with summaries of the findings and discussions on various issues leading to suggestions for future research.

7 DATA, METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND THEORISING PROCESS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter starts by presenting the data included in the analysis of the steering processes, which is used for theorising meta-organisations. Thereafter the chapter focuses on presenting the analytical approach, the methods and the tools used in the analysis of the case data. Finally, this chapter describes the process of theorising meta-organisations and some of the challenges related.

7.2 THE CASE DATA INCLUDED IN THE ANALYSIS

7.2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section gives an overview of the case data. The selection of the cases, the data-gathering methods and a general level description of the data gathered has been presented and discussed in section 3.4. In this section a more detailed description will be given of the content of the data.

7.2.2 THE DATA INCLUDED IN THE ANALYSES

7.2.2.1 INTERVIEWS INCLUDED IN THE ANALYSES

The data includes 31 interviews, of which 30 are NoE case interviews; one is with a Commission official. In table 11 an overview is given of those interviewed. As can be seen in the table, many of the case interviewees have more than one formal position.

In the Friendship Case, all members of the management group interviewed were also representatives of their organisations in the governance group. In addition, one of these members, the coordinator, was also counted as administrative staff. The two other members of the administrative staff interviewed were participating in and preparing the meetings of the governance and management groups, but did not have voting rights. In the Cross-Discipline Case all interviewees were both members of the management and of the governance group. Nobody from the administrative staff was interviewed for this case. In the Long-Term Collaboration Case the situation was also such that all members of the management group were members of the governance group and, as in the Friendship Case, the coordinator was also counted as administrative staff. This case, however, has an additional member of the administrative staff who has voting rights in both the governance and management groups. This is the result of this case having one of the member organisations being specialised in administrative processes.

Table 11   Details about the interviews included in the data analysed in part 3

	Friendship Case	Cross-Discipline Case	Long-Term Collaboration Case	Social Network Case	Funding Agency Case	Commission
Number of interviews done	6	6	8	4	6	1
Average length of interviews	38 min	37 min	45 min	36 min	44 min	39 min
Voting members of governance group interviewed	4	6	7	NA	5	NA
Voting members of management group interviewed	4	6	7	4	NA	NA
Members of administrative staff interviewed	3	0	3	0	2	NA
Gender interviewees	1 woman, 5 men	1 woman, 5 men	4 women, 4 men	0 women, 4 men	3 women, 3 men	1 man
Interviewee area of birth[73]	North Eur: 1 West Eur: 2 Central Eur: 2 South Eur: 1	North Eur: 1 West Eur: 3 South Eur: 2	North Eur: 1 West Eur: 5 Central Eur: 1 South Eur: 1	West Eur: 3 South Eur: 1	West Eur: 2 Central Eur: 1 South Eur: 3	Unknown
Interviewee birth year range	1940-1949: 4 1950-1959: 2	1940-1949: 1 1950-1959:1 Unknown: 4	1940-1949: 2 1950-1959: 3 1960-1969: 2 1970-1979: 1	1940-1949: 1 1950-1959: 1 1960-1969: 1 Unknown: 1	1950-1959: 4 1960-1969: 2	Unknown

[73] The division into areas aims at anonymising the data, countries can be categorised in many different ways. The division made aims to reflect the geographical division of countries – not any historical, political or otherwise possible meaningful division. The following division was made in the table: North includes Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland. West includes Ireland, UK, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Germany. Central includes Switzerland, Poland, Czech Republic, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Hungary. East includes Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Bulgaria. South includes France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece.

The Social Network Case does not have a separate governance group, and thus the interviewees were members of the management group. No member of the administrative staff was interviewed for this case. Finally, the Funding Agency Case does not have a separate management group. The interviewees were all participating in the governance group, only one without voting rights. In addition, one of the voting members of the governance group, the coordinator, was also a member of the administrative staff. In all the cases, the interviewees who were members of the governance group and management group were also leading and/or participating in work groups.

7.2.2.2   DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THE ANALYSES

Below an overview is given of the number of documents included in the data. The Commission documents do not tackle any of the cases in particular; these documents are therefore only used to gain an understanding of the role and perspective of the Commission in general.

Table 12   Number of documents included in the analyses presented in part three

Case	Friend-ship Case	Cross-Discipline Case	Long-Term Collabora-tion Case	Social Network Case	Funding Agency Case	Commis-sion
Number of documents	9	5	8	8	5	10

In the remainder of this sub-section I will describe the documents that have been included in the dataset.

Consortium agreements

A consortium agreement refers to the document which describes the agreements between the member organisations. This agreement includes various aspects such as a presentation of the organisation and division of responsibilities. The ten main categories used in the consortium agreements are presented in table 13 as well as the number of words used in each category.

The most extensively described categories are those of authority structure and division of responsibilities as well as intellectual property rights. The differences in the extent of tackling particular issues are especially interesting. For example, the Cross-Discipline Case has described more extensively than the other cases their authority structure, agreements on financial issues, as well as the ethical principles they will follow.

Table 13   Number of words used for different sections in the cases[74]

Case[75]	1) Purpose, nature, and duration of the network	(2) Obligations and responsibilities of the parties	(3) Authority structure and responsibilities of organisational grouping	(4) Financial section	(5) Liability and defaults	(6) IPR and publications	(7) Accession and termination	(8) Sub-contracting	(9) Settlement of disputes	(10) Ethics
1	438	264	2448	510	1190	3715	521	233	360	0
2	496	377	4993	725	1030	2034	915	205	188	1024
3	546	545	2837	296	1116	3247	513	290	226	0
4	471	318	1533	500	1316	2592	445	291	200	0
5	578	745	2242	704	1205	2659	1146	155	153	0

[74] Light shading represents the lowest number of words used; dark shading represents the highest number of words used.

[75] Case 1 is the Friendship Case, case 2 the Cross-Discipline Case, case 3 the Long-Term Collaboration Case, case 4 the Social Network Case and case 5 is the Funding Agency Case.

The difference in length of the overall documents is the greatest between the Cross-Discipline Case (11,987 words) and the Social Network Case (7,666 words), while the other cases have documents containing about 9,500 words. This difference indicates that those involved in the writing have had a different view on the need for contractually binding the member organisations and clarifying how the organisation is to function. In chapter 8 a more detailed description is presented concerning the development process of the consortium agreements in the presentation of the key events in the initiation process.

<u>Contracts</u>

'Contract' refers to the Network of Excellence funding contract each consortium signed with the Commission. It was not possible to obtain a copy of the complete contract with the Commission in any of the cases.

The most interesting part of the contract, for the analysis, is the so-called 'technical annex' to the contract. This technical annex includes a description of the consortium, the organisational structure, the division of responsibilities as well as the long-term (whole funding period) and a short-term (an 18 months period) plan of activities, including a budget. In three cases (the Cross-Discipline Case, the Long-Term Collaboration Case, and the Social Network Case) this technical annex was made available for the research.

<u>Other documents</u>

Additional documents were collected for each case. All information on the website of each case was collected into one document. This included in most cases descriptions of the organisational structure, the work groups, the work planned or done and a list of the member organisations. In addition, the project fact sheet of each case available at the Framework Programme 6 website of Cordis was collected.

Certain documents were collected for some but not all of the cases. First of all, the expression of interest document was collected in the Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case and the Social Network Case. Secondly, plans of activities were collected in the Friendship Case and the Funding Agency Case. Thirdly, public periodic reports on the activities undertaken were gathered in the Friendship Case. Fourthly, in the Funding Agency Case I also received the earliest notes that the coordinator had made after the first network-building meeting. These notes included his suggestions on names for the consortium, authority structure, topics to be concentrated on as well as a suggestion on the way of functioning together. In addition, I was able in the Funding Agency Case, with a temporary password, to look at their information and communication system built to support their collaboration's planning, reporting and controlling processes. Notes on this system have been included for this case.

The documents from the Commission included in the dataset consist of: the final report on the future of Networks of Excellence; a monitoring report on the implementation of indirect research activities in Framework Programme 6; an evaluation report on the effectiveness of new instruments in Framework Programme 6; a monitoring report on activities in Framework Programme 6 for the years 2003, 2004, and 2005; and the evaluation of Framework Programme 6 (covering 2002-2006).

Table 14   Details of the cases[76]

	Friendship Case	Cross-Discipline Case	Long-Term Collaboration Case	Social Network Case	Funding Agency Case
Starting date Commission funding	Autumn 2004	Autumn 2004	Spring 2004	Autumn 2004	Autumn 2004
Duration of funding	60 months	60 months	60 months	60 months	48 months
Number of member-organisations[77]	Medium-sized	Large-sized	Medium-sized	Small-sized	Medium-sized
Number of voting members in governance group	1/member	1/member	1/member	NA	1/member
Number of voting members in management group	6	6	17	5[78]	NA
Number of dedicated administrative staff[79]	3	3	3	2	3
Centralised/ Participatory	Centralised	Centralised	Participatory	Centralised	Participatory

[76] In order to secure the anonymity of the cases, some details which do not affect the analysis have been changed.

[77] Small-sized is between 10-14 member organisations; Medium-sized is between 15-19 member organisations; and Large-sized is between 20-24 member organisations.

[78] In the period in which the interviews were undertaken, the management group was extended by one member to a total of 6 members in order to include a female; before this the board only had male members.

[79] This includes the coordinator.

7.2.3 THE ESSENTIALS OF THE CASES

7.2.3.1 SOME INITIAL DETAILS ON THE CASES

In table 14 some details are presented on the cases. The number of member organisations included in the table is based on the list of member organisations published on the website of each case near the end of the funding period. This means that this number includes also the new member organisations which have been added to the consortium in the operational phase.

The duration of funding was in several cases extended, such as in the Funding Agency Case, but this information is not made public centrally and thus is very difficult to find. The duration of the funding presented below is thus the period for which funding was initially granted.

The different types of groups that have been described in the consortium agreements of the cases will be described in more detail in the next section.

7.2.3.2 THE DIFFERENT POSITIONS/GROUPS IN THE CASES

Governance group

In all cases but one a governance group was formally established. In table 15 the varying names used to refer to this group are presented. As can be seen, each case has chosen its own name for the governance group. All governance groups, however, consist of representatives of all members. In one case, however, in addition to the representatives of all members, associated members are also represented, though not individually. The associated members have chosen a collective representative who will speak on their behalf. In one case there is no governance group formally established.

Management group

In all cases except one a management group was formally established. In table 16 the different names which the cases use to refer to this group are presented. Two different types of management groups exist. In the first type the members of the management group are the leaders of the work groups. In the second type the members of the management group have been chosen (by the network or the initiator). One case has a combined governance/management group. Its name has been presented on the list of governance groups as all member organisations are represented in this group.

Table 15   Names of governance groups (in alphabetical order)

Name of governance group	Members
Institutional Board	Representatives of member and associate organisations
Network Council	Representatives of member organisations
Network Governing Board	Representatives of member organisations
Steering Committee	Representatives of member organisations

Table 16   Names of management groups (in alphabetical order)

Name of management group used	Members
Executive Committee	Cluster chairs (and deputies) and scientific director
Network Coordination Committee	Network Area Board chairs and coordinator
Network Executive Committee	Initiator chosen individuals
Network Steering Committee	Network area chairpersons and coordinator

Table 17   Names of work group groups (in alphabetical order)

Name of work group used	Members	Reporting
Cluster sub-committee	Work package leaders and task leaders	Via the cluster chair or deputy to the executive committee
Network Area	To be decided upon by the group	Via network area chair to the network steering committee
Network Area Board	Representative of member organisations participating	Via the network area chair to the network coordination committee
Work package	To be decided upon	Via the work package leader to the steering committee
Work Package Committee	Representative of member organisations participating	Via the work package leader to the executive committee

Work groups

The work groups are groups which are to execute the activities, or work. These groups are also referred to by various names, as can be seen in table 17. Although a work group may have several participants from one member organisation, the decision-making is limited to representatives of the member organisations participating or leaders of work packages or tasks. In two cases the membership was not prescribed in the consortium agreement and could be decided upon by the group itself.

Coordinator and administrative assistance

The Commission demands each consortium it funds with Network of Excellence funding to nominate a coordinator with responsibilities for at least communication with the Commission and financial administration of the funds received from the Commission. Each of the cases has therefore a coordinator. In all cases except one, 'coordinator' refers to both the coordinating institute and the person responsible, though more often to the person than to the institute. In one case 'coordinator' refers solely to the coordinating institute, while the person responsible is called scientific director.

The coordinator, presumably because of the responsibilities towards the Commission, has the overall responsibility for network administration. In all cases, a separate administrative group is present to support the coordinator with the network administration. Based on the consortium agreements, the following overall structure of the network administration can be expected:

- three of the cases (the Friendship Case, the Long-Term Collaboration Case, and the Social Network Case) fall into the category of the coordinator performing administrative tasks supported by (a team of) assistant(s)
- one of the cases (the Cross-Discipline Case) falls into the category of a manager with (a team of) assistant(s) performing administrative tasks and reporting to the coordinator
- one of the cases (the Funding Agency Case) falls into the category of an external organisation in charge of network administration under supervision of the coordinator

In one of the cases (the Long-Term Collaboration Case) the consortium agreement was, however, not followed. In practice this case has had an external organisation in charge of network administration.

Advisory group

Each case also has an advisory group. The advisory group often comprises a small number of external specialists who are asked to advise the consortium on, for example, its future activities.

Additional groups

In addition to the groups as mentioned above, the cases often have one or more panels or committees or may set these up when needed. One more common committee that is mentioned in the consortium agreements is the Intellectual Property Rights committee or panel which is to advise on issues concerning intellectual property rights.

7.3 THE ANALYSES OF STEERING PROCESSES

This section presents the approach to analysis; my perspective on analysing qualitative data. Thereafter I present the process of analysis, the different methods of analysis used and the tools that have been used to aid the analysis. At the end of the chapter the choice for changing to theorising meta-organisation is reflected upon. In addition, I reflect on the whole process of gaining understanding.

7.3.1 THE APPROACH TO ANALYSIS

Swanborn (2010) presents five different traditions or strands of methods for analysing case studies: "the 'Yin' tradition, 'qualitative' approaches, the 'Miles and Huberman' techniques, time-series analysis, and Ragin's logic" (Swanborn, 2010, p. 113). The approach in this thesis falls in the strand of 'qualitative' approaches. The grounded theory approach of Strauss and Corbin is the most well-known in this category.

I have used some ideas of grounded theory and I have been inspired by Charmaz's (2006) presentation of grounded theory, though I have not followed the approach presented by Charmaz in detail. Most influential in developing my approach to analysis as well as in creating a critical perspective on analysis has been Coffey and Atkinson's book '*Making Sense of Qualitative Data*' (1996).

Analysis of qualitative data is a process of organising and interpreting data. This process includes steps such as structurally going through data, selecting and labelling parts of the data that seem to say something useful in relation to the questions posed to the data (coding), reviewing the different parts that have been labelled with the same label to see how they link or if they actually belong to the same label (retrieving and segmenting). It also includes thinking through how a label possibly relates to other labels (theorising), checking if this is the case (reanalysing) and writing down reflections (memoing) as well as results (reporting, presenting) and checking if these

reflections and results do justice to the data as a whole. These steps can and often will be done several times and do not need to follow each other in a sequential fashion; the structure of the process can be more random, simultaneous or reversed (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Silverman, 2000, 2001).

Interpreting is an integral part of qualitative analysis. Interpretation is a constant movement between seeing and saying. As Gadamer puts it: "The text [that which is to be interpreted] brings an object into language, but that it achieves this is ultimately the work of the interpreter. Both have a share in it." (Gadamer, 1979, p. 350). This means that gaining some insight into the meanings of the data to be interpreted and writing about these readings is important because it makes one's interpretations explicit. At the same time, though, the actual object that has been brought into language should not be forgotten because it is the inspiration and the base for the interpretation. The expressed interpretations and readings thus need to keep a close connection with the original data.

Organising is another essential part of analysis. Organising here is understood as bringing order into what is being seen and thereby supporting interpretation. This includes coding, retrieving of information, picking apart a text to put it together in a new way. Along the lines of the previous paragraph, an important demand on the process of reorganising is to make sure that it stays possible, when interpreting, to check if the reorganising still does justice to the original text which brought an object into language.

7.3.2 METHODS OF ANALYSIS

In this research project several different sets of data were analysed. The analyses of the pilot interviews, the consortium agreements, and the case interviews had different aims and used different approaches. Some followed a more grounded theory approach, such as the analysis of the pilot interviews[80]. Some followed a more structured, quantitative approach inspired by Miles and Huberman (1994), such as the analysis of the consortium agreements[81]. The analysis of the case studies used the conceptual framework of steering processes, as presented in chapter seven, to organise and focus the analysis.

The interview data of the case studies[82] was first transcribed, and then coded in NVivo along with the interview themes (such as history of the collaboration,

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[80] Results of this analysis are presented in chapter 3.

[81] Results of this analysis are presented in chapter 4 (part two).

[82] Section 7.2 presents in detail the data that was included in the analysis.

development of the collaboration, the planning process, changes in the consortium, and description of the process of important decisions made) and the consortium agreement data dealing with the organisational structure.

The steering processes analyses of the case data, as well as their presentation, follow the structured approach as mentioned. This has been chosen in order to be able to observe and point out if particular elements of the processes are absent in the data. In addition, the structured approach helps to create relevant cross-case, cross-phase and cross-method analysis[83]. Furthermore, the structured approach has helped to deal with the volume of data, while making it possible to get all observations relevant to all elements to be included in the analysis. That is, it has made the analyses more reliable.

Two different sequences of analysis utilised the steering processes conceptual framework presented in chapter seven. In the first sequence the aim was to find out the similarities and differences in the way the cases organised the different governance, management and administration processes. The themes were divided into: (1) themes dealing with the initiation phase and (2) themes dealing with the operational phase. The data about each phase and about the responsibilities given to particular individuals or groups were then coded further with coloured pens showing if a particular piece of text indicated something about governance, management, or administration processes. If one piece of text indicated something about several of these processes, these colours were added in the margin. After this, each piece of text with the same colour, thus saying something about the same process, was collected into one document. This was all done manually because NVivo did not offer a convenient way of looking at the text fragments in their two contexts, the original text and the coding. This was followed by coding the text fragments based on the element of governance, management or administration which the fragment is relevant to. When this was work finalised, the results on each element were written out in detail and the pieces of data were interpreted, looking for similarities and differences between the cases. This way of working especially aided a cross-case analysis, providing a picture of similarities and differences on each process element in detail. It was, however, extremely difficult to get a clear insight into each case or about the links between the concepts, as each element had been extracted from its context. In

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[83] The presentation of this detailed analysis is included in appendices 5-10. The moving of this analysis from the main text to the appendix was deemed necessary due to both the length of the main text, and thus readability of the thesis, as well as due to the shift in focus to the theorising of meta-organisations. The presentation of central events and structure was thereby seen as sufficient following the argument. As the theorising still draws on insights gained from the detailed analysis, the detailed analysis was still included in the appendix.

the presentation of the results of this sequence it became necessary to explain repeatedly how the context of particular cases influenced the way of organising. The presentation of the results started to suffer as a result, becoming more and more repetitive and vague. Therefore, conclusions were also becoming extremely hard to draw out to a more general level, as for this a clear picture of the whole cases was necessary.

A second sequence of analysis started to reconnect the separate pieces back to the cases. The already analysed data was reorganised into a presentation per case. This was done to make it easier to get and give a good overview of the particularities and context of the cases and the way in which the generic intertwining processes of governance, management and administration were organised. This second sequence was not part of the initial plan for the analysis, but it became an excellent method for checking the correctness and completeness of the cross-case analyses performed in the first sequence. Issues that in particular cases had not found their way into the presentation of the cross-case analysis, as well as issues that had stayed vague or unclear became obvious and could be checked and reflected upon. The presentation of the analysis was then set against the data of the whole case again for a check.

Near the end of the second sequence of analysis, it became clear that the cases and the analysis performed could, besides using the concept of meta-organisation to give insight into the setting of the cases, also be used to further theorise meta-organisation. The cases which all worked with indirect resources for all activity undertaken, did give valuable insights into the particularities of meta-organisations with indirect resources. The meta-organisation theory presented could then be tested against these cases as well as new conditions were found that would extend the theory, especially in relation to the use of indirect resources. This means that the data analysis presented in the thesis concerns the issues relevant and contributing to meta-organisation theory. The analysis follows the assertions and hypothesised conditions as discussed in chapter six. The within-case analyses as well as the cross-case analysis which were the result of the second sequence of analysis are presented in appendices 5-10 to provide a more detailed understanding of the cases.

7.3.3 RECONSTRUCTION OF CENTRAL EVENTS AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

In order to assist the understanding of the particularities of each case as well as the comparative elements across cases two additional steps were taken. First, central events in the network-building phase, as well as in the operational phase, were reconstructed. Central events were considered central when the event was mentioned or used by a minimum of two, but often more interviewees within a case while commenting upon the decision-making or the management of the network. Second, a picture of the organisational structure is drawn based on the descriptions of responsibilities, structures and linkages in the consortium agreement. The central

events and the organisational structure of the cases constructed will be presented in chapter 8.

The aim has been to make these authoritative accounts as reliable as possible. According to Swanborn (2010), case studies can often be criticised for permitting many interpretations among which it is not possible to choose one in any sensible way. The solution suggested by Swanborn is enriching the case data and thereby increasing the degrees of freedom. Many independent data that support a certain interpretation among many alternatives make that alternative more credible (Swanborn, 2010).

The reconstruction of the network-building phase and operational phase draws mainly on the interview material, so that the events are identified from the statements of various interviewees. In addition to the interview data available written documents have also been used when applicable. The organisational structure is drawn mainly based on the description in the consortium agreement. Interview and other material are used in order to increase the degrees of freedom of the source data, when the reading has been ambiguous. In addition, if the description of the practice differs from the contractually described structure, this is discussed.

The presentation of the results of the reconstruction analysis will be supported by quotes from interviews or documents when possible. These excerpts have been chosen based on relevance and clarity, and to give an insight into the way particular pieces of documentary text have been interpreted. Where there are contradictions, both original texts will be presented. I will then, if needed, discuss the texts and argue which of the texts is more probable to have been (closer to) reality. In these cases I may present other data to clarify statements (such as information from the website of the case, reports, promotion material, etc.).

7.3.4   *CHALLENGES FOR THE ANALYSIS*

As presented in part two of the thesis, the aims of the thesis and focus during the data-gathering was different to how the thesis initially developed. The data was originally gathered with the aim of analysing the organisational structure, managerial responsibilities and decision-making processes. It is ultimately used to analyse the organising of the generic intertwining processes of governance, management and administration, which in turn is used to develop meta-organisation theory. This is not without its challenges.

The analyses of the steering processes concentrated on the meta-organisational and group levels as most of the interviewees were in managerial positions on these levels and were asked to describe processes in most detail on these levels. In addition, all relevant documents focused on the meta-organisational and group level. The data

collected thus gave little opportunity to analyse the individual level. Questions that tackled the decision-making processes did in some interviews provide glimpses of governance, management and administration processes at the individual level. When relevant to understand the case or the way of organising governance, management or administration processes these are included in the presentation of the case. These insights are, however, in most cases based on only one source which makes these findings less reliable than the analyses at the group and meta-organisational level; on group and meta-organisational levels individual statements have been cross-checked with those of other interviewees, as well as with available documents when applicable.

Another issue is that the data gathered focused on decision-making processes, which means that the data does not in an even manner show all elements of the governance, management and administration processes. This does not mean that these elements are less important or less central elements of these processes, for example planning and organising in management processes feature more centrally than do monitoring, coordinating and motivating, as planning and organising were specifically asked about in the interview situation.

Finally, the interviewees in the cases were occupying different functions simultaneously. The challenges this creates for the analysis and the ways this challenge was handled have been already discussed in detail in section 4.3.

7.4 THEORISING PROCESS

The theorising process concerning meta-organisations has been an iterative process spread out over different phases of gaining understanding. This process started from getting acquainted with the initial assertions by Ahrne and Brunsson (2008) which form the basis of the theory. These initial premises and the consequences of these premises were reflected upon in the fourth phase of gaining understanding. In this phase, the reflections lead to extending the assertions by explicating and clarifying the element of constitutional membership not explicitly discussed by Ahrne and Brunsson (2008). I drew especially on the work of Gulati et al. (2012) as they presented more explicitly some of the issues not discussed by Ahrne and Brunsson (2008). These premises, thus articulated, are described in chapter five.

In this last phase, in which the aim of the thesis changed to making a contribution to meta-organisation theory, the initial premises explained in chapter five are tested in an iterative process against research literature and empirical examples.

The literature used for reflection included inter-organisational relations literature, especially work which focuses on whole networks (such as Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Ostrom, 1990; Provan & Kenis, 2008; and Roberts, 2004), as well as organisation

studies literature focusing on organisations as a broader concept than 'formal' single organisations (such as Ahrne, 1994).

The initial premises presented in chapter five were also, and more importantly, tested against empirical examples. I tested them most extensively with the Network of Excellence cases, utilising both the reconstruction of the central events as well as the detailed analysis of the steering process to actively test the assumptions. In addition, however, I reflected on the premises using my own earlier experience with meta-organisations (especially national and European-level student unions) and tested them as well against other types of meta-organisations, such as the United Nations, FIFA and Star Alliance, information on which I gathered from their internet pages. Finally, I also tested the initial premises by discussing with other researchers and practitioners, most importantly with Pekka Linna, who work and have worked with a variety of meta-organisations.

In the process of testing the initial premises against the literature and the empirical examples of meta-organisations, some issues were clarified, new premises arose, certain issues stayed unclear or issues I thought were clear became less so. This was followed by several rounds of reflection and testing with the full variety of sources, before these questions were dealt with. The whole process resulted in clarifying, refining, elaborating, and refuting different assertions at the basis of meta-organisation theory.

As the aim of extending meta-organisation theory arose in the sixth phase of gaining understanding and the data concerning the Networks of Excellence consortia had been gathered much earlier, there is naturally not a perfect match between the data and the aim. The data provides a limitation to the aimed theorising in three important ways. First, the data was gathered with a meta-organisation or network level of analysis. This means that those claims in the theory which are concerned with effects on or in individual member organisations are not able to be tested. Examples include the claims related to members' identification with and commitment to the meta-organisation. Second, the data gathered focused on governance, management and administrational structures, processes and tasks. This means that broader claims, such as the differentiation of the meta-organisations from other (meta-) organisations, are not testable. Third, all the meta-organisations studied utilise indirect resources. The claims related to direct resources are therefore not testable with this data set. The claims which could not be tested against the Network of Excellence data were tested against the other empirical examples where possible.

The theorising done is presented in detail in chapter nine. Before presenting this, the central events in the Network of Excellence cases are presented in chapter eight to give a more detailed insight into the cases.

8 THE STRUCTURE OF, AND CENTRAL EVENTS IN THE CASES

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In section 7.3 the reconstruction of central events in the initiation phase and in the operational phase, as well as the structure of the case was presented as a key element in the analysis of the cases. This chapter presents this reconstruction of each of the five cases studied.

The reconstruction of central events follows a structured approach, generally following the interview guide themes (see appendix 3) and the organisational presentation in the consortium agreements. First, the initiation phase and the key decisions in this process are presented. This presentation follows the description by interviewees. These are more specific in some cases than in others. The themes, issues and decisions discussed were highlighted by interviewees. Second, the organisational structure chosen for the consortium, as presented in the consortium agreement, is highlighted. In cases where the consortium did not follow the structure in practise, this is explained in more detail. Third, the presentation of the operational phase highlights the decision processes discussed with the interviewees. As the interview guide included questions about planning, reporting and membership decision processes specifically, these are included in most of the presentations. Additional processes presented, such as a change of policy, are case-specific.

The chapter is structured such that each case is presented in a separate section. In each section, first the case is briefly introduced, after which key decision processes in the initiation phase, the consortium structure chosen and the key decision processes in the operational phase are described. Each case description ends with a short characterisation of the case. At the end of the chapter a short cross-case reflection is presented.

8.2 THE FRIENDSHIP CASE

8.2.1 INTRODUCTION

This Network of Excellence consortium was initiated by two colleague-friends who together with three other close colleagues started the preparations for a funding application as Network of Excellence. This initial small group prepared the mission and vision, outlined topics and types of activities, as well as decided on the partners to be invited. From the start, this case had administrative support specialised in preparing successful applications for funding from the Commission. The five initiators and administrator play a central role in the case due to their multiple roles in preparing, presenting and making decisions both during the initiation phase as well as during the operational phase. In addition, it is clearly an expert type of

organisation, with much individual participant responsibility in relation to the activities to be undertaken.

This case is, in terms of number of member organisations, one of the medium-sized Networks of Excellence cases studied[84]. The funding received indicates[85] that this case is medium-sized also in terms of individual participants, as around 100 researchers and doctoral students need to have been proposed to be integrated into the consortium.

8.2.2 THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE OF THE FRIENDSHIP CASE

The process from initiation until the signing of the consortium agreement and the contract with the Commission included a number of steps. What happened in each step and who participated will be described in order of occurrence.

8.2.2.1 INITIATIVE AND EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Five people (later referred to as 'the initiators') developed a collaborative idea over a longer period of time. They had previously collaborated together in a Commission-funded project in Framework Programme four, and wished to continue collaboration. The initiators made a proposal for a project to be funded under Framework Programme five, but were unsuccessful. They, however, maintained collaboration and information exchange even though they had no funding for a formal project.

Two of the initiators (later referred to as 'the main initiators') took the lead when the information concerning Network of Excellence funding possibility was made public. An expert in research funding applications to the Commission who worked at the organisation at which one of the main initiators came from (later 'the administrator') was invited by the initiators to help them with preparing the application. In the first session they discussed the ideas that the initiators had developed. Based on the input of the two initiators, the administrator drafted the expression of interest and submitted it to the Commission.

8.2.2.2 PREPARATION OF A CO-OPERATION SUGGESTION

In the first call for proposals from the Commission, which included a list of different topics, one topic carried the name which had been the title of their expression of

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[84] Medium-sized means that this case falls in the range of 15 to 19 member organisations, with member organisations located in five to nine different countries. The exact number is not given in ensure anonymity of the case.

[85] As presented in chapter two, based on the financial regime announced by the Commission, the size in terms of individual participants can be counted.

interest. When the call came the initiators and the administrator started to discuss how the expression of interest would be extended into a proposal. The initiators and the administrator then came together for a two day meeting, as the administrator described:

> "I think we met once for two days to discuss who would be a partner and what would be the main issues in the consortium, what we were aiming at (...) I think everybody agreed or had a similar picture of what this network could achieve (...). [The discussions concentrated on] ideas how can we [work], what else can we do and how could we integrate this or that."

One of the initiators confirms this process and describes it in a bit more detail:

> "(...) that basically was the vision in our meeting and with this idea we started to work around who was doing what and using our knowledge of colleagues who were in the field and then checking the literature. (...) That was quickly arranged to actually include the essential [groups in the field]. ([Sanne:] Did you then start writing?) No, we, we started to define work packages and tried to group the colleagues into a reasonable set of work packages."

This meeting thus resulted in a first draft outline of the proposal, including the mission and vision of the network and of the work areas, in a list of organisations that would be invited to participate in the network and an initial idea of the division of work group members.

8.2.2.3   RECRUITMENT OF MEMBERS AND DEVELOPING THE PROPOSAL

After the two day meeting, the administrator contacted the potential member organisations and informed them about the initiative.

> "I sent out a short questionnaire for them, who are you, can you describe your group, (...), what do you think the field should achieve in the next five years and these questionnaire answers were the basis for my proposal then."

The specific activities that would be undertaken were thus suggested and further worked out by the different organisations, as one interviewee recalls:

> "The decisions and design concerning the activities were defined by all partners, not only the [initiators] (....). Every partner was implementing ideas and giving fruitful ideas on that subject. (...) So together we did write the appropriate text which was then edited again and well stick [sic] together by [the administrator]."

The administrator thus compiled the different contributions into one proposal. The administrator mentions having worked closely with the main initiators, especially when creating the final version of the proposal. The administrator submitted the application to the Commission.

> "These two were the ones sitting together with me (...) doing the final additions of the proposal. (...) These two really took time to discuss with me whether this could be written like this or should be changed, or whether important aspects were missing and the things we do around the proposal."

The accounts of many interviewees confirm the central role concerning the editing and coordinating the creation of the proposal by the administrator. One of these is included below.

> "For us it was a process where we, well... on a regular basis we were invited to write (...) parts of the paper that had to be written and also got continuously an update on (...) the proposal (...) as it was developing in time."

8.2.2.4   COMMISSION AND THE CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT

When the proposal was retained for funding by the Commission, two issues still needed to be handled. First, the participating organisations needed to sign a consortium agreement. Second, the contract negotiations with the Commission needed to be carried out.

The process that led to the signing of the consortium agreement consists of choosing a template, identifying the issues that would need adjusting, deciding on the adjustments, finalising the agreement, sending the agreement to the participating organisations and collecting the signatures of the different participating organisations. The administrator took care of almost all tasks, except the decision on the adjustments, which was made by the initiators.

One major adjustment the initiators decided on was to nominate people for particular positions instead of electing people to these positions, whereby the initiators were named as network area leaders and therefore formed the network steering committee. Only one member was added to the steering committee from outside the initiating group. Furthermore, the coordinator position was switched from one main initiator to the other main initiator. The administrator said about this process:

> "One decision that we indeed took at that point [in the negotiations with the Commission] was to shift the role of the coordinator. (...) [Main

initiator 1] was supposed to do that, but he turned that idea down. That is
why [main initiator 2] was forced into being the coordinator."

In the same interview it becomes clear that main initiator 1 had successfully been able to get two proposals retained for funding as coordinator. This was then also confirmed to be the reason for turning down the idea of officially becoming the coordinator of this consortium.

The negotiations with the Commission were undertaken by the administrator and the main initiators. During the negotiations, as becomes clear from the quote below, the Commission demanded no changes.

"But these negotiations were not real negotiations, because we got all the
money we wanted, we were allowed to do all the things we wanted to do.
So we just agreed on (...) the starting day."

8.2.3 THE STRUCTURE OF THE FRIENDSHIP CASE

Based on the consortium agreement, the following organisational structure has been drawn.
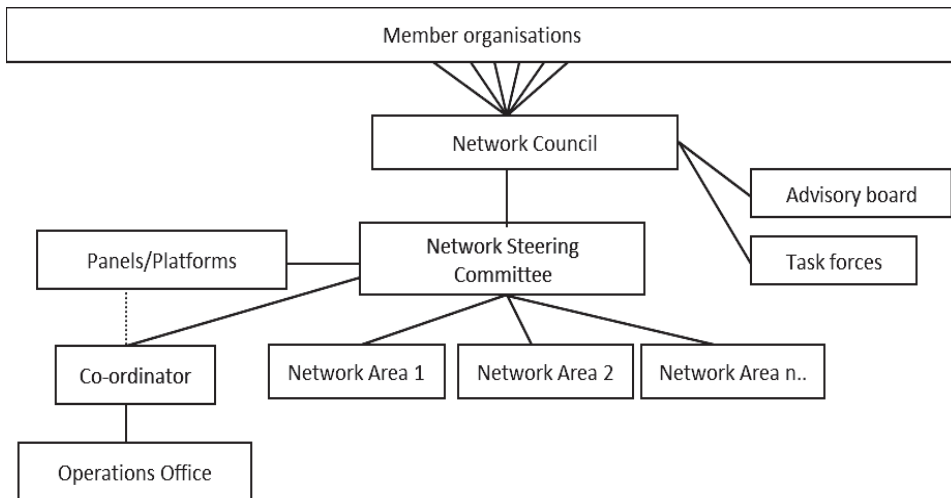
Figure 18   Organisational structure of the Friendship Case

Based on the interviews, however, a few further clarifications can be made. First, in practice the network steering committee members are the heads of the network areas together with the coordinator. These network committee members are also the members of the network council. This means that these members play a central role in this case. The network steering committee is, in an interview with one of the administrators, presented, with a smile, as "*our dictators*" while the network council was presented as approving those decisions.

> *"(...) those five men more or less deciding everything important. And then once a year the general assembly gets a summary of what has been decided and approves of it. This was not very diplomatic, but that is reality. [interviewee laughing]."*

As the network steering committee consists of five men and one woman, this does indicate some interesting issues, though outside the scope of this thesis. Furthermore, it is understandable that the network steering committee is more actively involved as the network steering committee comes together via videoconferencing about once a month, while the network council is assembled only once a year at the annual meeting. As we will see later, the annual meeting is of importance especially in terms of reporting, direction and performance control as well as planning.

Besides the 'dictators' it was mentioned that the two main initiators discuss all issues of importance before the network steering committee and network council meetings. This explains why it is mentioned that no decision is taken without their consent.

> *"(...) all the strategic decisions are taken in between them (...) unanimously."*

Second, the advisory board reports to the network council, but before this the network steering committee and the advisory board meet to discuss the report in detail.

Third, task forces and panels/platforms seem not to have been established.

Fourth, the operations office includes two administrators, one at each of the main initiators' institute, who work together at distance and have contract regularly via email, telephone and conference calls to coordinate their work.

Fifth, the consortium agreement left the structuring and organising of the network areas to be decided by the network areas. In the interviews the network areas are sometimes referred to as work package, while elsewhere they are mentioned as being two different groups. To clarify this, the documents of the case were analysed, which revealed that the network areas consisted of one to four work packages. Three network areas consist of only one work package, while the others have two, three or four work packages. Each of these work packages has one member organisation taking the lead, while other member organisations may participate in undertaking some of the tasks. Some work packages have participants from only one or two member organisations, while others have participants from four or five member organisations. In only a few work packages participants from all member organisations are included. Although each network area concentrates on one theme, the work packages are often very independent from one another.

8.2.4 *THE OPERATIONAL PHASE OF THE FRIENDSHIP CASE*

There have been several processes described by interviewees. The events most often discussed by the interviewees included yearly planning to create implementation plans, the adding of a new work package, the adding of new members, the premature finish of a sub-project and reporting. Each of these will be briefly described below.

8.2.4.1 THE IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

> "We have our annual meeting kind of arranged shortly before the reporting period and so at the time when you have to start thinking about the implementation plan. In that annual meeting the different work packages and network areas discuss what they are, what they have achieved and what they are going to do next.

In the annual meeting, the work package leaders thus report what they have done and present their proposal concerning the work that work package will undertake during the next period. This is then discussed and amended during the annual meeting.

> "And every work package has a head, and that person takes care of this, preparing it and discussing this with all the various group leaders who are part of that particular work package."

The proposals then are redrafted and handed over to the administrative staff. The administrative staff compiles the whole plan to be submitted to the Commission.

> "(…) Then from that the results of these discussions are then kind of rephrased into the new implementation plan which I have to compile, but the work package leaders write the new goals for the work-package and submit that to us together with their budget request. I compile all that, and once it is approved send it out to the partners again, and when it is approved to be kind of technically correctly assembled, we give it to the steering committee and they look over it before we submit it to the Commission"

Although interviewees mention that it is possible to differ from the original plan as outlined in the contract with the Commission, most interviewees indicate, however, that the implementation plans generally do follow the ideas as set out at the start.

> "(…) deliverables have been (…) committed to (…) by partners, and I mean, whatever steps are done in the implementation plans (…) the implementation plans are heading, let's say, towards the final deliverables as agreed upon."
> "If somebody comes with something completely different, then the situation will be subject of further discussion. Provided the work

packages and the objectives do not change much, we don't consider the
necessity of having an in-depth discussion."

8.2.4.2 ADDING A NEW WORK PACKAGE

There have been two new work packages developed during the operational phase. The first new work package was initiated by the steering committee after particular applications for membership were denied because of lack of expertise. As the applications came from one EU region, this was seen as problematic. In order to solve the situation, a new work package idea developed for increasing the expertise in that area. To fine-tune the idea, the steering committee invited some of the denied applicants to discuss their idea at the annual meeting. In this meeting the idea developed further. Thereafter, it was discussed with the advisory committee and presented to the network council at the same annual meeting. The network council approved the idea as well as the suggested resources needed for it. The responsibility for the implementation was given to the administrative personnel.

The second new work package idea came from one of the organisations applying for membership (see also the process of adding new members later). This organisation took the initiative and discussed the initial idea first with member organisations who could be interested in participating in such activity. In the discussions the idea developed somewhat further and was then discussed with the advisory committee and presented to the network council.

> *"We have discussed that (...) during the [place] meeting with the Scientific*
> *Advisory Board. But of course that was much more....indicating, let's say,*
> *this is the direction in which we would like to go."*

As the idea was accepted, a proposal was prepared and in some iterative steps further developed.

> *"Then you have to work it out and you have to get it on paper and that*
> *has been done. (...) I mean the work package has been in some iterative*
> *steps has been finalised now."*

The proposal was then sent to be accepted by the steering committee.

> *It [the proposal for a new work-package] has been sent to the steering*
> *committee and in the next meeting of the steering committee we have to*
> *say yes or no to that proposal."*

From an interview done later, it becomes clear that the work package was accepted by the steering committee and included into the overall plan of activities.

8.2.4.3   ADDITIONAL MEMBERS

In the operational phase three to four new member organisations had been accepted at the time of the interviews. Two different views of the selection process were given. One interviewee refers to an official application procedure which is published on the web-pages of the consortium.

> *"We have an official application procedure, which is outlined also in our webpages so that everybody can find it. And we need a short proposal; that is the CV of the group leader wanting to join and a short exposé why they want to join [this consortium] and which part of the project they want to participate in and what they want to contribute."*

This information is collected by the administrative staff and sent to the steering committee as part of the documents for the meeting. Another interviewee when talking about those members accepted refers, however, to a procedure whereby potential members are proposed by one of the steering committee members.

> *"There must be a proposition (…) from one member of the steering committee."*

This indicates that, although a formal application procedure exists, an organisation will only be considered if one of the steering committee members proposes to accept it and thus will argue in favour of your application.

The steering committee thus selects the potential members it thinks should be accepted. The administrative staff then prepares the network council meeting such that (1) the potential new members were given space to present themselves, (2) the network council had all material about the potential new members, and (3) the budget based on the acceptance of the potential new members. Finally, the network council decides on the proposal to accept these organisations as new members or not.

8.2.4.4   PREMATURE ENDING OF ONE OF THE SUB-PROJECTS WITHIN A NETWORK AREA

One of the sub-projects within a network area was terminated prematurely. The work for the sub-project had not resulted in the promised results during the two years it had received funding from the consortium.

The advisory committee (as advisory committee, but also as mid-term reviewers for the Commission) reviewed the work of the consortium at the annual meeting and pointed at problems already discussed the year before concerning this sub-project which had not been resolved within the year passed.

The advisory committee presented their observations to the network council and advised them to discontinue the work of the sub-project. Although this lead to a discussion in the network council, the network council did not make a decision on what to do. The advice could, however, not be ignored, at least not by the steering committee as the quote below shows:

> *"I mean, we did not establish the Scientific Advisory Board just for fun, as a Steering Committee we had said we would take them seriously (…)"*

The steering committee then decided to discontinue the sub-project. They, however, did also decide not to discontinue immediately, but to grant a further half a year of funding for the group to finalise and report their work.

This meant that the sub-project still got funding for six months to finalise reporting and the deliverables that had been promised for the period still running. In addition, if so wished, the group got the opportunity to re-apply for support in the next period, a year later. No guarantees were, however, given that they would get the support.

8.2.4.5 REPORTING

There are three types of reporting processes. The first type is the content reporting, reporting the activities undertaken, which is done on the work-package level. Each work-package leader reports the activities undertaken by the work-package. When more than one member organisation participates in the work-package, each member organisation reports their activities to the work-package leader who compiles it into one work-package report. These reports are thereafter sent to one of the administrators. This administrator compiles all the work-package reports into the consortium report.

The second type is financial reporting. This is done on the member organisation level. Each member organisation delivers its financial report concerning the part of the Commission funds it received. These separate reports are sent to the administrator dealing with the funding who then combines the separate reports into one consortium report.

The third type of reporting is concerned with reporting or sharing of results. The delivery of the results to the Commission is combined with the content reporting to the Commission. It, however, is very possible that the results were reported or shared within the consortium already far earlier, for example through announcements on the web pages, intranet or extranet. One of the administrators was responsible for publishing the content on the web.

8.2.5 SUMMARISING THE FRIENDSHIP CASE

The Friendship Case is, on the meta-organisational level, characterised by a small group of people preparing and making most decisions. The people in this group had already known each other for a long time, and had also worked together previously. In addition, this group is supported by an administrator, who is an expert in preparing Commission funding applications as well as administering Commission-funded projects. Otherwise, this case is characterised by self-steering participants, who share outcomes, problems and plans within thematic groups to learn from each other and possibly coordinate where this is needed or possible. Further, the advisory group is highly influential in the control processes of this consortium.

8.3 THE CROSS-DISCIPLINE CASE

8.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Cross-Discipline Case was initiated by a small group of colleagues, who selected potential participants with a first idea in mind. These potential participants were then invited to participate in approximately three initiation meetings of the consortium. Financial support for the initiation meetings as well as administrative and expert support was given by the organisation of one of the initiators. This means that there was a potential for rather centralised decision-making. The consortium, however, through the initiation meetings had created a rather strong community capable of withstanding the centralised decision-making. The activities in this case are structured such that participation of participants from different organisations is necessary to complete particular tasks; this led during the operational phase to rather high level of collaboration between the members.

This case is, in terms of number of member organisations, a large-sized Networks of Excellence studied[86]. The funding received indicates[87] that this case is large-sized in terms of individual participants, as around 150 researchers and doctoral students need to have been proposed to be integrated into the consortium.

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[86] Large-sized means that this case falls in the range of 20 to 25 member organisations, with member organisations located in ten to fifteen different countries. The exact number is not given in ensure anonymity of the case.

[87] As presented in chapter two, based on the financial regime announced by the Commission, the size in terms of individual participants can be counted.

8.3.2   INITIATION PHASE OF THE CROSS-DISCIPLINE CASE

8.3.2.1   HISTORY OF THE COLLABORATION

According to one interviewee, the network is an extension of cooperation that has been funded under previous Framework Programmes (3, 4 and 5). This means that there has already been a lot of cooperation between several participants and member organisations before the network was initiated. According to another interviewee, however, the research community in their field was split into factions that wouldn't talk to each other. According to this interviewee there was a lot of competition and distrust in the field. This interviewee does, however, point out a difference to this in the network:

> *"There was a core group of researchers who had a common understanding and trusted each other."*

As the network structures in the previous Framework Programmes were significantly smaller (four or five member organisations), the most likely situation is that there has been a core group that has cooperated previously but did not include all prominent groups in the field, unlike their Network of Excellence in Framework Programme 6.

8.3.2.2   FIRST PREPARATORY MEETING

There was a small founding community of initiators that took action when the EU announced the call for networks of excellence. Central in this 'core group' were two colleagues from an organisation that committed itself to building a Network of Excellence in the field.

> *"(...) when this call for networks of excellence was issued by the Commission, some of us, the core group, came together and laid out a master plan how we could establish such a network."*

The commitment for building a Network of Excellence included the possibility to use the time of experts within the organisation as well as financial contributions to make face-to-face meetings possible.

8.3.2.3   RECRUITMENT OF MEMBERS

In the preparatory meeting the most prominent members of the field were identified. One of the initiators, later to become the coordinator, called these people and presented the matter, and invited them to a meeting at his organisation.

> *"We were invited to cooperate or to begin to write the application by [later to become coordinator] and he invited, I think, about 20 different*

> *groups based on people he thought were likely to contribute to it in constructive ways ...”*

Some of the invited people, however, named other ones that they saw as meaningful cooperation partners and thus suggested or demanded them to be included.

> *“I was invited (...) and I said I would be interested if there is a significant involvement of other people working on [topic x], which is my field.”*

8.3.2.4 PREPARATION OF DIVISION OF WORK

Three or four meetings were held at the organisation of the future coordinator. Initial meetings were full of confrontations and mistrust.

> *“(...) we had a meeting in [location] and sometimes there was some fight [sic] between the partners because ... we have to choose the topics, we have to decide the way of functioning, the name of the cluster, where each partner will go, what we can share and so on, and that was not so easy.”*

One of the difficulties was the difference between concentrating on basic research and concentrating on applied research. This difference, which is also later to be noted in more detail in relation to the consortium agreement, was especially large between the organisation which supported the building of the network (focus on applied research) and the organisations invited (focus on basic research).

A second difficulty was the combination of two rather separate research fields that did not know or trust each other. This meant that there was little familiarity with the work, approach and people across the research fields.

> *“it was a lot ... of competition and distrust ...”*

The face-to-face meetings, however, gradually led to the participants seeing a common agenda.

> *“(...) then over time from all these discussions in the beginning a bit reluctantly but then more and more openly a common ground was found.”*
> *“I was there for – I can’t remember how many – three or four meetings to set it all up, which gradually defined through discussion the shape and content of this ... it started to fall out into four coherent, scientifically coherent clusters.”*

Initially five clusters were constructed. These clusters are areas or topics within which collaborations were foreseen. During the writing of the application, however, two of

these clusters were merged in order to create a more compact application and thus leaving four clusters as the content structure of the network.

> *"We started then to write the application. (...) Then it turned out that it was too much space, because we wanted five different clusters and that was not allowed. So, it was decided that the cluster I am coordinating should involve both [research field A] and [research field B]."*

8.3.2.5   THE SELECTION OF CLUSTER LEADERS

Each cluster was to get a cluster coordinator and a deputy cluster coordinator, who could share the workload.

> *"I was there [in city x] for the second or third meeting, where we more clearly defined what we were going to do. (...) And then I was asked whether I want to be the cluster coordinator with another person and I agreed to do that.*

From the different interviews it did not become clear who made these decisions. It could be that the participants within each cluster themselves chose their coordinators. The other possibility is that the coordinating organisation selected and asked particular people to fulfil these positions.

8.3.2.6   INITIAL POLICIES

Initial policies were also discussed during the face-to-face meetings. One such policy detailed the division of funding.

> *"From the beginning we (...) limited the amount of money the people can gain from the network to a certain amount. (...) We also put into place a competitive function. (...) Each year the money is allocated based on performance-bases. And this we try to do as transparent [sic] as possible. So, performance means of course the standard things, publications, yes, impact factors, then joint-publications, then contributions to network activities, (...) attending meetings, organising meetings, workshops, trying to bring in other financial resources, (...) contributing to development of protocols (...) and management function."*

Although other policies may also have been discussed, these were not mentioned specifically in the interviews.

8.3.2.7   PREPARING THE PROPOSAL

The clusters which were formed during the face-to-face meetings were then to develop a cluster proposal and these cluster level plans would as a whole form the

proposal for a Network of Excellence to be funded by the Commission. The selected cluster leaders were to take the initiative for developing such cluster plans.

Some clusters created their plans very smoothly.

> "We just have to make a very coherent scientific program with people wanting to share something, and having complementarities."

In these clusters there was often a small group of people writing, while the other participants would initially give ideas for what could be done and later would comment on drafts produced.

> "We were the three writing the proposal and we exchanged e-mail and we asked the other partners what they want to do. And very soon we are one cluster."
> "I am the deputy of one of the clusters and we were free to write the program and we wrote it very quickly."

In these clusters the participants were able to connect to other participants relatively easily without needing to modify their plans from what they otherwise would have been doing.

> "(...) in a sense everyone is doing what they probably would have done anyway ... so the only thing that is new about this in one sense was doing it in a concerted manner and agreeing with partners how one would share out the work."

The cluster created by merging two clusters in a rather late stage of the initial meetings included people from two rather separate subfields in the research community. This cluster had a lot of tensions in the beginning, even though the bringing of these sub-fields together was seen as exciting and innovative.

> "And the exciting idea there was ... by comparing [two traditionally separate research topics] it should be possible to get some new ideas or guidelines or statistics for [the field of study of the interviewee] ... initially we just wanted to transfer techniques to each other and thought that these are on the website and that all people should contribute to it ... of course our implications that could be products, but that is not really stated in our deliverables or milestones. It is just knowledge."

When this cluster was writing their proposal everybody was writing their piece, which resulted in too much text and the cluster coordinator felt that required lots of work to get an acceptable proposal. The communication during the writing mostly was via

email, but when there were big disagreements the participants would call one another. In the end everyone in the cluster agreed on the proposal.

When the clusters had developed their proposals, these proposals were sent to the person later to become the coordinator, who compiled these into a shared plan for the whole network.

> "All separate pieces of text from the clusters were sent to [later to become co-ordinator], who compiled them together with his people at his institute."

This whole proposal was then still commented upon in a few rounds and links between different clusters were developed as the idea was that there would be a lot of collaboration between the clusters.

> "(...) the idea is that there should be a lot of collaboration between the clusters."

8.3.2.8 CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT

There was a meeting at which the principles of the cooperation were discussed. After this the administrative personnel of the coordinating organisation prepared a draft of the agreement. The draft led to a controversy about the terms concerning the research results: should the network aim at protecting the intellectual property rights of the results of the network or adopt an open approach. The coordinating institute had a more IPR approach, while the other organisations were driving towards an open approach.

The conflict got to the point where the other members were considering changing the coordinator. The representatives of the Commission also participated in the discussion and supported the stand of those members that were considering changing the coordinator. The coordinating organisation then accepted a more open approach to the results of the work done in the network. A participant who did not work in the coordinating organisation drafted these new terms that were then accepted by all members, and a consensus was reached.

8.3.2.9 CONTACT WITH THE COMMISSION

During the preparation and application process there was close cooperation with the representatives of the Commission.

> "... when we started this, it was very much an evolving thing. I mean a lot of it was done in cooperation, in very close cooperation with the individuals from the European Commission because they also have no

> *idea about many of the issues, you know, because it was new to them too, and so they have the idea of building these networks but they really didn't know, in many cases they didn't know how to do it because they hadn't done it before, so it was a, it was very new to everyone, and there were, you know, it was a very sort of interactive process. It was a little bit strange actually, I was a bit surprised at how it worked because we thought, you know, they sort of said 'you must do this' and we said 'how do we do it', and they said 'well, we don't know' … they were very extensive discussions …"*

It, however, stays unclear when these discussions exactly took place. It is most probable that these discussions were held during the negotiation phase, after the initial proposal was selected as possibly to be funded by the Commission, as this is also the period in which the groups which have been selected are asked to sign a consortium agreement. It is also in this phase that all needs are agreed upon in detail.

On the other hand, the following quote indicates that there was contact with the representatives of the Commission even before writing the proposal, and possible even before other participant organisations were invited.

> *"So, we had at least let's say five to maybe seven meetings in Paris before we actually wrote the application. We also had meetings in Brussels with Commission representatives and discussed with them the issue."*

The consortium was able to solve and agree on all issues amongst themselves and with the Commission and started their operations in the summer of 2004.

8.3.3 THE STRUCTURE OF THE CROSS-DISCIPLINE CASE

The consortium agreement of this case is extensive and describes a rather large and complex structure. The picture drawn based on the consortium agreement (see the picture below) needs a few explanations. First, a clear division is made between the coordinator (which is the coordinating member organisation) and the scientific director (in the other cases referred to as coordinator). Second, the liaison managers, although reporting to the executive committee, are to create inter-linkages between the different clusters. In addition, from the interview material there arises a few issues to point out. First, the liaison managers seem to have never been appointed. Second, the cluster chairs (or cluster deputies if the chairs are unable to go) together with the scientific director form the executive committee. Third, these same people who lead the cluster and form the executive committee are also the representatives of their organisation in the institutional board. In total the chairs and deputies and scientific director together comprise about half of the institutional board members. Fourth, the management office, working at the coordinator institute under the scientific director, included at least a project manager as well as a secretary.
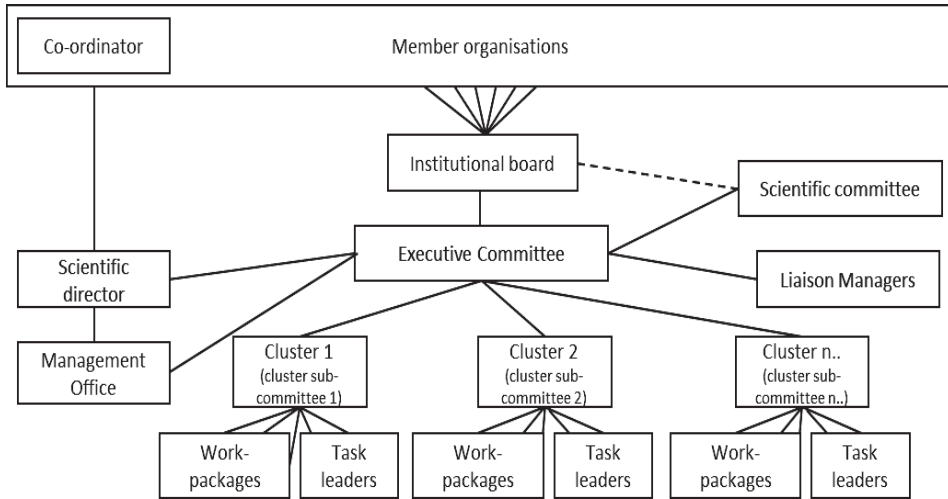
Figure 19   Organisational structure of the Cross-Discipline Case

8.3.3.1   REFLECTIONS ON THE WAY OF WORKING

The analysis of the interviews shows that one part of the work consists of training doctoral students. This activity, however, is organised rather independently from the other consortium activities. The administration and decisions related to the Ph.D. programme are handled by an administrator located in another institute and the cluster coordinator for training. The processes of this part of the organisation were not specifically looked at and will thus be excluded from the analysis.

The Ph.D. programme had, however, a very positive effect on the other processes that will be discussed. The main reason was that supervisors of the doctoral students were assigned from two different member organisations and that this process created far more content-rich understandings of the knowledge and abilities each of these organisations had. This again created better opportunities for collaborative work between these organisations. This created better relations between the different representatives and organisations.

> *"There are really a lot of very good collaborations that have emerged from the network and because of the network, which, I think, would not have been possible without [name of the network] … it somehow changed the how, how, as a [the name of the research field] community, we interact with each other. It made a huge difference, absolutely … More friendly, more open, yeah, less competitive and more respectful, I would say, yeah. So even if we don't agree on each (…) topic, it is not as controversial any more as it once was. We accept the other person's point of view, opinion and we try to understand it and we try to find common ways to solve controversial issues."*

As the members of this case were not familiar with each other and even to some extent were rivals, the initiation phase had been difficult. The face-to-face social meeting helped in seeing people and thus creating trust needed to bridge the gap between the different disciplines.

> *"We had lots of problems when we wrote the application. Then we met, we had this [work group meeting] and we met and drunk a little wine and we talked and we found out that we were absolutely fabulous people and after that there is no problem (…) I mean, you have to get to know each other and of course since we talk a bit a different languages, it is simply essential that you are a little bit informal also."*

Another important issue discussed concerning the way of working is that attending meetings is considered compulsory. As one interviewee stated in relation to being present at the work group meeting during the annual meeting:

> *"Absolutely. It is a must, if they don't, what is the purpose, yeah? Because our main meeting is the only forum where we all come together and we all have to discuss, we have to find new research activities, collaborative activities and if you don't show up, I mean, then you do not participate to the network, yeah?"*

8.3.4 OPERATIONAL PHASE OF THE CROSS-DISCIPLINE CASE

8.3.4.1 THE IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

All interviewees in this case mention that the yearly planning process is relatively simple, something that takes about an hour during the annual meeting. As one interviewee explains:

> *"(…) so at the beginning of the network all of this was put down in writing (…), the aims, the general projects we are going to be taking, how that work was distributed between the partners both within and between the [work groups]. Of course, each year those aims have to be modified partly because of some aims are met and some aims as it becomes clear that they are not going to be attainable. So each year a kind of a new or amended version of those plans has to be made. In practice so far that has really been simple because we simply have taken [laughing] the existing set of aims and simply modify them. You know, it is... so we just, so basically at our [work group] meeting we simply meet for about one hour, we all sit around the table, we have the aims up on a screen and we, you know [laughing].. all in a very open and transparent way. So it has been, it has been very straightforward really it has been very easy."*

The practice of another work group differed substantially as the leader describes:

> *"When we meet in the [work group] meetings, we hear what each other person is doing or thinking about doing and we come up with areas where we can work together and then we each write it up for out particular action. (...) A lot of the planning is done by the individual participant, and of course we listen very carefully what else is happening in the network and being in the network it then makes it a lot easier to establish some collaborative work. So, it happens on the basis of actual opportunities rather than an administrative bureaucratic process".*

This indicates that the planning is done on the individual level, but that on the group level adjustments are made and new shared ideas are created. Another interviewee especially focuses on the last, saying:

> *"Our main meeting is the only forum where we all come together and we all have to discuss, we have to find new research activities, collaborative activities."*

Thus, there are differences within the consortium in the way the planning takes place, whereby some groups take the long-term plan as the starting point and work out how this needs to be modified, while other groups start by seeing which projects are taking place in the member organisations which are member of the group and how these activities could be combined with work others are doing.

8.3.4.2   THE BUDGET

The division of the budget for the first year to the different activities was decided upon by the executive committee. As is mentioned by one of the interviewees:

> *"When we knew the funding we would get from the Commission, the executive committee (...) met and then we decided how, what we should do with the money. And then we decided that we should put priority on integrating through a training programme, whereby always two member organisations are responsible for the training of an individual. Others would have preferred to fund the planned activities themselves, but there was not much money for that."*

Another interviewee reflected on the same, but linked it to the Commission's aims for funding these networks. In addition, this interviewee points out an important issue, that of the difference in the importance of funding.

> *"I mean none of the money for the individual participants is very big money, it's... I mean the aim of the network is to promote networking, is to promote cooperation rather than to fund the science per se. But having said that, of course many of the smaller partners, you know, a Ph.D. student can be a significant help to their budget, and even small amounts*

of funds they get can make a big difference. For other partners who are in bigger institutes or who are well-funded anyway, then it's partly, then it is really just the cooperative aspect of the partnership that I think really is the attraction."

After the first year's budget, the budget suggestions were made by the coordinator and normally were agreed upon without changes and even without much discussion as was explained by one of the interviewees:

"The budget is obviously very complicated because it can be divided in so many ways (...) so the easiest way, basically the coordinator has taken the responsibility for doing this and in general we have passed that unanimously with very little discussion, because once you start to unpick it and say, in the sense that you know, if you get individual groups saying, you know 'I want 5000 more, 10000 more', you know, the discussion would never finish."

The desire was for the budget to be divided in a relatively fair way which made this case to create a ranking system based on the collaboration rules agreed upon in the consortium agreement. The ranking system included, for example, presence at meetings, participation in consortium-wide tasks, as well as the quality of performing the work assigned and reporting what has been done. Based on the information delivered by the member organisation on their contribution, the coordinator creates a budget suggestion. The basic idea behind the ranking system is to make sure that participating organisations only receive funding if they show willingness to participate.

"The people who are not participating have had their budget cut, so there is a striating scale of budget cutting at 50% to 65 % and then by 75% or 80% if people don't attend the meetings or do the report or, you know, generally fall of it."

In some cases, however, the executive committee is involved in making decisions on the budget, especially when based on the evaluation a cut would need to be decided upon:

"One issue [discussed at the last executive committee] pertained to a group that has repeatedly not participated in network activities. We discussed at length what we want to do about it. And so, last year we already reduced funding, and this year we said 'Guys if you don't show up at the next meeting, next [work group] meeting we will reduce your funding to zero'."

Another interviewee referred to the same situation, but approached it differently seeing potential dangers in cutting budgets.

> *"We've got to be quite careful about cutting budgets because it is quite a diplomatic balancing act to keep everyone quite happy, and to avoid personal conflict. That can totally destroy a network."*

8.3.4.3 REPORTING

From the perspective of the representative/participant of a member organisation reporting was especially difficult in the first year, as it was unclear how and what needed to be reported. Based on this experience, action had been taken and forms had been created by the coordinating organisation to make the reporting by the different member organisations easier in the year after.

> *"The first reporting was pretty tough, because I mean it was not web-based and you have to send emails. We didn't know how to report, so it was very confusing. But now it is with a form, so standardised and we all know what we are supposed to do and the coordination [coordinator and a secretary], they are doing it very nicely. And for the finances, of course, with the EU it is problematic, but that you have an administrator to do so you only have to tell them to follow the deadlines."*

8.3.4.4 ADDITIONAL MEMBERS

This consortium had planned to grow in terms of member organisations over time. At the time point in the long-term plan agreed with the Commission, the executive committee decided on the amount of new members to be accepted and announced a call for new members. When the membership applications were received, the participants in each work group were asked to evaluate the candidates for their work group in terms of potential collaboration with these candidates and potential contributions to the work group in general. Based on the evaluations from the work group members, the work group leader made a suggestion to the executive committee concerning the preferred candidates for membership. The executive committee made the final decision.

As the consortium agreement needed to be amended the member organisations did approve the decision by the executive committee. The need to change the consortium agreement was seen as extremely difficult by several interviewees as each member organisation (and several people within these member organisations) needed to sign these amendments.

Associate membership applications were not discussed with the work group participants, but only within the executive committee. They also decided on the

candidates that would be accepted. This decision did not demand a change in the consortium agreement.

8.3.5 SUMMERISING THE CROSS-DISCIPLINE CASE

The Cross-Discipline Case is characterised by having all or almost all member organisations actively participating in the governance and management processes on the meta-organisation level, while the administrative processes related are delegated to one of the member organisations. This case is, on the group level, characterised by largely self-steering groups. Specific to this case is the formalised process of control to prevent free-riding, whereby the potential punishment for not participating is that funding may be cut. Finally, meetings are seen as very important, as the time when the organisation really comes to life.

8.4 THE LONG-TERM COLLABORATION CASE

8.4.1 INTRODUCTION

This Network of Excellence has a long history of attempts to collaborate. Collaboration has however, never been viable due to the lack of funding. This case is the only one where the collaboration was initiated by the directors of the organisations and not as in the other cases by the individual participants. The collaboration had received financial support from the Commission in Framework Programme 5. The Network of Excellence application included more member organisations. One member was added to take care of all non-core activities, such as administration, meeting organising, reporting and roughly ten organisations working on the core activities were also invited. The ideas for collaboration that had been discussed during the FP5 period were used as the basis for the application. Thus most of the preparation work for the application was done by the members of the FP5 network and only one or two of the new members contributed to the application more extensively. This led to the situation where the earlier included members had more central positions.

This case is, in terms of number of member organisations, one of the medium-sized Networks of Excellence cases studied[88]. The funding received indicates[89] that this case is small-sized in terms of individual participants, as around 50 researchers and doctoral students need to have been proposed to be integrated into the consortium.

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[88] Medium-sized means that this case falls in the range of 15 to 19 member organisations, with member organisations located in five to nine different countries. The exact number is not given in ensure anonymity of the case.

[89] As presented in chapter two, based on the financial regime announced by the Commission, the size in terms of individual participants can be counted.

This number of participants is lower than in the other medium-sized cases. This might be explained by their focus on integration through creation of policies, rather than on undertaking shared research. The collaboration in this case focuses on an organisational level, whereas the collaboration in the other cases focuses more on collaboration between individuals, research groups or departments.

8.4.2   THE INITIATION PHASE

8.4.2.1   HISTORY OF THE COLLABORATION

Several interviewees referred back to different times at which similar collaborations had been seen as necessary. The quote below is one of these:

> *"I think that many of the questions raised here now have been touched upon already some twenty years ago, but the problem there was that although the problems were seen and were discussed, no-one could go into detail of these points because of lack of money".*

One interviewee described the role of the Commission in the initiation of this earlier network:

> *"I think it was a proposal initially from Brussels watching the progress in [country x]. And then the proposal came forward probably as a throwaway remark, but you know how these things gather pace. And then there was an invitation thrown out to a number of countries where [the topic] was seen as a strength to come together for preliminary meeting and prepare a grant application, and the timing was right, and it progressed quite well."*

One interviewee explained the need to define the areas that they could work on:

> *"At the beginning, partly because we weren't quite sure what we were supposed to be doing, it is only over the, over a number of years that we are really now quite sure about what we're doing. (…) What was needed here was to define really, get to the bottom of why we had been brought together and what we would gain from working together, and what we could deliver to the European Community who were funding."*

8.4.2.2   INITIATION OF THE PROCESS TO GET NETWORK OF EXCELLENCE FUNDING

None of the interviewees mentioned the initiation explicitly. This may be because the idea of continuing the network was inbuilt into the aims of the earlier network. The project manager was the only one of the interviewees mentioning the initiation of the continuation:

> *"(...) then we got this call for the 6th Framework Programme and we decided ok, we add ten other [organisations] in Europe and we write this proposal for this Network of Excellence."*

As discussed in chapter five, it did not always become clear who is being referred to when an interviewee in this setting uses 'we': this is one of these occasions. It is very possible that the 'we' is the coordinator and project manager – who are both located at the same member organisation. On the other hand, the 'we' can also refer to the participants of the earlier network.

8.4.2.3   ADDITIONAL MEMBERS

In the process of preparing the Network of Excellence ten new members were added. Only one interviewee discusses the selection of new members. This interviewee, who was not fully happy with the choices made, stated that:

> *"I think that the second network was increased in number because of two reasons. One of them was for research or scientific reasons and the other one was for political reasons."*
> *"Probably we have had some instructions from the European Community saying that we have to involve other people in certain places or in certain countries."*

When asked about the decision process in which new members were added this interviewee replied:

> *"I know that some of them [new members] have applied, but others have not, I don't know if they have applied or not or I don't know exactly how the mechanism was for including other groups"*
> *"I suppose that was a kind of conversation between the coordinator (...) and the European Community".*

This indicates that additional members were not accepted or discussed with all the participants of the earlier network. The same interviewee, however, also gave a more nuanced picture later on, at least in terms of discussing and accepting one of the new organisations:

> *"I think it was [administrative assistant of the previous project] or [coordinator of the previous project] who proposed this [organisation, specialised in administrative support to Commission projects]. But just at the very beginning. So, we met, I don't remember exactly the place, but [this organisation] presented (...) the work. And well we approved that this was (...) a way to carry it out all this process."*

Based on the data, I conclude that the choice for adding additional members was made by the coordinator. In addition, the invited organisations were most likely decided upon by the coordinator. In both cases the deputy coordinator may have participated in the decisions. Furthermore, not all organisations that were initially invited wished to participate, as becomes clear from the following statement of the project manager:

> *"But there were also other partners that we wanted to have included (...), but they didn't want to join this project."*

8.4.2.4   THE THEMES OR AREAS AND DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The perspective on this process is different depending on when one had joined the network. The meetings of the earlier network were extensively used to discuss ideas and plans which were then used in the proposal for the next network.

> *"Actually all of us, one way or another, [was involved in the preparation of the Network of Excellence application], because we had the meetings [of the earlier network] also during that preparation time. (...) Actually many of the work packages were (...) detailed already in the [earlier network]. (...) Each of us had one or more work packages based on what we considered during our discussion [in the earlier network] to be relevant. And then these ten additional groups, they basically just went into those work packages that they considered of interest or then they had own new work packages."*
> *"(...) we had the meetings also during the preparation time and then during these meetings all highlighted issues regarding each particular detail were discussed"*

The project manager who had been hired for the earlier network was also involved in coordinating the writing of the application for the Long-Term Collaboration Case. He talks about the same division of labour when making the following observation: "*Honestly, the new ten partners, besides [one], they did not contribute to this proposal so much, they just added the official things.*"

8.4.2.5   THE APPLICATION FOR NETWORK OF EXCELLENCE FUNDING

From the interview with the project manager it becomes clear that the writing of the application was started about three months before the deadline.

> *"Three months before [the deadline] I started to collect all the, what they need from the other partners."*

The administrative support organisation, which was one of the new organisations, also seems to have contributed to this process. The interviewee from this organisation

(hereafter referred to as administrator) had not participated personally as she had not been hired yet. She however said:

> "I was told that the application was mainly processed by two of my colleagues and by [project manager] and of course [coordinator] well took most of the important decisions, and I understand that there were also consortium meetings during the process of application, but I cannot tell you exactly how the decisions were taken."… "It was lucky for me that there was already the proposal for the first project. On the basis of this proposal (…) I wrote the proposal for the new project."

8.4.2.6   CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT

> "There was a first version made available by our national contact point [of the Commission], and this was reviewed by us and adapted to our project structure, and then we, as I said, circulated it to all the legal departments [of the member organisations]. They would give me their comments, things that they could not agree at all and things like that. Then I tried to find a compromise with each, and I was also supported by the legal department of the [coordinating member organisation] and, yeah, then it took some months before we found a solution or version which could be signed by all the [members]."

The 'we' this interviewee is talking about seems to be the coordinator and the interviewee herself, perhaps the project manager as well. This approach also means that the actual participants and even the representatives of most member organisations have not seen or read the consortium agreement.

> "I doubt that other partners have actually read the document."

It is likely that the interviewee here meant by 'partners' the participants in the governance group as she stated that the legal departments of the member organisations had reviewed the document.

8.4.3   STRUCTURE

Based on the consortium agreement the following organisation structure could be drawn. It is important to know that the representatives in the network governing board are expected to have the authority to bind the member organisation to the decisions made.
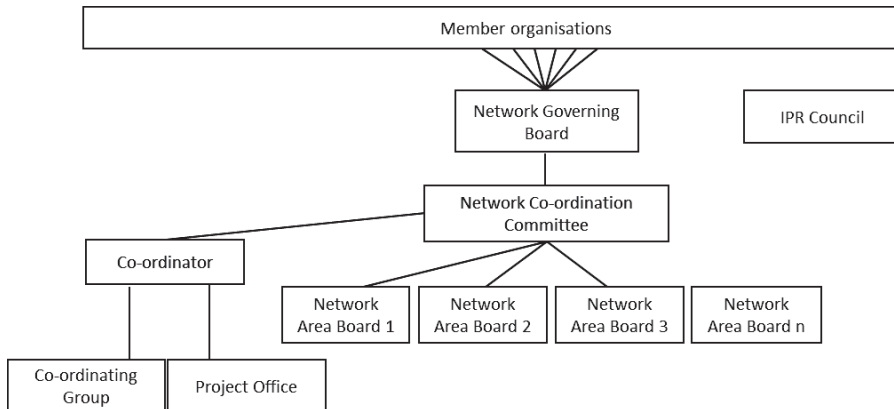
Figure 20   Organisational structure of the Long-Term Collaboration Case

Based on the interview data a few further explanations need to be given. First, the coordinating group, which has especially an advisory task in relation to the coordinator, is not active, as can be noted from the following quote:

> "That would be the coordinator (…) and four others, and if you're going to ask me the names, I do not remember as I don't believe we have met, as a group [interviewee laughing]."

Second, the consortium agreement states that the coordinator is responsible for the administration of the consortium, including the financial administration and the administrative and coordinative side of the reporting to the Commission. In practice, however, the administration has been split between two member organisations: the coordinating member organisation where both the network coordinator and a project manager (also referred to as deputy coordinator) are located and the administrative member organisation, a professional project management company, which has hired one person to perform the tasks allocated to them and to represent the organisation.

Many of the interviewees reflected on the role, influence and consequences of having included this administrative member organisation as well as on the task division between the coordinating member organisation and the administrative member organisation. In relation to the tasks the administrative member organisation performs and the consequences one interviewee said:

> "They deal with all of that administration side and they do it excellently, and they take it away from us effectively, just reminding us on occasion when we need to do something about it. So that actually works very well, it has removed a lot of the administration required from our shoulders."…They do play a major part. This Network of Excellence would not work as well if we didn't have them, I can tell you that for a

> *start [interviewee laughing]. Basically because any academic, and the*
> *coordinator is an academic professor, any academic could not spend the*
> *amount of time required to do the administration."*

One interviewee also reflects on the influence of the representative of the
administrative member organisation in the network:

> *"We call her [the representative of the administrative member*
> *organisation] our controller. (…) She controls everything. She's more,*
> *probably more powerful than the coordinator in the sense that she keeps*
> *everything going at the right time. (…) I mean the meetings where we are*
> *meant to make democratic decisions, it's [the representative of the*
> *administrative member organisation] who tells us what decisions we*
> *have got to make [interviewee laughing], but we have got to decide*
> *basically. (…) [The coordinator] has delegated a lot to [her]."*

8.4.4   THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

8.4.4.1   A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE PROCESSES DISCUSSED

The processes related to the yearly activity planning (also referred to as
implementation plan) and the reporting which are necessary due to the demands of
the Commission were specifically asked about in each interview. Besides these
defined processes, interviewees were also asked to describe decision-making
processes related to areas they saw as important for the consortium or that created
changes in the consortium. The topics of the processes taken up by most interviewees
are: changes in membership, development of a policy on authorship, and changes of
existing plans or new additional plans. These processes will be reconstructed in this
section using quotes of interviewees were possible.

8.4.4.2   DIFFERENT TYPES OF NETWORK AREAS AND THEIR WAY OF WORKING

The aims of the Network of Excellence seem to fall into three different types. First,
there are network areas that work on sharing and describing processes, procedures
and practices of the member organisations and aim at learning from one another.
Second, these same network areas often also work on identifying non-matching
processes, procedures and practices of member organisations which prevent active
collaboration and aim at harmonising those processes, procedures and practices to
make collaboration possible. Third, there are different types of network areas that
aim at developing as well as sharing new cutting edge research methodologies.

One of the interviewees described the way of working in the following way:

> *"It has been an interesting one to watch that evolve, because at first there*
> *is complete denial by the partners involved. It's just left on the table as an*

area of difference, and then we come back to it and look at it again, and gradually, gradually the message spreads that this is probably the best and most acceptable way to do it. And you find by the next meeting that the partner has actually taken steps to put that in place. And so the acquired shift in behaviour which results from not one discussion, not two discussions, but a number of face-to-face discussions and listening to the views around the table, very important. And it, this all does depend on acquired, non-confrontational diplomatic progress in conversation, I think. You can't impose these things rapidly on people, it has got to evolve."

In addition, those that do take part in a network area are seen as the ones that would make sure that the consortium makes progress on that area. This also includes the right to decide:

"I think there is an implicit understanding that the people who do the work are the ones who make the decisions on each, each individual part, but we try to achieve consensus on the major issues (...).

8.4.4.3   *THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY PLAN FOR THE NEXT YEAR*

One of the network area leaders described the process as follows:

"What happens certainly with mine, as the work package leader[90], I make the initial plan. At our gatherings every six months I will present the work which has been carried out in the past period, but also the plans for the next period. (...) It is discussed at that meeting. So, I present it to everyone[91], and then on the second day of the meeting, this is the annual meeting actually, we then will meet together in those small groups, so the work package leader with all of those involved in that work package will then meet together and discuss the plan. And from my experience you get some input into it and may need to change a few things, but then the work package leader then puts any changes in place and submits that to the coordinator. (...) It is mainly the people involved in [a particular work package that comment on the network area plan], which will be a different number for each work package to be honest. Mine is a reasonably big one with about ten people involved, but usually if you

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[90] In the consortium agreement this is called the chair of the network area board, while interviewees talk about work package leaders.

[91] Everyone refers to all participants in the annual meeting. Although it has not been explained in detail, it seems that all those participating in the work are invited to the annual meetings and that one part of this meeting is the governing board meeting.

> *have got a good plan, they don't insist on any changes [interviewee laughing]."*

The accounts above are a typical description of the process, as another interviewee, for example, describes:

> *"Involved is of course the work package leader, he should give a layout of the... of the new programme for the next 18 months usually. And this should be of course after discussion with the people that are also involved in this work package, but should be written by the work package leader."*

The budget preparation process, which is prepared together with the implementation plan, was not discussed at any length by interviewees in this case. The few references made to the budget, confirm that the budget for the consortium including the different network areas is prepared by the representative of the administrative member organisation and discussed and agreed upon by the network governing board. After this, the chairs of network area boards (also referred to as work package leaders) can decide upon the use of their own budget. One comment, however, indicates that the budget was already agreed upon at the outset and thus that only changes in the agreed division would need tackling:

> *"[talking about new members joining the network] (...) the money is the problem, because this is already, of course it was somehow divided between the partners for the next five years, and so everybody has to, you know, the budget will be reduced from each partner somehow to give the money to the new one."*

After the meeting in which the reports of the previous period (see the section concerning reporting) and the plans and budget for the coming period are discussed, the project office – the deputy coordinator and the representative of the administrative member organisation – will make a full package including all documents needed and submit the reports, plans and budget to the Commission.

8.4.4.4   CHANGING EXISTING ACTIVITY PLANS AND MAKING ADDITIONAL PLANS

> *"In a sense, we are, have, we were allowed to reformulate the work package, so the milestones, reformulate some of the milestones and some of the deliverables. (...) We thought of a completely different approach as proposed by the former work package leader. (...) That is why [deputy coordinator] came himself to [place] to see what, how we were doing it and what our first drafts were, how they looked like and as soon as he saw that it was, the quality was okay, and he anticipated that we would manage some of the milestones and deliverables, then they gave us quite some free hands to fill it in."*

Also, when a work package is ready, or is unable to proceed further, other work packages can be started.

> *"So, we have not prepared this kind of work package, but we are trying to do that because we think that is important and we can do that. (…) We have a proposal for example, I can do a proposal and this proposal has to be approved by others [by representatives of all the members]."*

8.4.4.5 REPORTING TO THE COMMISSION

The deputy coordinator said about the reporting:

> *"So we have to do the reporting to the Commission, the [work package leaders] have to do a report on their [work package] and each [member organisation] has to write a report on all the work that [they] did for all [work packages]. So, we have these two reports, and then I have to read them and to approve them, check them".*

Other interviewees, however, mention that these reports have to be delivered before the consortium meeting and that each work package leader presents the progress made during the meeting. The representative of the administrative member organisation, for example, mentions:

> *"It [the reporting] is kind of put together with the preparation of the meetings, because usually we ask the work package leaders to deliver the progress reports before the consortium meeting, so that their presentation at the meeting goes in line with what they delivered in the report to the Commission. And here this is the point where we can discuss everything and review it if necessary."*

In one interview it does, however, become clear that the deputy coordinator actively reviews the reports delivered and checks the results with the plans that were made:

> *"He reminds us as sometimes when there is something that we have not done and also if we appear to be deviating from what we originally planned to do, he will often question us on that".*

Others also discussed the reporting. The representative of the administrative member organisation, for example, notes that she is responsible for the overall reporting process, but that the deputy coordinator is responsible for the scientific content side of the report. This is also confirmed by the deputy coordinator:

> *"All the documents, all the audit certificates and all for the financial management, this all is collected by the [administrative member organisation]."*

The representative of the administrative member organisation has developed a software tool which other interviewees also refer to when talking about the process of reporting and planning. The software tool was developed to make the planning and reporting process easier, support the preparation of meetings and to make it easier to monitor progress and make the financial accounting and administration easier. All those that need to deliver information have their own password and account and get an automated email when their input is needed. Reminders are also sent automatically when the information has not been filled in within a certain time-frame. The information requested is delivered directly into the system using the form which one is requested to fill in. Each information request is accompanied by a detailed explanation of the needed information and the form in which it is needed. This made it easier for those delivering information to know what is expected of them. Not everybody, however, was enthusiastic about the planning-reporting process.

> *"Terrible, it's terrible. That's also something which I feel I have had sometimes extensive problems with. You know, we have these work packages, milestones, deliverables and implementations, etcetera, and it's... it is as a train works, you know, it goes from one station to another, and there are these tracks. Now we are not working in that kind of world. We have... we have something moving from one point to another, and on that route there is lots of stones [interviewee laughing] (...) I understand that maybe this is needed to (...) follow what is happening, but at the same time sometimes I get the feeling, I don't know maybe I am wrong, that actually people are not following <u>what</u> the groups are doing but just that there is given a milestone or a number. (...) the substance is ignored whereas formalities are followed. (...) I have difficulties to accept, but then you do it because it's expected from you, that it should be, you know, reported this way. But it doesn't feel very substantial."*

8.4.4.6   ADDITIONAL MEMBERS

In this consortium associate members were added when the consortium had been running for about 2 years. The process that led to the final decision of accepting two associate members and the process of changing the consortium agreement that it resulted in will be presented here. Interviewees contradict each other concerning the number of applications discussed.

> *"There are two reasons. First of all there were people who wanted to join the network, and second also we said that we would benefit from subjects with a slightly different orientation. So they actually, how do you call it, came with more inform-, more knowledge. So some of the work packages have been, how you call it, become better because there is more knowledgeable persons involved"*

The interviewees that were network area board chairs remember the following process.

> "It was introduced to all of us that those particular [type of organisations] contacted the coordinator. He then disseminated that information to all of us already before one of our major meetings and discussed it at the meeting. I think we had a democratic vote on whether they should be allowed to join in the first instance as associated members of the group. And that worked reasonably smoothly."

Later in the interview the role of the coordinator and deputy coordinator in the preparation becomes clearer when the interviewee was asked who is selecting the issues to be decided upon in the different meetings:

> "It's mostly [the coordinator], [the deputy coordinator] and myself (…) and sometimes we are also approached by the work package leaders."

The documentation in relation to the decisions at the meetings is collected or if needed created by the representative of the administrative member organisation. In the case of the membership applications the coordinator seems to have played a role in preparing the decision. The representative of the administrative member organisation however collected and published all information together with the agenda for the meeting. The decision was then made during the network governance board meeting.

> "Actually, we were all involved (…). There were, I don't remember correctly, was it 17 applications or something like that, and we discussed each application, how it would benefit us and what we knew about the group and then agreed to include them. (Sanne: And then not all of them were included or?) No, there were some groups which were considered that they didn't contribute with anything, they would just have wanted something."

The number of applications mentioned in the quote was not confirmed by other interviewees. What does become clear in other interviews is that only two groups were accepted and as associate members, not full members.

> "We don't have any new full partners. We have introduced two associate partners. So that is they are allowed to attend the meetings, be involved in the meetings, but they don't have a budget yet. But the idea is that maybe in a year's time if their contribution is deemed to be important and not duplicating someone else's, then they may be receiving a budget for the work they are doing."

After the decision of the network governing board, the process was not yet finished. The representative of the administrational member organisation mentions the following:

> "That is an especially complicated process because a decision that is taken by the governing board concerning an amendment of the consortium agreement is only a preliminary one...because it must be rectified by the signatures of the legal authorities of the [member organisations]. It's binding only then."

8.4.4.7   A NEW POLICY CONCERNING AUTHORSHIP

One interviewee presented the issue as follows:

> "... the only occasion when there has been a degree of disharmony [interviewee laughing] in the network is the issue surrounding, when we are all doing a piece of work and all involved, is who should be the authors when the report is written and submitted to a scientific journal. That created a lot of discussion, some disharmony.(...) It was led by one of the more vocal members who was looking after that particular aspect of the work of the network, and proposed quite forcefully how we should go about deciding who should be an author on the report and who shouldn't. There was some disagreement about that from a number of people, again one of the more vocal ones was in opposition to those decisions [break 3s.]. The discussions took an awful lot of time, I don't think there was really a democratic vote on it, partly because part of it was a question of [professional practice] (...) it is a common conflict [in our field]. (...). It was resolved by the coordinator (...) making the decision [interviewee laughing] for everyone, which is fine, fine. (...) Because it was never going to reach a unanimous decision. I think it reached a majority decision, so in that sense it was fine, and the coordinator the said that this is all we are going to do, which as far as I am concerned is his role, I have no problems with that [interviewee laughing].[Is there still disagreement on this even though a decision was made?] I think they are disagreeing still with that, although they did, their point of view was taken onboard and there was a.. some degree of compromise, just not as much as they had hoped]."

The other interviewee, the one which was responsible, stated:

> "Yes. We had, you see we had, we were preparing on manuscript, and when you are preparing a manuscript with more than 20, how do you call it, authors, there was actually 28 authors, the problem was not regarding the fact who, the authors that were included, but the problem was that there was some individuals who were members of [name

consortium] but were not included as authors because they hadn't participated actually... [to the manuscript] .. Yes, and that is our, actually my mistake, because [interviewee laughing] I was the one who handled that manuscript, was that before this manuscript was actually so far gone, we hadn't defined in detail the mode of action how to handle this. And so then that was done only in retrospect (...).

Another interviewee described the final stage in more detail, this interviewee (the deputy coordinator) noted:

We saw that there is a need to have really strict rules, and then [these were] written by the work package leader, who does, who writes all the manuscript for this (...) publication, and there was (...) some kind of draft with all the provisions. And then we sent this draft to.. to all the team leaders and they could say what they likes and what they did not like, and then we had the second version and the third version, and at the end this third version was accepted by all team leaders at the end. (...) It was a long process as you can imagine writing e-mails to all the partners and so on, waiting for the answer, usually that is a decision that needs two months, but it was important to do it this way."

8.4.5 SUMMARISING THE LONG-TERM COLLABORATION CASE

The Long-Term Collaboration Case is characterised by stronger member organisation involvement, while the two first cases presented focused more on participant involvement. The case, due to its focus on harmonising or creating common policies which would make collaboration possible, has particular member organisations responsible for particular themes, and other member organisation participants involved in discussing the themes, problems or difficulties needed to be tackled as well as the possible common solutions. In addition, this consortium has delegated much of the governance and management responsibility for preparation and implementation to the administrators.

8.5 THE SOCIAL NETWORK CASE

8.5.1 INTRODUCTION

This Network of Excellence was initiated by one of the participants who invited some colleagues to participate in the development of a Network of Excellence. The preparatory work was done mainly via electronic communication or in meetings organised across Europe by and for a small number of members, from one particular country for example. The participants met collectively face-to-face only when the funding had been secured. The network resembled a social network with a rather strong central hub, the initiator, and some clusters, formed by already connected individual participants (often within national borders). The initiator alone handled

the consortium governance and management processes in the preparation phase and selected a few colleagues to assist in these processes only at the beginning of the operational phase. The collaborative activities are undertaken mostly by participants that knew each other already before the network got together. In addition, many of the activities were not done collaboratively, but results of work done and ideas for next steps are shared and where possible linked to the work done by others. The funding received from the Commission was considered to be substantial and the expectations of the desired behaviour and beliefs in the demands of the Commission strongly influenced the action space of this consortium. The Commission seems to be given the position of the owner, whereby the consortium was fully subject to the Commission; this is a dynamic different from the other cases.

This case is, in terms of number of member organisations, a small-sized Networks of Excellence cases studied[92]. The funding received indicates[93] that this case is small-sized in terms of individual participants, as around 50 researchers and doctoral students need to have been proposed to be integrated into the consortium.

8.5.2 THE INITIATION PHASE OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK CASE

8.5.2.1 INITIATION AND THE WAY OF WORKING DURING THE INITIATION PHASE

The collaboration was initiated by one person (the initiator, who later became the coordinator), who invited three colleagues to join in preparing a Network of Excellence application. These people had, as mentioned, worked together previously. In addition to these four, one of these colleagues suggested including one additional colleague. He was invited by the coordinator thereafter. These five people then formed the inner group.

> "The thing was initiated by [the coordinator] and he got in touch with some of the people he knew reasonably well, in fact I suspect the people who are in the executive group, we discussed the idea with [the coordinator] and came up with suggestions for other partners and [the coordinator] did most of the leg work like writing to those people and finding out if they were interested."

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[92] Small-sized means that this case falls in the range of 10 to 14 member organisations, with member organisations located in five to nine different countries. The exact number is not given in ensure anonymity of the case.

[93] As presented in chapter two, based on the financial regime announced by the Commission, the size in terms of individual participants can be counted.

So, the established way of working was such that the initiator would write a suggestion to those invited. These people would then comment, suggest amendments and changes to the suggestion. Based on the comments and suggestions, the initiator would work further on the suggestion. There were no collective face-to-face meetings organised, and most preparatory work was done via email. People who were geographically closely located would meet face-to-face to discuss the application

> "So, I don't recall any large meeting where we all participated, but I remember a few smaller meetings. For instance, I think that [the coordinator] had meetings in [country A] with some of the participants (...), especially with the ones that were in [country A]. And for example, we had planning meetings between the [Country B] participants, we had a couple of meetings here (...) amongst us to the, to contribute and to help each other how we could participate on these."

The application was also discussed by some of the participants when meeting at conferences, but this was rather random.

> "Well, I met [name participant] actually in a conference. So maybe there was [sic] some small discussions, not made on purpose to the, for the network, but people would meet in conferences and they would discuss some issues how to get this together."

The way in which the topic and goals of the consortium started to form and were agreed upon has not been reflected upon by any of the interviewees. The interviewees did reflect on the way in which the additional members were selected. This will be described next.

8.5.2.2   INVITING ADDITIONAL MEMBERS

The four people initially invited were, along with the initiator, involved in the selection of additional members to be invited to join the consortium. One of the interviewees recalls:

> "We just mailed then, we just emailed each other and gave our opinions, and there was general agreement. It wasn't necessary for anybody to veto or anything like that, you know, it was a collegial discussion and in the end we reached agreements".

The choice of member organisations seems to be linked to themes or areas they wished the collaboration to cover. This becomes most clear in the statement of one interviewee who mentions that the selection of members was based on the area of work of the individuals:

> "If, for example, we had a lot of people in one area and very few in another, then we might have said, well let's not have this person who works in a highly populated area, let's instead try and find somebody who works on [another area] which may not have been properly covered".

Another interviewee recalled the same process slightly different as he recalls the following:

> "Only one general decision was the size of the network. So there was some point information from [the coordinator] that we should include more members in the network. So then we send him feedback for new possible members. Then later there was also a discussion that maybe it was getting too big, maybe it should get a bit smaller, and we discussed how we could make it smaller without people getting annoyed. These sort of more key decisions were made by [the coordinator] in the end, but there was a lot of input from (...) everybody in case of these more general issues".

This last comment also reveals the central position of the initiator in the collaboration. This central position becomes even more obvious when getting an insight into the way the proposal suggestion was prepared.

8.5.2.3 PREPARING OF THE PROPOSAL

> "Interviewee: It was officially by e-mail, there was circulation of proposals, coordinated by [the coordinator] on what the work packages could be. And then [the coordinator] would compile opinions from other people and make, make the draft proposals for the whole thing. And then we e-mail corrections to that.
> Sanne: So, first everybody was sending around their ideas?
> Interviewee: Yeah, well, we would send them to [the coordinator]."

All the invited participants sent their proposals on what they would contribute if the network were to receive funding.

> "I have provided my bit, so to speak."

The initiator, however, wrote all pieces together; combining the different parts into one proposal, and he also did all the revisions, as another interviewee confirms.

> "It tended to be [the coordinator] doing the writing. [The coordinator] did, I must say, most of the work (...) and we amended it, changed it a bit as he wrote. So it was an e-mail process, we met rarely, if ever."

The communication mainly flowed via the coordinator, though there were also occasions at which people working on a common work package would discuss as a group to get some things sorted.

> "(…) there were small decisions about the work packages, and I think in those cases the people involved in those work packages would discuss among themselves and with [the coordinator]."

8.5.2.4 PREPARING OF FINANCIAL DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

During the network-building phase the specific contributions of each member organisation were settled and through this the member organisations also prepared their budget. A large part of the financial resources were thus set at the outset, based on the planned involvement in the shared activities.

> "Well (….) ,most of the budget is of course decided on forehand. (…) There is only one reason why people participate in these things, just because they get money out of it."

One interviewee reflects on the decision to pre-allocate most funding as the best decision made, as this prevented conflicts about funding and made it possible for the member organisations to know how much money they would receive over the whole period.

> "I think the best decision was to allocate more or less fixed amounts of money for the research involved right from the start and to make sure all of the individual group leaders knew how much money they had to play with, but to reserve the rest of the money from the network for activities that would be prioritised later. So, nobody feels that their share has been taken away, but they also feel that there are new activities that can be funded."

The putting aside some of the funding for additional activities was thus also seen as positive, creating opportunities for unforeseen collaborative activities.

8.5.2.5 CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE COMMISSION

Although not much is said about the contract negotiations with the Commission, one of the interviewees mentions that this was done by the coordinator alone.

> "I was not very much involved in the actual negotiations. That was all done by [the coordinator]. And he collaborated closely with the person in Brussels [the Commission representative]."

This also points at a very central role played by the initiator during the initiation phase.

8.5.2.6 CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT

One of the additional things that needed to be done before the consortium could receive the funding is the creation of and agreeing on the consortium agreement. Like with most of the activities during the initiation phase, the coordinator had a central role in writing this, while the legal advisors and administration of the institutes of the participants signed it.

> "[The coordinator] knows what is in it (...). We pay no attention to it. (...) It [the co-operation] would be exactly the same even without this contract."

Another interviewee, when asked about the consortium agreement, reacted:

> "I don't think any of us have had a look at the consortium agreement (Interviewee laughing a bit). (...) We are so unused to working with contracts that we just don't think along those lines."

Thus, although the consortium agreement was signed by the organisations of the participants, the participants themselves have not read the document.

8.5.3 STRUCTURE OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK CASE

The structure that was described by the consortium agreement which I had received, the following structure could be drawn.
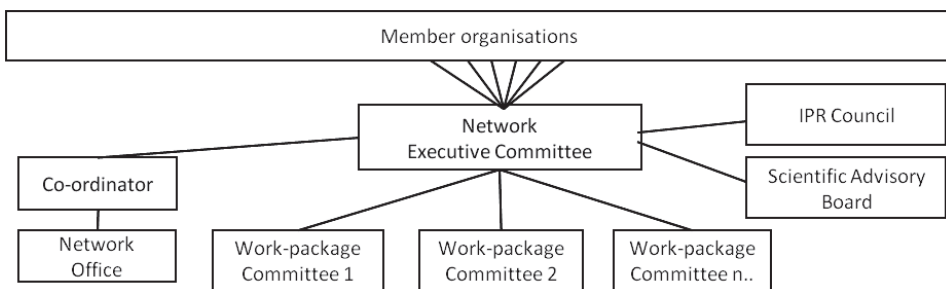
Figure 21   Organisational structure of the Social Network Case

This is a relatively simple structure, whereby the network executive committee consists of five people including the coordinator, who are to decide on most consortium level issues. The work undertaken, however, is in the hands of the work

packages, whereby those organisations participating in a work-package make the related decisions.

Based on the interviews, however, a few clarifications need to be made. Most importantly, the network executive committee was only formed after the initiator and the Commission representative got into an argument during the first meeting of the consortium. This resulted in a suggestion by the Commission representative to change the coordinator. The interviewee, who was asked to take on this role, mentioned:

> Interviewee: "the Brussels person asked me to actually become the coordinator of the network rather than [the coordinator] to which I said "no way, this is not on" and I suggested instead that we form an [executive committee] chaired by [the coordinator] and that is what we did.
> Sanne: "How was decided who was going to be in that [executive committee])"
> Interviewee: "That was basically decided by [the coordinator] and myself and we took people who we knew would be vocal and available. So we took some fairly experienced people."

The establishment of the executive committee was also reflected upon by one of the other members of the executive committee interviewed:

> "The members of the executive group, those are the people who are the most I think enthusiastic and pro-active, I think we, I forgot exactly how it happened, but we met perhaps in [the office of the interviewee quoted above] and decided that one way of making decisions more efficiently was to elect an executive group and have that group take most of the decisions, if not all decisions. And so we told every other member that this is what we were planning to do, and if anybody had any major objections they should let us know. There weren't any, so now we are responsible."

The tasks of the executive committee were presented by interviewees as rather much those things that need doing and which nobody else would like to do.

> "It is most active in doing the things that are too tedious for anybody else to want to do. Like organising meetings, like websites, like encouraging people to write things up when necessary."

Another interviewee, however, presents two major roles:

> "So there are two major roles. One is to ensure that the project as a whole is progressing as it should. And that outputs are made as planned and as

> *promised, that all the deliverables are delivered on time. To put pressure on individuals, to individual members of the network to deliver their parts of the project. And to make sure that everybody knows what deadlines are coming up and to make sure people stick to those. (…) And then [the second role] the financial management of the project. So we set priorities for [the activities] in which the central funds of the network are used. The [executive committee] decides on what the priorities are to apply on how to spend that money."*

A different view is given by another interviewee when asked about the most important areas in which decisions need to be made:

> *"The most important areas that we have to act are in making sure that our activities are acceptable to the EU, to make sure that our reports fit into the EU's format and that we do as much as possible what we said in the contract we would do."*

When asked about the reactions of other members on the decisions made, a typical reaction was similar to the following quote:

> *"So far everybody has agreed with the decisions. In fact they are quite happy that the [executive committee] is taking a lot of the decisions, because most of the members don't want to be involved in that. They just want to get on with things and be told what happened and that they have money and just do this."*

The network office, mentioned in the consortium agreement, consists of one administrative assistant without previous experience with Commission-funded projects. This assistant has worked for the consortium full time until about half way through the funding period, after which she worked part time until the end of the funding period. Furthermore, a financial support officer of the organisation of the coordinator is mentioned as undertaking the financial administration for the network. In addition, an assistant of a member of the executive committee helped to prepare the reporting to the Commission (on at least one occasion).

In addition, the way of working in this type of Commission-funded structure was not very familiar, at least to all participants. One of the interviewees mentioned the difficulty of coping with the contractual approach of the Commission:

> *"The difficulty is that the EU see it as a contract (…). The difference being that in a contract you have to carry out work that you will say you carry out. And of course, the way science works is that, you know, you say two years before the grant begins or the contract begins, this is very interesting I'd like to do this. Two years later someone else may have*

> *done it, it may not longer be interesting, but according to the EU contracts one has the impression you are supposed to do it anyway. So, this has been one of the really frustrating things I must say. But then you know, it is EU, and you have to stick to it, because if you don't stick to it, you won't get the money, and it is quite a lot of money."*

This view on the Commission funding seems to influence the way this consortium works to a larger extent. This will become clear in the description of the different key processes in the operational phase in the next section.

8.5.4   THE OPERATIONAL PHASE OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK CASE

8.5.4.1   THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND DIVISION OF FUNDING

The activities which will be undertaken during the next period are planned by the participants involved. In relation to the earmarked budget, the participants just write what they will do and what they have done.

> *"Interviewee: We don't plan the science because we leave that to the individual scientists. We are scientists ourselves and we hate being told what to do. So co-operations change and shift and end and start and just the usual.*
> *Sanne: and there is no control over what is being done?*
> *Interviewee: No. We don't want to. What we do is everybody has to write their little piece as in the report and the plan, we collect that centrally [the coordinator does] and then a few of us have a look at it, and you know get a set format like for what is done and so forth before we send it out [to the Commission]."*

In relation to the funding which was not earmarked at the outset, the executive committee gathers suggestions for activities to be funded at the annual meeting and picks from those suggestions the ideas the consortium will fund.

> *"We have an annual meeting of the entire network and every group is represented at that meeting. At that meeting we collect ideas from people as to what new activities should be done. Then, at the next meeting of the [executive committee] those ideas are discussed and prioritised in the same way as studentships. The [executive committee] decides also on the funding related to those ideas."*

8.5.4.2   REPORTING

As already mentioned in the quote related to planning, the participants who undertake work are responsible for reporting. As becomes clear from the quote below,

all these contributions are collected by the coordinator and then harmonised into one report.

> "The report is written by everybody, it is just, we then you know, one writes three pages and the next one writes one page of a thing, so then we [the executive committee] try to get it in similar formats."

There is no evaluation of the activities undertaken by participants by the consortium itself.

> "We don't do internal evaluations, no, the evaluation is done by the EU. (…) Things go as they go and they are written down. Life is too short to evaluate our friends once a year."

8.5.4.3   CHANGES IN THE ACTIVITIES

In the consortium the changes in activities are very much at large decided upon by those doing the work. This becomes especially clear from the quote of one of the interviewees:

> "Some activities have merged with others when it has become clear that two work packages, for example, might overlap so much that it would be sensible to bring them together into one work package. And some projects have been dropped because for some reason they haven't worked or something like that. (Sanne: Who decides on that?). Mostly the person doing the work, you know, you see, the person doing the work could say this isn't working, is not gonna work, and so we're gonna stop this line of research, and it gets inserted into the annual report and is approved or not approved by the EU. Usually approved."

Thus, the responsibility and choices in relation to the research are with the individual participants or groups undertaking the work.

8.5.4.4   NEW MEMBERS OR EXCLUDING MEMBERS

One of the issues that came to the fore in the interviews was the influence of the needed paperwork for adding new members and excluding existing members. The consortium would have considered adding members and would also have considered excluding a member if this had been easier. In both cases, however, the contract with the Commission would have needed to be adjusted, which was seen as a major obstacle.

One interviewee was very clear about this:

> *"Changing the composition of a network is a major pain in the neck. So, to be avoided at all costs, because Brussels drives you wild. They make your life a misery."*

But also other interviewees mention the difficulties of changing the composition by adding or excluding member organisations.

> *"That [adding associate members] was suggested from the beginning [by the coordinator], that we should, that one of the objectives is to spread the excellence, we should have the type of members that could participate in our meetings and that could somehow interact with us and eventually could become full members [pause 4 s.] with the objective of really spreading the, what the network is doing. But this was never really, we never found a way how to get [the Commission representative] to agree on how this could be done. We discussed this in our executive meetings a few times but in the end we can't get really a green light from him on how this could be done."*

Thus, the consortium was unable to negotiate and find a way to get the acceptance from the Commission on how new members could be added; it therefore did not happen.

8.5.5 SUMMARISING THE SOCIAL NETWORK CASE

The Social Network Case is characterised by the very strong participant orientation, whereby formalities are generally seen as annoying. The consortium is very strongly about colleagues who know one another reasonably well working together, trusting that the work done is of good quality. If participants do not react to emails or do not participate, the people closest, knowing the participants best, would be asked to take action to make sure it improves. There is little governance or management taking place on the meta-organisational level, as most issues have been agreed upon at the start, and the participants take care of steering their work. Meetings are mainly used to share results and plans, and learn from one another.

8.6 THE FUNDING AGENCY CASE

8.6.1 INTRODUCTION

This Network of Excellence was initiated by the participants of a collaboration which got funding in Framework Programme 5. This case follows most clearly the instructions set out by the European Union in the provisions for Network of Excellence funding. The initial application sets out the mission and vision, but no detailed plan was presented detailing specific tasks or activities for the whole funding period. This Network of Excellence worked as a funding agency for its members, deciding every year on which projects would receive funding for the next 18 months in

order to move towards reaching the mission. These funding decisions were made by ranking project suggestions sent in by the individual participants of the member organisations whereby academic evaluation of two or three anonymous reviewers was used to rank the projects.

This case is, in terms of number of member organisations, one of the medium-sized Networks of Excellence cases studied[94]. The funding received indicates[95] that this case is large-sized in terms of individual participants, as around 125 researchers and doctoral students need to have been proposed to be integrated into the consortium. The initial funding provided to this network was, however, for a shorter period than that of the other cases studied (4 instead of 5 years).

8.6.2 THE INITIATION PHASE OF THE FUNDING AGENCY CASE

8.6.2.1 THE HISTORY OF THE COLLABORATION

This case is an extended continuation of a collaboration which in Framework Programme 5 had received funding for a collaborative project. Of the ten participants in the project, nine continued and participated in the development of the Network of Excellence.

> "It started in a previous programme. We were participating, ten different groups, and at that time it was just a joint project. (...) We were working together for five years, three years, sorry. (...). [The topic of the previous collaboration] is quite similar to the topic that we are addressing now [in the Network of Excellence]. (Interviewee then describes the different participants that continued and the different topics) (Sanne: So then about seven of the ten participants are still participating?) About nine, nine."

These nine people, in the last (or one of the last) meetings of the project started to discuss applying for funding to continue their collaboration. This will be described in more detail below.

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[94] Medium-sized means that this case falls in the range of 15 to 19 member organisations, with member organisations located in five to nine different countries. The exact number is not given in ensure anonymity of the case.

[95] As presented in chapter two, based on the financial regime announced by the Commission, the size in terms of individual participants can be counted.

The coordinator, who also coordinated the previous collaboration, described the initiation meeting as follows:

> "Right prior to the end of the former integrated project, when it was just about time to start thinking about applying for FP6, we had a sort of a sign-on meeting of the steering committee and (…) there was one representative for each [organisation], so there were nine people. And we sort of, you know, brainstormed about strategies to apply for FP6. At that time it was already known that in the area that we could apply for, the only instrument that was available was Networks of Excellence. So, we gathered our thoughts and read through the regulations and stuff to know what Networks of Excellence really means, which I am not sure I know [interviewee laughing] what it means. And so, at that point, you know, each of us came up with like proposals for adding a new group that maybe had some interesting expertise that we didn't have, things like that. (…) So, we came out of that meeting, that was, you know, could be maybe three months prior to (…) or even more like four months prior to the deadline for applying for FP6, we had already sort of designed the structure of the new network."

After this initial brainstorming meeting, the coordinator prepared a note suggesting the structure, the areas they would concentrate on, some possible names, the way of dividing the funding, as well as some next steps to take. The coordinator describes his suggestion in the following way:

> "My strategy was to basically, rather than allocating resources at the beginning of the network to each participating [organisation], I decided that we would, should behave a little bit as a funding agency. (…) In order to apply for the money people had to establish connections within the network, real connections, because on paper it is very easy to say 'We will work with this and that', but once you get the money you don't have a lot of pressure to fulfil those things. And that [real connections] is basically the spirit of this network. We progressively restrained funding to the initiatives that proved to be more successful as time was going, it is what I defined a triangle strategy which means that as time goes on you restrain funding to a fewer number of initiatives, but you give more money per initiative."

This procedure was included into the note written by the coordinator after the first meeting[96] which formed the basis for the proposal. This process is confirmed by other interviewees, such as the following member of the steering committee who also participated in the process:

> "I remember a meeting with a small number of people, probably we were ten. And we were discussing about that and [the coordinator] elaborated the idea and made a little proposal also on the way to distribute funds and so on."

Another interviewee remembered more than just one meeting, and described in more detail the different issues discussed.

> "We worked first [on choosing who would participate], we had to discuss in very [sic] detail the, the group that we are, for the network, the group from each [organisation] that we are, you know, we decide candidate to, to participate in it, and to be very selective on that. The second issue is the subject, because the subject is, I think that it is very well focused area but it is broad, so we have to think about to cover many different aspects of [research field]. So we were trying to be as broad as possible without, you know, miss the focus. (…) And that took us maybe two meetings. (…) The big decision I'd say the one that got the approval of the consortium is what the type of funding is that we are going to get."

When the decisions on the focus, participants and the funding were made, the selected participants were somehow invited to participate in the proposal. The interviewees do not give clarity as to who invited the selected participants and how this was done. They also started to prepare the actual Network of Excellence proposal. This preparation process will be described next.

8.6.2.3   THE PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

After the initial meeting(s) the preparation of the proposal was done via email.

> "And then, you know, the way that we do is we pass all the information by, just by .. by email and discuss all that."

And another interviewee more specifically describes the work that was done and who participated in this proposal preparation.

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[96] This note is one of the documents included in the dataset for this case.

> *"I think all the institute coordinators contributed in some was, by writing portions of the text to deal with what each institute is going to contribute to the programme. So, they were all involved and I was involved a bit more in coordinating because we had, I think we had four different areas that we were covering (...) and I was more involved in one of them and checking that the text was correct for that. But [the coordinator] he put the whole thing together to make the final document that we submitted. So he is central to that, but all the [member organisation] coordinators contributed text and no, clearly we had all to be, all the forms we had to fill in."*

The coordinator reflected on the preparation of the proposal as risky due to the rather broad work packages they defined and due to saying that these would be changed when the funding was allocated to them.

> *"We ran a big risk in the original proposal because we put some broad work packages in the original proposal, but we stated very clearly that these work packages would be then redesigned and new ones would be added, because of the funding strategy we decided. (...) I criticised up-front the idea of pre-allocating resources to a large network like this, this would not be an incentive for people to really develop integration. [It is] easy to put that on paper. In a way then the reviewers liked that [interviewee laughing]."*

The budget, due to the strategy chosen, was not specified very much, and this was possibly due to the vague requirements of the Commission in relation to the Networks of Excellence. The coordinator explains:

> *"They [the Commission] basically ask you to put like a certain figure, there was a certain amount of money that was proportional to how many people were involved with a network, as a grant to integration. So I took advantage of this like sort of vague indication. I, basically what I did, I said 'These are the programmes that we will develop and this is the timing of these programmes, and we foresee that a certain fraction of the total resources of the grant will go into these programmes'. (...) If you say 30 percent of the total money will go into the [name programme] then you have a lot of degrees of freedom in allocating the money. So in a way I think that I basically took advantage of the possibility that was given to us by this very vague definition of the budget, but surprisingly most people actually preferred to pre-allocate the money to various [member organisations]. But that may work or may not work [interviewee laughing], and in my experience it doesn't work very effectively to develop real integration."*

After the proposal had received positive reviews, the consortium was invited to the contract negotiations with the Commission. One of the interviewees mentions that these negotiations were done by the coordinator. At the same time also the consortium agreement was prepared.

8.6.2.4 THE CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT

The coordinator prepared the consortium agreement together with specialists of his institute. He remembered the following:

> "The real substantial thing was this consortium agreement, so with the help of the lawyers I went really into the details, again, with all the responsibilities and the rights, the flexibility of the network, so we came up in the consortium agreement with a design of the management structure of the network that was like very detailed. So consortium agreement was important."

After this the consortium agreement was sent to the member organisations in order to be signed. There is not much mentioned about this by the interviewees, and thus if amendments were made or requested or if it was directly agreed upon by all member organisations stays unclear. The coordinator, however, does reflect on the acceptance of the funding strategy which he included into the consortium agreement.

> "Basically that was the overall strategy, so people accepted this indication because it was indicated in the consortium agreement, and they signed the consortium agreement. Probably they didn't think too much about the potential consequences of that."

8.6.3 STRUCTURE OF THE FUNDING AGENCY CASE

The structure of the consortium, based on the analysis of the consortium agreement, is presented below. The structure is relatively simple and combines the governance group with the management group which in the example consortium agreements have been separate. Thus, the representatives of the member organisations (including the coordinator) form the steering committee, which makes the decisions for the consortium. The other participants from the member organisations can participate in the annual conference where it is possible to link up with others, which makes it possible to create or participate in the internal development of work packages.
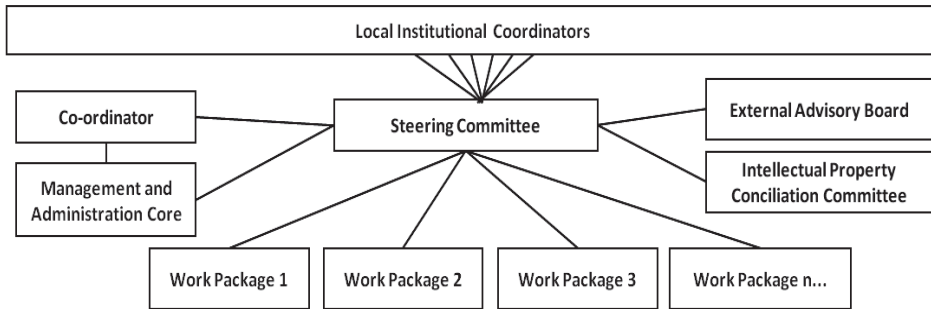
Figure 22 **Organisational structure of the Funding Agency Case**

The coordinator describes the structure and their tasks in the following way:

> *"So then of course the structure is that there is a coordinator which is myself, and there is a steering committee, and the steering committee is made up basically of what I define as local institutional coordinators. There's one scientist who's the coordinator, the local coordinator for each institute, OK? And this person has, say, a dual function. He's involved in coordinating locally the activities of the various groups that are network members within a given institution. For example, in disseminating news about the consortium, information about the periodic reports, the meetings and stuff. And then of course the other function is to be a part of the steering committee, OK? And there's a mini-management team which I created, the n also, and it has been incredibly helpful to me. It's made basically by two people in addition to myself. One is an assistant to all the coordination activities, OK, so organization meetings, the training education program and stuff like that, and the other one is an administrative assistant who is basically, whose job is to coordinate all the administrative representatives for each institution."*

It is important to note that the administrative organising is almost fully separate from the content organising, due to the direct coordination between administrative assistant and the administrative representatives of the member organisations. The administrative assistant and also legal advice were given by an external organisation contracted to do administrative work, which included the building of an administrative system to support the different processes of planning, and selecting projects, assigning funding as well as for reporting. This organisation also was contracted to give advice on intellectual property rights. Although it was an external organisation, the organisation was closely related to the institute of the coordinator.

The role of the local institutional coordinators is described by one of the interviewees in this role as consisting of mainly administrative coordination.

"You need one person in each institute who is really responsible for making sure all the funding works and communicating with the administration in the institute about funding and distribution and stuff, because I think it depends on the institute but personally in our institute the administrator has very little experience dealing with the EU networks, so I am in an essential role in just telling what is going on and all the funding works and it gets very confusing, especially with all these different work packages and everyone involved in different groups and someone has to keep track of all that, so it does work very well, in our institute anyway."

Another interviewee mentions that part of her role of local institutional coordinator is to stimulate the people in her institute to participate and help them in identifying opportunities for collaborations.

"Actually my role is only through communication, because each one is a senior scientist, and so within the network what they do is to establish collaboration in a totally independent way. And the only thing that I do is to make sure that they receive all the communication needed, that they prepare their work packages and so on. So it is really just, you know, what can I say, administrative coordinator, not the scientific coordination that I make. In case I try to (...) for instance I can say: 'Well since you do so and so, [you might] take into account that the other one is doing something that may be of interest for you', (...) so I can encourage and help in finding the right partner, but essentially everyone, you know, has his own project."

In addition to the role of the institutional coordinators, the consortium coordinator also reflected on his own role in relation to the decision at the start to create the funding structure specific to this case:

"The bold decision that I made and people sort of followed that decision [interviewee laughing] also, because as you know there is a subtle psychological issue in these Networks of Excellence. The coordinator does most of the work, and the other people sort of accept that, in a way they... for, with very little effort, I have to admit, they get some amount of money and they just have to play by the rules, but they... it is for most people the easiest way to be funded. Being a participant in one of these large co-operative efforts at EU-level. There is little bureaucracy to do, again for a participant, a lot of bureaucracy for the coordinator, and so the pros fairly exceed the cons. So they comply."

This position seems to also be reflected in processes, such as the choice of additional members. These processes will be described in the section below.

8.6.4   THE OPERATIONAL PHASE OF THE FUNDING AGENCY CASE

8.6.4.1   DEVELOPING IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

Due to the funding structure chosen and accepted, the development of implementation plans was something each single individual included into the network would need to create.

> *"So, once the network officially started we launched a so-called call for proposals. So people were encouraged to then go deeply into what they want to do, establish connections with other members of the consortium, and then come up with a very simple application for money into a web-interface."*

These different plans were then evaluated and ranked.

> *"These applications are work package applications essentially with a leading investigator and a number of participating investigators, a short description of the tasks, (...) and then of course the milestones and deliverables that are foreseen, and stuff like that. (...) I have again a database with a list of all the applications, and I sign, in an anonymous way, each application to three members of the steering committee for them to assess, to evaluate the application. And of course I choose them based on not having conflicts of interest, so of course they are not members of the proposal, they don't have obvious conflicts. So then the proposals are assessed [... and based on this] the proposals are ranked."*

The projects from top to bottom on the ranking list get funding, until the pre-set amount of funding for a particular programme is reached.

> *"We pre-allocate and decide together as a steering committee the amount of money that goes into the overall call for proposals. (...) of course each proposal has a funding request. (...) The proposals are ranked and then we go down in the funding proposal by proposal. Of course we ask people, and that is something that I do generally, to maybe remodulate their funding request if that is excessive or redundant with other requests and stuff like that. And then at the end basically the ones, the amount of money that goes into the successful proposals matches the amount that we allocated. All the other proposals are not funded."*

The criteria for evaluation are linked to the broad descriptions of what the network aimed to achieve, both in terms of content (it needs to contribute to the aims set at the start for the programmes) and in terms of collaboration (the higher the number of collaborators from different institutes the better).

The reporting is also mainly the task of the participants themselves.

> *"They [the participants in a work package] each of them has to write a*
> *report each year on their work. But, they don't have to do the financial*
> *side which I deal with [as institutional coordinator] with the*
> *administrator. Each of the work packages that is funded has a*
> *coordinator who could be anybody, not only the institutional*
> *coordinators (…), who has to put together the report in collaboration with*
> *the other members of the work package (…) to make sure they write a*
> *report that summarises all of their work."*

The whole report is brought together, however, with the help of the administrators
and the coordinator.

The consortium had expected to be able to perform particular tasks at the end of the
four year contract with the Commission. The organisation which had been involved in
the consortium from the beginning, which had promised to do it, had however
changed its focus and was not longer interested in undertaking the tasks. This led to
the situation whereby the consortium needed to find a new partner to undertake these
tasks. One of the interviewees described it as follows.

> *"We were coming to this stage where we really needed to [undertake a*
> *particular activity] and none of us had the expertise and the, the SME*
> *(which is one of the members) who could have done that, they shifted*
> *slightly so isn't doing that sort of thing anymore it seems to me, so that's*
> *when we added this extra SME. So that was a discussion although it was*
> *[the coordinator], he named it, he suggested the company, but we all*
> *discussed whether that was an appropriate thing to do."*

The coordinator mentions the same, though he adds that the need for such
organisation was already discussed in an earlier meeting.

> *"I found and I proposed, I discussed with the steering committee, and*
> *they.. so the initial discussion was like in April this year in a meeting that*
> *we had, sort of an ad hoc meeting. And then I set a meeting that was also*
> *involving this new participant, sort of potential participant, so that the*
> *other members of the steering committee had the chance to talk to this*
> *person, and then we basically made the decision."*

Due to the focus of this organisation, the contract with the Commission needed to be
changed. This meant that there was a need for negotiating with the Commission on

changing the aims to a certain extent as well as including a new organisation to the contract.

8.6.4.4   *TERMINATING THE FUNDING OF PARTICULAR ACTIVITIES*

One interviewee mentions concerning the termination or reducing of the funding for particular programmes the following:

> *"Well, we discussed it at the beginning. In fact several of us thought it was a waste of time right at the beginning, but we agreed to fund it. There were, I can't remember, there were probably 3 different [activities] that people were [undertaking]. (…) We discussed 'well do we really need this or not and how useful it will be and we agreed to fund them for a year to see how it went and the after a year we decided that they weren't really providing anything useful for the network."*

Another interviewee mentions that the programmes which were removed were to develop and provide services for the member organisations. Only in one of the four programmes, however, were services created that the member organisations wanted to use, especially as all member organisations were so well-established that those services were already available to the participants in their own organisation. The funding of the other programmes was then reduced and this funding was devoted to the programme in which there were services developed that were seen useful.

8.6.4.5   *PARTICIPANTS OF MEMBER ORGANISATIONS, PARTICIPANTS OF THE META-ORGANISATION?*

One of the problems in this network reported by one of the interviewees is how to deal with the results of the participants of the member organisations. The idea of the network is to share results and to work together as member organisations, but only a few participants in the member organisations get funded by the network and thus there is no incentive for the other participants to be open about results. One interviewee mentioned the following:

> *"A lot of people in the [member organisations] are not paid by the network, so they really have no, they don't need to be involved really. (…) I mean you're bringing in people from [the member organisations] who have nothing to do with the network, who just happen to have results that are relevant. And clearly they want to have their own publications; they don't suddenly want to be a shared author on a joint publication just because their P.I.'s are part of a network."*

Thus, participants from the member organisations who are not directly involved may compete with one another. This can create difficulties as the expectation is that everybody shares their results. If, however, a group leader is involved in a consortium

project, this can create difficulties when participants in his or her group are funded by other funds but have results which are very relevant to the consortium.

8.6.4.6   RESULTS OF THE FUNDING STRATEGY

Many interviewees reflected on the funding strategy. In most cases the positive side emphasised was that the participants were very much encouraged to collaborate with others in the network. Also the fact that there was no possibility for free-riding – you needed to be and stay actively involved in order to be able to apply successfully with others for the funding available.

> *"I think nearly everybody got some funding for one year at the beginning for a member of staff. But then naturally some of them were not collaborative, weren't that interested in the network and just dropped out. But that was quite a good self-selection mechanism, whereas if they would have been given money right up front and just told you have x euro then they would have taken it, but not been involved at all with anybody else. So from that point of view the method worked well. People who consistently were involved carried on getting funding."*

Although this was seen as a very positive result, there were some issues that people did mention to be a drawback. The coordinator knew that not everybody was as happy with the strategy he had pushed for, as he mentions after describing the funding strategy:

> *"And that seems to have worked very nicely, although I am pretty sure that people who have sort of not benefitted from this strategy, don't like me a lot, but that is the way it is [interviewee laughing]."*

One of these issues mentioned by interviewees that were considered negative was that they as participants still needed to apply for the funding. This especially made it difficult to budget and to hire new staff to undertake tasks.

> *"You have to keep applying for the money even after you've got the grant at the beginning. Whereas in other situations you know more or less how much you're going to get at the beginning and then you can budget. But this one has been much more difficult at least for us to budget and know how much we're getting."*

> *"It doesn't function that well, because it functions only for groups, larger groups, because you also actually compete with other members of the Network of Excellence for funding, internally we decide and the steering committee decides, gives marks for those proposals, and then money's distributed for let's say 12 months, 18 months, 2 years, etcetera. Now, I*

mean you get funds for employing people, you can only employ people, you cannot employ somebody for 12 months, because you have to advertise, you have to select, etcetera. So you have to be able to reshuffle money within your group from other sources to cover up, you know, so that you would have all the people employed and then you successfully get funded for 12 months to do something, and then you can actually use that money and put the other money aside for something else. So you need a larger structure to be able to be flexible with shuffling money back and forth. This is not, it doesn't really make that much sense, the best would be to have a certain amount of money allocated for a longer period, period of time.

One other issue discussed was that the distribution of the funding did not go as much to those who initiated the collaboration as they had been expecting. On interviewee mentions:

"I think this way is different and I think people had a bit of adaptation to that and there was, I would say that I have been happy personally with the way it has worked. But I do feel that the, it has meant that some [groups within the member organisations] have got, by some strange means disproportionately large amounts of money compared to others. Just because of the way they've participated in those different networks and groups within the network, which you wouldn't necessarily expect. They were [smaller groups], they weren't the main institute coordinator [groups], they were smaller [groups] and they just somehow managed to get more so in that respect there was no pre-allocation to anyone and I think some people found that a bit difficult because you know, they contribute a lot to writing the thing and then they actually did not get that much out of it. So, but overall I think it worked well because it encouraged people to collaborate more than they did in framework 5."

All in all, however, interviewees of the Funding Agency Case did stress the positive, the fact that they had been able to create real collaboration and had not been taking money to do work on their own.

8.6.5   SUMMARISING THE FUNDING AGENCY CASE

The Funding Agency Case, a continuation of an earlier Commission-funded collaboration, is characterised especially by the way in which they allocate the funding. Participation is focused on participants themselves, who through the meetings are encouraged to make plans for collaborative projects. These plans are then evaluated through a blind review process and, if ranked high enough, the project proposed will receive funding. A clear difference is made between decisions concerned with the direction of programmes and funding of particular programmes, on the one hand, and the granting decisions as to who gets funding, on the other

hand. This results in funding being distributed amongst those with the best, collaborative plans fitting within the programme, and not as in the other cases amongst the participants who participated in the initiation phase.

8.7 TWO CROSS-CASE REFLECTIONS

The cases show that actual participation can be focused on participants or on the member organisations. This focus affects the way in which the member organisations were selected and the way in which steering takes place. With a focus on participants, which most cases had, the participants were selected and their organisations were included. When a participant decided to change employer, the member organisation would change as well. The steering in these meta-organisations was mainly self-steering. With a focus on the member organisations, it was the quality of the organisation as a whole which was evaluated and if a representative changed employer, the representative would be replaced. The steering in these meta-organisations was more collective.

The cases also show the central a role is played by the coordinators and administrators of the consortia, because of being responsible for taking care of the central administrative processes and communication with the Commission. In particular, their knowledge about what is happening in the meta-organisation and their role in preparing the meetings, which play a crucial role in these meta-organisations, are important. The more professional and dedicated to the consortium these individuals were, the more positive the interviewees generally were about their own participation in the consortium and the less negative the interviewees were about the Commission and its rules.

9 REVISITING META-ORGANISATION THEORY: INSIGHTS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of setting the claims of the extended meta-organisation theoretical assumptions against the Network of Excellence consortia data. The assumptions and the conditions related, as presented in chapter 5, are thus revisited.

Details from both the presentation of the cases (see previous chapter) and the analysis of the steering processes (appendices 5-10) are set against the claims, both the general assertions and the specified related conditions as developed in chapter 5. The conditions will, however, only be discussed in detail when the Network of Excellence consortia data give insights relevant in relation to these conditions. As discussed in chapter 7, not all assumptions or related conditions are checked as the pre-collected data focused on the network level, and more specifically on the structure, tasks and processes of governance, management and administration.

The chapter is structured such that it follows the list of assertions as presented in chapter 5, with each section focusing on one of the assertions. In the introduction, the conditions hypothesised in related to the assertion are recapitulated. The hypothesised conditions that are unable to be verified with the Network of Excellence data are mentioned explicitly. An overview of the results of this chapter is presented in the next and final chapter of this thesis.

9.2 CLOSED BOUNDARIES REVISITED

9.2.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter six the assertion was put forward that meta-organisations have closed boundaries decided upon by the members. Thus new members can only enter these organisations after having been accepted. The consideration of closed boundaries led to five hypothesised conditions (see for an overview table 18).

The first hypothesised condition claims that a system for approving/disapproving membership applications needs to be in place. The analysis of the cases shows the difference between the approval of members in the initiation phase and the approval in the operational phase. This confirms that a system has been put in place. The criteria for choosing members, however, were not specified. This will be discussed and a hypothesis is developed explaining in which situations these criteria would be specified and in which not.

Table 18   Assertion 1: Closed boundaries

Assertion 1	Hypothesised conditions
Organisations with constitutional membership have closed boundaries (formulated based on ideas from Gulati et al., 2012).	This leads to a need for a system for approving/disapproving membership applications and for specifying membership criteria (Gulati et al., 2012).
	This gives the meta-organisation the right to enforce compliance with its commands and rules (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).
	This gives members the possibility to utilise the label 'member of'; receiving the meta-organisation's last name (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).
	This provides a basis for the members' identification with the meta-organisation, which facilitates the recruitment of members and demands clarity in terms of rights and obligations (Gulati et al., 2012)
	This provides a basis for the meta-organisation to differentiate itself from other (meta-)organisations (Gulati et al., 2012).

The second hypothesised condition claimed that closed boundaries give the meta-organisation the right to enforce compliance with its commands and rules. Although this is confirmed by the analysis of the cases, the cases show that this is a very delicate issue. I will present the three different routes taken to deal with compliance to commands and rules: avoidance, externalising and formalising.

The third, fourth and fifth hypothesised conditions were not looked at in this study and very little of the data gathered in the study provides insights into these conditions. These conditions will therefore not be discussed. These conditions, however, would be worth studying in the future.

9.2.2   A SYSTEM FOR APPROVING/DISAPPROVING MEMBERSHIP

9.2.2.1   FROM DECISIONS BY ONE OR A FEW TO A CONFIRMATION BY THE MEMBERS

In the initiation phase, the membership selection was made by the initiator(s) of the collaboration. The selection of members, beyond the initiator(s), followed in all cases the (initial) setting of the mission, the overall topic or field, and vision, the goals to reach. Thus, when the initiator(s) knew what they would like to reach with the collaboration, they started a search for potential collaborators. In two cases, those invited made further suggestions concerning additional members and in one case, the Social Network Case, also discussed a way to make the number of collaborators smaller again. The decision, however, of including or excluding additional members was still made by the initiator(s).

In the cases where the initiators were an existing group, the coordinator of this group made the decisions on the inclusion of additional members. The coordinators in these cases did take advice from the existing collaboration on potential additional members.

In the operational phase all cases, except the Social Network Case, chose to include new members. In three of the cases, new members were planned to be included as a way to meet one of the demands by the Commission in relation to the Networks of Excellence which was that the consortia should spread their excellence[97]. The choice of members, as will be discussed later in more detail, was, however, not particularly geared towards spreading of excellence.

The funding which the consortium received from the Commission had been agreed upon at the start for a set duration. The accepting of new members thus meant less funding for existing members in those cases that had divided the funding based on the division of tasks between the member organisations and had not foreseen a budget for potential tasks by additional member organisations. In one consortium (the Long-Term Collaboration Case) this led to the decision to add new members as associate members instead of full members. This would give these members fewer rights and they would only receive funding from the Commission in order for them to be able to participate in the consortium meetings (spreading of excellence), but not for the activities which new members would undertake and contribute to the consortium. In the other three cases (the Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case and the Funding Agency Case) the status of the new members became the same as the existing members.

The involvement in the selection of new members differed per case. In the Friendship Case the selection of the members was made by the two central people together with the rest of the management team. In the Cross-Discipline Case all the participants of the clusters were asked to give their opinion on potential new members before the management team made the selection. In the Long-Term Collaboration Case those requesting membership were not pre-screened or pre-selected, all requests were put forward to the governing board. And finally, in the Funding Agency Case, which needed an additional member to undertake particular tasks promised to the Commission, which the network members were unable to deliver, the coordinator selected a candidate which was able and willing to undertake the tasks.

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[97] The aim of the Commission with the Network of Excellence instrument was to create durable integration. As discussed in chapter three, this was interpreted in various different ways by the different parts of the Commission. Similarly, the spread of excellence was interpreted differently. For all the consortia studied, except the Long-Term Collaboration Case, durable integration was not a goal. The spread of excellence was not the goal of the consortia themselves either, although it was a demand to be met through publications and teaching, for example, in order to qualify for the funding. The actual goals of the consortia, except for the integration goal of the Long-Term Collaboration Case, are thus different, which means that the influence on the design and behaviour of the meta-organisation is rather limited.

In all cases the final suggestion to accept new members was discussed and agreed upon in the governance board. In two of these cases a separate acceptance from each member organisation was even needed to get formal acceptance. In addition, those cases which added members that would participate in undertaking work for the Commission also needed to ask for acceptance from the Commission for adding the new members to the contract. These additional processes in order to get members accepted were seen as especially difficult and bureaucratic by the interviewees.

9.2.2.2 MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

While the members of the consortia were explicitly named in the consortium agreement, the membership criteria were not in any way specified. In both the initiation phase and operational phase, the cases selected the members based on their capabilities, thus they were instrumental for reaching the goals the initiators or members had in mind. This is perhaps most clearly illustrated by an interviewee of the Friendship Case about the selection of potential members in the initiation phase as presented in the quote below:

> "(…) that basically was the vision in our meeting and with this idea we started to work around who was doing what and using our knowledge of colleagues who were in the field and then checking the literature. (…) That was quickly arranged to actually include the essential [groups in the field]."

The hypothesised condition was, however, that membership criteria would be defined in meta-organisations. The cases show that this condition, however, does not apply for meta-organisations relying on indirect resources. This is logical as meta-organisations with only or mainly indirect resources depend on the contributions by the member organisations to give the meta-organisation capacity for action. In these cases, a new member is to add value to the existing members; the new member is to contribute to the capacity for action. The expected added value of a potential member can differ for the different member and is thus open for discussion. This means that criteria are difficult to be formulated in an exact or precise manner, which means the acceptance of members is a governance decision. This makes the involvement of the member organisations in the decision-making process concerning new members more probable.

The condition may apply, however, for meta-organisations with mainly or only direct resources. The criteria for these meta-organisations might be relatively simple to evaluate. For example, a family-firm association utilising only direct resources might demand its members to be family-firms but might not have any other criteria. Whether the firm is a family-firm or not is easy to describe and evaluate. The

acceptance of members in this situation would become an administrative decision which would be made based on the criteria set.

Thus, membership selection and criteria in indirect resourced meta-organisations will differ from the membership selection and criteria in direct resourced meta-organisations. In the first, the criteria are expected to be vague and the members can be expected to have different interpretations of the need for and added value of a potential member. This means that member organisations can be expected to be involved in the decision-making process concerning the membership. In the second, the criteria are expected to be specified in an exact or precise manner, which makes it possible for others to make the decision for the member organisations.

9.2.2.3 *SELECTION OF INDIVIDUALS OR ORGANISATIONS?*

So far, the assertions and discussion take as their starting point that the selection of (new) members focuses on the organisation. In the Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case, and the Social Network Case, however, the selection of members did not focus on the potential contribution of the potential new member organisation as a whole, but focused on the potential contribution of a part of the organisation – by an individual or an individual group. As the consortia are meta-organisations, and thus the members are organisations, the selection based on the potential contribution of particular individuals or individual groups seems, based on the analysis, to have interesting consequences.

First, the representatives of the member organisations in most cases were those with the highest potential contribution, and not necessarily able to fully represent the organisation as such. This means that the governance board of these cases are not given high enough authority to make decisions in relation to a change in the consortium agreement or the workload agreed upon. This means that proposals for these decisions need to be separately presented to and signed by an authorised representative of each member organisation who is not present in the governance board meetings.

Second, when an individual participant, for which an organisation was invited as member, leaves its organisation and starts to work for another organisation, the consortium faces difficulties. This happened twice in the Friendship Case. On one occasion the member organisation was asked to withdraw from the consortium and the new organisation was asked to become a member organisation. On another occasion the member organisation had become more broadly involved, and thus the member organisation could not be asked to withdraw. The organisation the participant joined, however, was already a member organisation but its participants had not been very actively involved. This meant that a suggestion was made and

accepted in terms of changes in the contribution and funding to be received by these two member organisations.

Third, the participation of a member organisation is evaluated based on the participation of the particular individuals initially selected. For example, in the Social Network Case an interviewee mentions that one of the members is not participating at all. Later in the same interview, however, it becomes clear that the non-participation concerns the initially invited individual. The case was that this initially invited individual did not participate. A more junior colleague in the member organisation had, however, taken over the responsibilities for the tasks and represented the organisation in the annual meetings.

In those cases where the selection focused more on the organisations, and which did not specify in great detail the specific tasks to be performed by each member organisation (Long-Term Collaboration Case and Funding Agency Case), the situation is different. In these cases the representatives are expected to have the authority to make decisions which bind the member organisation to the decision. In addition, the individuals participating can change. This results in very different conditions or consequences.

First, the change in personnel of the member organisation can lead to changes in perspective on how particular goals which the member is responsible for should be reached. In the Long-Term Collaboration Case, a change in personnel and thus the person responsible for representing the member organisation led to the reformulation of the implementation plan already agreed upon.

Second, the contribution of individuals or groups from the member organisations other than those from the initial collaborative group may prove to be effective. In the Funding Agency Case one of the interviewees reflected upon this as a negative aspect, as those that were not in the initial group were able to obtain funding which the initial group had been able to obtain.

> *"But I do feel that the, it has meant that some [groups] have got, by some strange means disproportionately large amounts of money compared to others. Just because of the way they've participated in those different networks and groups within the network. Which you wouldn't necessarily expect, they were subsidiary [groups], they weren't the big [groups], they weren't the main institute coordinator [groups], they were smaller [groups] and they just somehow managed to get more so in that respect there was no pre-allocation to anyone and I think some people found that a bit difficult because, you know, they contribute a lot to writing the thing and then they actually did not get that much out of it."*

The cases thus show that both shallow involvement of the member organisations and more extensive involvement of member organisations in the meta-organisation create particular conditions for the participants and the meta-organisation to deal with. The consequences of the depth of involvement of the member organisation in a meta-organisation, for example on the life-span, growth and effectiveness of meta-organisations and the identification and motivation of participants, would be worthy of further study and theorising.

9.2.3 THE RIGHT TO ENFORCE COMPLIANCE

In the consortium agreement of all the cases, the meta-organisation is given the right to enforce compliance to its rules and commands. In the cases, both the rules and commands are to be agreed upon by the member organisations before compliance can be demanded. The Social Network Case is an exception, as the members do not meet formally to decide on rules and commands which weakens the possibility to enforce compliance. In the other cases, however, enforcing compliance also presented challenges.

The analysis of the cases showed three different ways of dealing with control and granting to deal with the complicatedness of control and granting in a non-hierarchical setting. This applied particularly in a setting where the individual people involved are socially, but not contractually bound, and whereby these people are crucial for creating the capacity for action. The first way of dealing with control and granting was to avoid hierarchical controlling. This is done such that those undertaking work are also given the responsibility for managing and governing the work they undertake. This way of dealing with control and granting was common in all cases, especially in relation to the choices of research projects as well as their implementation.

The second way of dealing with control and granting was to externalise these responsibilities. This was done by relying on the Commission or the external advisory group to speak up in case of identifying problems especially in relation to performance and direction. The judgement by the external group is then taken as authoritative, which makes taking action unavoidable. An example of this way of dealing with control and granting can be seen in relation to the premature finish of a sub-project in the Friendship Case. In this case, the judgement of the external advisory group concerning the progress and work plan of one sub-project made it possible for the consortium to decide to discontinue funding the sub-project. The need to follow the granting suggestion was questioned, but justified by referring to the structure agreed upon as one interviewee said: *"I mean, we did not establish the Scientific Advisory Board just for fun, as a Steering Committee we had said we would take them seriously (...)"*. This shows that the governance responsibility was

externalised in terms of control and in terms of granting, even though the management group made the actual decisions.

The third way of dealing with it was to formalise and depersonalise control. This was done by agreeing on a set of general performance criteria and rules of participation which could be easily checked so that the control became administrational or by creating criteria and utilising blind review. In the Long-Term Collaboration Case formalisation and depersonalisation was used to be able to adjust the budget for the next period. The adjustment was meant to prevent free-riding and promote active participation. In the Funding Agency Case formalising and depersonalising was also used as a way to control and grant. In this case, double blind review of project proposals was used to rank projects in a particular area, whereby the highest ranked projects would be granted funded.

In addition to the different ways of dealing with control and granting, the cases show that enforcing compliance is complicated by difficulties to decide on rules, due to the autonomy of the member organisations. This issue thus links to assertion six and will be discussed in more detail later on in this chapter.

9.2.4   *EXPLICIT AND TAILORED DEFINITION OF TASKS AND RELATIONSHIPS?*

Gulati et al. (2012) suggested that closed boundaries are often combined with an explicit and tailored definition of tasks of the members and the relationships between the members. This condition was not taken into the initial outline of meta-organisational theory as the examples by Ahrne and Brunsson (2008) did not confirm this to be as important specifically for meta-organisations. The cases, however, provide reason to reconsider this.

Four of the five cases studied prepared an explicit and tailored definition of tasks for each member both during the preparation phase, as well as with new members. The relationships between the member organisations were, however, not specified in detail. The Funding Agency Case was an exception as this case only prepared a general plan during the preparation phase, and thus did not specify the tasks for the different members.

The coordinator of the Funding Agency Case made clear that not specifying the tasks was a risk they had taken: "We ran a big risk in the original proposal because we put some broad work packages in the original proposal (...)". The considered risk may explain the tendency to specify the tasks of each member in these settings, but also other issues play a role. Three issues seem to be of importance. First, not specifying the tasks at the start meant that the consortium needed to divide the tasks several times. Secondly, not specifying the tasks meant that the member organisations could not rely on getting funding for the tasks they had in mind to undertake during the

whole funding period. This meant that hiring personnel specifically for the project was more difficult.

The cases show that meta-organisations can use explicit and tailored definition of tasks and possibly also relationships. However, the examples of Ahrne and Brunsson (2008) and the Funding Agency Case also show that closed boundaries do not demand or necessitate explicit and tailored definition of tasks. What seems to be most important and thus gives rise to the necessity for the explicit and tailored definition of tasks and possibly relationships is the temporary, project type of set up.

Thus, in those meta-organisations which are built to be temporary and have an external customer and/or funder, we can expect an explicit and tailored definition of tasks. This, however, is not the case in the open-ended meta-organisations which Ahrne and Brunsson (2008) used mainly as examples. These organisations can be expected to create definitions of tasks in the operational phase. The division of these tasks among member organisations may, however, also be done on the spot, ad hoc or last minute and do not need to have been divided for longer periods.

9.3 LOW STRATIFICATION REVISITED

9.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The discussion concerning the assertion of low stratification of membership in chapter 6 led to three hypothesised conditions.

Table 19   Assertion 2: Low stratification

Assertion 2	Hypothesised conditions
Organisations with constitutional membership have a membership with low stratification (formulated based on ideas from Gulati et al., 2012).	This demands clarifying the division of votes to be able to come to collective decisions (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). Differences between member organisations (such as resources, power, interests, and input) can lead to the division of votes being called into question (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) - This makes it uncertain what the appropriate forms of decision-making and voting rights are. (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) - This makes the importance of votes a common source of conflict and negotiation. (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008)
	This leads to extensive multilateral negotiations and consensus-building efforts between the members (Gulati et al., 2012).
	This enhances member's commitment to the meta-organisation (Gulati et al., 2012).

The first hypothesised condition considers the division of votes and related difficulties. The cases give the impression of a less problematic situation in relation to the votes as there is little mention of problems in this area.

Additionally, the second condition, the expected extensive multilateral negotiations and consensus-building, is far less obvious than expected. The analysis, however, shows that those processes which lead to the creation of collective rules which can be enforced by the meta-organisation are reported to include extensive multilateral negotiations and consensus-building, while this was not the case with other processes.

The last condition, related to the member's commitment, will not be discussed in detail as too little data is available related to this. When, however, studying this specifically, the discussion on the difference between the ownership and the work organisation should be considered. This could lead to a need to consider three different issues: (1) member commitment, (2) representative commitment, and (3) participant commitment.

From the analysis, two more interrelated issues arose. First, although the cases did have low stratification among the members, there still can be relatively high stratification among the participants. The stratification often related to the stratification which existed within the member organisations, thus seniority, being principal investigator or not, heading a group or not all created hierarchical relationships amongst the participants. Second, as member organisations can have differences in the importance of the hierarchical position and decision-making ability, tensions between participants of different member organisations can also occur for instance when participants try to make decisions and some of the participants are unable to do so without checking with others from their organisation.

9.3.2   DIVISION OF VOTES

In all cases, except the Social Network Case which does not have a formal meeting of the members, the votes of the members have been divided such that each member has one vote. Thus, although Ahrne and Brunsson (2008) expected the division of one member one vote would likely be contested, the cases studied did not show signs of active contesting of the division of votes. It is important, however, as several interviewees pointed out, that an informal rule exists which is followed. This rule differs from the formal division of votes and gives those who actively participated in the right to decide what is done and how. The impression ariose from the interviews that voting against proposals made by those actively involved was something 'not done'. As this is caused by the conditions created by indirect resources, this will be discussed in more detail in the section on indirect resources.

9.3.3   *EXTENSIVE MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS AND CONSENSUS-BUILDING*

In the Long-Term Collaboration Case two different examples were given of extensive multilateral negotiations and consensus-building. One process aimed at harmonising different types of practices in the member organisations. The following was mentioned by an interviewee responsible for harmonising one of the practices:

> *"It has been an interesting one to watch that evolve, because at first there is complete denial by the partners involved. It's just left on the table as an area of difference, and then we come back to it and look at it again, and gradually, gradually the message spreads that this is probably the best and most acceptable way to do it. And you find by the next meeting that the partner has actually taken steps to put that in place. And so the acquired shift in behaviour which results from not one discussion, not two discussions, but a number of face-to-face discussions and listening to the views around the table, very important. And it, this all does depend on acquired, non-confrontational diplomatic progress in conversation, I think. You can't impose these things rapidly on people, it has got to evolve."*

In the same case another multilateral negotiation and consensus-building process was described which aimed at creating a policy on authorship. This policy had become necessary in order to solve a conflict between participants, as well as to prevent future conflicts over authorship. This process took place via email and was rather extensive, including several rounds of draft proposals and comments sent back and forth.

In the other cases studied, however, there was no mentioning of extensive multilateral negotiations or consensus-building in the operational phase. In the initiation phase, the agreement on the consortium agreement in some cases was, however, only possible after extensive negotiations and consensus-building.

The examples indicate that the extensive multilateral negotiations and consensus-building are necessary in relation to new rules or policies which have an impact on the member organisations or could be enforced by the meta-organisation. The multilateral negotiations, however, do not necessarily involve all member organisations. The negotiations and consensus-building in indirect resourced meta-organisations may take place between the participants or representatives involved in preparing a proposal which could be decided upon by the representatives. As also mentioned in relation to the division of votes, this creates particular conditions in meta-organisations with indirect resources, as those with fewer resources might not have the possibility to contribute. If not contributing also means that one has difficulties in voting against the proposal, the influence of these less 'rich' member organisations may be(come) very limited.

9.3.4   *LOW STRATIFICATION AMONG MEMBERS, NOT NECESSARILY AMONG PARTICIPANTS*

The cases indicate that although there is no, or very little, stratification amongst the members formally, there does exist stratification amongst participants. Some of the participants are project workers hired to implement particular tasks. They have within the member organisation a hierarchical relation to a project leader, a supervisor, a head of department, etc. Their influence and status are lower. In case where they represent their organisation, they may not be considered to have high enough status (see the discussion in section 9.2.2.3). Thus, the stratification among members may be low, while the stratification among participants may be high or higher. The stratification among participants can follow the hierarchical position in the member organisation, but may also follow particular static categories such as age, status, existing connections and experience, or more developing categories such as active involvement, vision and connecting ability within the meta-organisation. An interviewee from the Long-Term Collaboration Case, for example, mentions:

> *"I think the juniors are more easily, you know, giving up their opinions if [interviewee laughing].. they are not so vocal about what they want. And it's, basically it's very, very typical in a sense that when you are on a coffee break those who are junior and do not want to, you know, proclaim their opinion, they go to the person who they want to be their vocal voice during the next meeting."*

Although the cases studied are examples of indirect resourced meta-organisations, I expect that in direct resourced meta-organisations the employees will be organised in an even simpler hierarchical manner.

It is important to recognise this difference, as well as that this higher stratification among participants has consequences for the way the meta-organisation functions. One consequence of the stratification among participants is that it can create tensions among participants from different member organisations due to their difference in status or decision-making ability. This issue was pointed out most clearly by one of the interviewees interviewed during the pilot study:

> *"Some of the [nationality] researchers working in some of the work packages are very loyal to their senior scientists. If this scientist is for one reason or another not interested in one of the issues that are raised they just don't contribute anymore."*

Thus, differences in terms of structure and practices in the member organisations thus also influence the meta-organisation.

9.4 INDIRECT AND/OR DIRECT RESOURCES REVISITED

9.4.1 INDIRECT RESOURCES

9.4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

There were five different conditions discussed in chapter six related to the assertion that meta-organisations can utilise indirect resources. Although the resources mainly concentrated on are human resources as this type of resources bring out more specific issues, other resources can also be utilised by the meta-organisation such as tools, materials, space, etc. of the members.

Table 20   **Assertion 3: Indirect and/or direct resources: Utilising indirect resources**

Assertion 3	Hypothesised conditions
Organisations with constitutional membership can utilise indirect and/or direct resources.	Utilising *indirect resources* means that: - Members of meta-organisations can supply it with a great capacity for action and access to resources right from the start. (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) - A few members are often enough to enable a meta-organisation to be effective and to gain influence and attention. (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) - Meta-organisations utilising indirect resources dependent on their members in order to gain capacity for action, which makes it difficult to exclude members. (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) - As the members account for the capacity for action, it is the members rather than the meta-organisation that can be successful. (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) - Member organisations become simultaneously principals and agents of the meta-organisation (Gulati et al., 2012).

The first of the conditions claims that members can supply the meta-organisation with a great capacity for action and access to resources right from the start. This in chapter six had been considered true only for indirect resourced meta-organisations. The analysis of the cases, however, shows that even for indirect resourced meta-organisations this is not always true.

The second condition claimed that a few members are often enough for the meta-organisation to be effective. As neither size nor related effectiveness was addressed specifically in the case studies, it is impossible to discuss this condition.

The third condition claims that indirect resourced meta-organisations are dependent on their members and that this makes it difficult to exclude members. I question the difficulty of excluding as a general claim as the meta-organisation will not be equally dependent on each member, and thus a very inactive member may be excluded without any consequences for the capacity for action of the meta-organisation. The dependence on the member organisations, however, does have other consequences

such as insecure resources – member organisations retain control. This leads to the use of different ways to motivate member organisations to contribute.

An important additional condition arising from the cases links to both the first and third condition. Members in indirect resources meta-organisations cannot contribute in an equal manner, and more especially cannot contribute to all activities equally. This has an important impact on these meta-organisations. This suggestion is made that this would be added to the conditions related to the assertion that meta-organisations can utilise indirect resources.

The fourth condition claims that the success of the meta-organisation is the success of the members. I think it is more complicated than this, and that the success of the meta-organisation is a different type of success than that of the member organisations, even though a very strong link exists.

The fifth condition is concerned with members being simultaneously principals and agents of the meta-organisation. Although this can be technically confirmed, the consequences of this were not discussed at much length. The cases, for example, show that this contributes to the possibility as well as demand for self-steering. In addition, this combination also means we can expect the meta-organisation to be more responsive to the needs and wishes of the member organisations and one could expect this also to have consequences for the commitment level of the members.

In addition to the already hypothesised conditions, an additional condition will be proposed, which links to some of the conditions above but has its own consequences. This condition is that the participants have no employment relation with the meta-organisation. This gives every participant multiple hats, which can lead to possible conflicts of interest. Furthermore, it also changes the meaning of the hierarchy in the work organisation. The issues arising from cases in relation to the participants will be discussed.

9.4.1.2   *MEMBERS CAN SUPPLY THE META-ORGANISATION WITH GREAT CAPACITY TO ACT*

When members supply the meta-organisation with great capacity to act, the meta-organisations is an indirect resourced meta-organisation or an meta-organisation utilising both indirect and direct resources. The condition thus actually only confirms that indirect resources meta-organisations are possible. However, Ahrne and Brunsson in addition claim this is possible from the start. This is confirmed by the case studies, which actually show that it is not possible to set up a meta-organisation without members supplying the meta-organisation with a capacity to act. During the initiation phase, the contributions of the organisations which initiated and those who were invited to participate are necessary for any meta-organisation to start. Thus, the members need to invest during the initiation phase in order for a meta-organisation

to be set up. This same is true in the initiation phase of any association, without the initial contribution of resources, the organisation will not be set up.

In the operational phase, however, the members' supply of resources becomes a bit more complicated. The cases challenge the assertion that the members can provide it with the great capacity to act or access to resources directly. One way in which the cases challenge this claim is that in the operational phase most cases were hiring personnel to undertake the activities agreed upon. This means that the members did not have the capacity or access to the needed resources right from the start, but organised the capacity for action when the contract with the Commission was secured. The second way in which the cases challenge this claim is that in most cases, communication tools and systems as well as administrational tools and systems were bought or developed for the meta-organisation. Thus, meta-organisations may also have the need for tools and materials that are not yet present in the member organisations. The third way in which the cases challenge this claim is that the final establishment of the cases is triggered by the promise of funding by the Commission. Thus, the situation can be such that the members do not have the possibility or willingness to invest the resources needed for the meta-organisation and that resources are needed from outside to make the meta-organisation able to acquire the capacity for action.

Thus, members might be able to supply the meta-organisation with the capacity to act, but this does not mean that all resources can be supplied by the member organisations from the start. In the case that the member organisations are unable to supply the meta-organisation with the necessary resources, the meta-organisation will not only depend on their members, as will be discussed below, but will also have a dependency relation to those which provide the meta-organisation with these lacking resources. The dependency on the Commission funding was in all cases such that the consortium would not have been created without receiving this funding.

9.4.1.3 *THE META-ORGANISATION IS DEPENDENT ON THE MEMBERS TO GAIN CAPACITY TO ACT*

In meta-organisations utilising only indirect resources, the member organisations will provide the meta-organisation with (an important part of) these resources. The resources are, however, owned and remain controlled by these member organisations. This means that the use of these resources can be restricted by the member at will. This makes the use of these resources uncertain and unpredictable; the meta-organisation is in this situation dependent on the members to give it capacity for action.

The cases show that this dependence has led to policies and structures to ensure contributions will be delivered, or at least that member organisations are motivated

to deliver. Three different approaches were used by the cases: the punishment approach, the reward approach, and the social control approach.

The punishment approach was the main approach in the Friendship Case and the Cross Discipline Case. This meant that if member organisations failed to perform or contribute in the agreed upon manner, the funding to these member organisations would be cut. The well-functioning of a punishment approach relies, however, on the willingness to control and act upon this control. This is not always easy, as discussed in section 9.2.3 concerning the right to enforce compliance. When control shows, however, that a particular member is fully passive and does not show signs of willingness to become active, it seems not very difficult to exclude such members. The Cross-Discipline Case was in the process of excluding one of its members, for example. The following quote by one of the interviewees shows the way in which the reasoning for this is built up.

> "The network has (...) to have some rules about [excluding members], and those rules have to be implemented ultimately. So far, you know, I think everyone has been very understanding, and as I said, there have been a few members who haven't been very cooperative, haven't been very collaborative, and they have suffered as a result. So their funds have been cut. I think if they continue to behave in that manner, then they will be ejected from network. And obviously again, at that point we'll have to resort to (...) the legal sort of issues that are laid down in the consortium agreement, which is why I think we have that consortium agreement. But I think that's fine, (...) if people aren't a part of the network then there's no point in being there [interviewee laughing]."

On the other hand, what also can be read from the quote above is that if a passive member does not disturb the other member organisations and their free-riding does not give them unreasonable benefits or reduce the benefits for the other members, the meta-organisation may consider not excluding such member.

The reward approach was the main approach used in the Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Funding Agency Case. This approach meant that the funding of the Commission was targeted at those actively contributing to the meta-organisation. Thus, it focused on rewarding the contribution made by the different member organisations. In this approach there was also a need for control; due to its reward-orientation it was clearly agreed upon on beforehand and was therefore less difficult to implement than the punishment approach.

The social control approach was the main approach in the Social Network Case, but was also a more silent approach present in the other cases. This approach means that the member not participating in the agreed upon way or not contributing to the

network may be approached by colleagues with the request to take action. If this does not result in action, or if this is needed very often, the member might risk their reputation. This approach has an effect, especially as the cases are temporary structures. For participants it can be very important to build or be invited to build connections in order to create a temporary meta-organisation.

9.4.1.4 MEMBER ORGANISATIONS WILL IN AN UNEVEN MANNER CONTRIBUTE TO THE META-ORGANISATION

In the last two sections it was established that indirect resources are insecure and utilising of these indirect resources creates a dependency of the meta-organisation on the members. In both sections an important, but not very much highlighted condition was that member organisations contribute in uneven manner.

The cases show that both in the initiation phase and the operational phase the contributions are very uneven among the member organisations participating, but that the contributions can be more or less uneven. In the initiation phase, the initiator(s) and especially the coordinating initiator will contribute much more resources to get the meta-organisation set up. The coordinator of the Funding Agency Case presents this the most clearly and argues that this gives the power to influence:

> "The bold decision that I made and people (...) sort of followed that decision [interviewee laughing] (...) because you know there's a subtle psychological issue in these Networks of Excellence. The coordinator does most of the work, OK? And the other people sort of accept that (...) with very little effort (...) they (...) get some amount of money (...) It is by far for most people the easiest way to be funded. (...) So they comply."

Similarly, an interviewee of the Long-Term Collaboration Case mentions that there are large differences, but in this case it did not only concern the coordinator but a small group of people who did most of the work. This interviewee also speculates on some of the reasons for possible differences in contribution among members:

> "In a consortium of this type at least, there are very active members and there are some who are less active, and that depends on a number of issues, I think. It depends on the personality, it depends on the experience that you have, it depends on your facility for speaking in English and liaising with other people and your research ideas, you know, what can you think of that would be useful and that you are prepared to give the time too, because it's time-consuming."

In the operational phase contributions by member organisations are also uneven. The following quote from one of the interviewees of the Cross-Discipline Case highlights this:

> *"There is __huge__ variation between the productivity and that's, you can't deny that. Some people produce a lot within the work packages and some others have been less productive."*

In this phase, however, the contributions by members in the cases are financially compensated. Those members that contribute will get a proportion of the funding provided by the Commission, while those who do not contribute in most cases will get less or no financial compensation. In addition, those members actively involved in the cases also have more influence. The same happens as described by the coordinator of the Funding Agency Case: those who put in a lot of effort will be able to decide and the rest comply with these decisions. These two ways of compensating contributions by member organisations are discussed briefly below.

The financial compensation creates a need for an administrational system which can track and combine internal administrational processes concerned with the division of funds across, for example, work groups with administrational processes of the member organisations concerning their contribution, for example, to each work group, the management and committees. This means that besides the planning, record-keeping and reporting of meta-organisational groups, there is a need for planning, record-keeping and reporting by each member organisation and an administrational system which can keep track of both and combine the two.

The influence compensation leads to undermining of the voting system discussed in section 9.3.2. This happens in different ways. In the first place, as can be read in the quote above from the coordinator of the Funding Agency Case, those who are doing a lot of work are also given the right to decide. This means that actively participating agents gain more legitimacy as deciding principals than do less actively participating agents. In the cases this was also true on other levels, as can be seen in the quote below from an interviewee talking about a particular area which he was responsible for:

> *"It's mainly the people involved in that work package [commenting on the initial plan drafted by the work package leader] (...) but usually if you've got a good plan, they don't insist on any changes [interviewee laughing]."*

Thus, if a member organisation was actively involved in the development of one theme, this member organisation was also allowed to decide upon the theme. Members active in other themes will not get involved or comment on the plans of other themes. In relation to those member organisations that contributed to the management, their decisions are also legitimate to a large extent. An interviewee of the Social Network Case, for example, mentions in relation to the decisions made by the steering committee:

> *"On the whole they agree with the priorities that were set by the steering committee as long as they are fair and distribute the, the resources evenly across where they are needed. (...) So far everybody has agreed with the decisions. In fact, they are quite pleased that the steering committee is taking a lot of the decision-making [away from] them, because most of the members don't want to be involved in that. They just want to get on with things and be told what happened and that they have money and just do this."*

This means that the hierarchical structure of governance board, executive committee, work group, and participant gets undermined as those who have been active concerning a particular issue are seen as the legitimate decision-makers on that particular issue. These legitimate decisions can still formally be voted down. In order to vote against this, however, the formal hierarchically-ordered groups have to have good reasons and need to consider the possibility of losing the willingness of those member organisations involved to invest in the network.

A member organisation, which cannot contribute as much as other member organisations, thus loses out on influence both as principal and as agent, as their chance to participate is reduced. Therefore they have less ability to influence via actively participating but in addition, due to not having been participating, they will also have a restricted legitimacy of influencing through voting as owners.

Utilising indirect resources leads to uneven contribution, and thus as a consequence, there is a need for compensation. Financial compensation leads to the need for extensive, cross-organisational administrational systems of planning and reporting. Influence compensation leads to undermining of the equal voting structure and therefore can create principal-agent conflicts between the member organisations. Additional consequences which can be expected are that (1) the meta-organisation's dependence on each member will differ, whereby the contribution of the member is important, and (2) each member will differ more strongly in their commitment and identification with the meta-organisation as these are expected to be linked to the willingness to contribute.

9.4.1.5 MEMBERS RATHER THAN META-ORGANISATION CAN BE SUCCESSFUL

The cases show, contrary to the claim of successfulness of members instead of meta-organisations, that both the contribution of members and the meta-organisation can be successful. In the Friendship Case an interviewee mentions that *"The most important aspect of the network is the possibility to have an open contact with my colleagues in the other nodes of the network and keep all the nodes coordinated in the development of these new methods. I think this is, by far, (...) the main benefit from the network."* In the Cross-Discipline Case an interviewee mentions that the

success of the network is indirect *"I mean now since I am collaborating with people that know techniques that I don't know, I am sending my students there! It is fast and quick and we don't need to do [sic] all the mistakes ourselves, which saves time and money!"*.

This means that although the meta-organisation is dependent on the members for their contribution to be successful, it is the rules and structure of, and the possibilities created by the meta-organisation that make the meta-organisation successful. It even makes collaboration between the members and the successes in these collaborations possible. This means that successfulness may need to be considered in other terms, perhaps not the direct financial or material results, but the environment and possibilities created are where the meta-organisation can be successful.

9.4.1.6 *MEMBERS ARE SIMULTANEOUSLY PRINCIPALS AND AGENTS*

The section on unequal contribution previously made reference to the dual role of members: them being simultaneously principals and agents. In this section it was mentioned that as member organisations due to their contribution to the meta-organisation's capacity for action, are both agents as well as principals. This unequal contribution therefore led to uneven influence of member organisations as those member organisations which were active agents gained more influence on the proposals as well as more legitimacy to decide as principal.

When member organisations function as agents, there can be an expectation that the needs and wishes of the principals are less in conflict. This is, however, not necessarily the case as not all members are actively involved in all issues. Therefore, those members, which are not able or not in the position to actively contribute as agent, might still act as principal. This would therefore create complicated conflicts between the member organisations as principals and agents.

9.4.1.7 *PARTICIPANTS HAVE NO EMPLOYMENT RELATION WITH THE META-ORGANISATION*

An additional condition, which arose from the cases, is that participants in indirect resourced meta-organisations do not have an employment relation with the meta-organisation. Two consequences are especially clear. First, the participants are not fixed into a hierarchical organisation-defined authority structure as employees are. This means that participants remain more independent. This leads meta-organisations to have activities including the related management and governance processes decentralised/centralised to the level at which participants undertake the work. The hierarchical structure of the consortia as described in the consortium agreements, whereby, for example, work groups would report to the executive committee, are described in interviews as more a division of labour: each work group decides on the issues related to their theme and the executive committee decides on

issues not related to any of the themes. Thus, those questions that are not decided elsewhere are the issues to be decided by the executive committee. As becomes clear from an interviewee of the Social Network Case:

> "I mean let's not give the impression that this (...) group of people (...) are making the decisions left, right and centre. The efficiency of things, like where do we hold the (...) annual meeting, and who is going to be the local organiser for that and this sort of thing. And it needs kind of a small group of people to do that, because otherwise nothing will ever happen."

Second, as participants do not have employment relationships, individual participants can fill multiple positions on different hierarchical layers within the meta-organisation simultaneously. Although it is not necessary for participants in the meta-organisation to wear multiple hats, the cases indicate this to be probable as nearly all interviewees have four to six hats they can put on. This is logical as those actively involved from a member organisation are easily seen as the best candidate to be the organisation's representative. In addition, they may also assume managerial responsibilities besides participating in the implementation, being asked to do some work for a committee and so forth. In some meta-organisations, for example, in FIFA, some of the dual roles are made impossible. They, for example, prohibit participants from having managerial responsibility and representing one of the member organisations simultaneously.

One of the interviewees from the Long-Term Collaboration Case reflected upon having multiple hats by saying that one of the issues he has been wondering about is the following: "is there a conflict of interest for us as individuals participating in a network like this versus our own [organisation]". It was for this interviewee of utmost importance to have transparency in the decisions made and to be accountable for these decisions. Although this issue has not been further explored in the study, it does seem to be an important question to raise, and it highlights one of the possible tensions arising in cases where participants have multiple hats.

In three of the five cases, the governance board had not been given the power to decide on, for example, new members or changes in the agreements. These decisions were only to be *proposed* by the highest decision-making group of the meta-organisation to the members and were not to be *decided* upon by them. Although the study cannot answer exactly why, it seems to link to the multiple hats of participants whereby those most involved are representing their organisation. This means that when decisions are made that actually could influence the whole member organisation this decision needs to be made by others in the organisation. These people then again do not have the interest or ability to participate in the consortium and thus would on many other issues not be the right representative for the organisation on the governance board.

9.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented and discussed the findings of the study in relation to the assertion of constitutional membership. In the next chapter the findings are summarised and the suggestions for changes presented. Furthermore, the findings in relation to the assertions not discussed in this chapter are examined. In addition to the findings, various issues are discussed related to the research process, meta-organisations and steering processes, and suggestions are made for future research.

10 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

10.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis advances a novel approach to inter-organisational relations building on the notion that inter-organisational relations not only can lead to emergent social orders, they also can lead to decided social orders (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011). The perspectives central in inter-organisational relations literature, organisational economic, network and institutional perspectives (as becomes clear from the review by Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011), focus on the emergent social order (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011), order as the result of mutual adaption and connections between organisations. This thesis focuses instead on the decided social order, order as the result of decisions by individuals or organisations "not only about their own, but also about the behaviour and distinctions of others" (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011). Furthermore, this thesis had a meta-organisation (or, comparatively, a network level) perspective, or better still, level of analysis, instead of an ego-centric or dyadic perspective on the relations between organisations. This perspective, or level of analysis, is not very common (as was shown by Provan et al., 2007). At the crossroads of the organisational perspective on inter-organisational relations and a whole network level of analysis, meta-organisation theory provides insights into an area still largely under-recognised in the research literature on inter-organisational relations.

An overview of the contributions made to meta-organisation theory in this thesis is presented in the following section. Both the contributions made to meta-organisation theory and an overview of the theory, are presented in four summarising tables.

Meta-organisation theory provides an organisational view on meta-organisations as empirical phenomena. This has its strengths and weaknesses. After the presentation of the contribution and overview of meta-organisation theory, these strengths and weaknesses are discussed. A variety of the above-mentioned other perspectives can also usefully provide insights into the empirical phenomena. Some promising perspectives are highlighted in the suggestions for future research on meta-organisations.

Finally, the strength and weaknesses of the reconceptualising of governance, management and administration are discussed. Examples will be provided to illustrate in which situations the framework can be fruitful to use.

10.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY'S CONTRIBUTION TO META-ORGANISATION THEORY

Chapters 5 and 9 aimed at making two different contributions to meta-organisation theory. Chapter 5 focused on developing assertions in relation to constitutional membership and hypothesising the conditions related. In chapter 9 these assertions

and hypothesised conditions were revisited and findings related to the different assertions and conditions arising from the analysis of the case studies were presented. The insights helped to (re)formulate some of the conditions as well as made clearer some of the consequences of these conditions.

In the next section, the findings presented in chapter 9 will be summarised. After the summary of these findings, I present the findings in relation to direct resources and in relation to direct and indirect resources being combined. This is followed by an overview of the findings specific to organisations as members.

10.2.1 *ASSERTIONS RELATED TO CONSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP*

In table 21, table 22 and table 23 the key findings in relation to each of the three assertions focused on in chapter eleven are summarised. Table 21 presents the findings in relation to the assertion of closed boundaries. Table 22 presents the findings in relation to the assertion of low stratification. And table 23 presents the findings in relation to the assertion of utilising indirect resources. In each table the findings help to further specify the already hypothesised conditions, they help to specify how conditions are not as hypothesised, or they help to specify new conditions which have not yet been hypothesised. The changes suggested in hypothesised conditions as well as new conditions will be presented in italics.

Table 21   Summary of key findings (1): Organisations with constitutional membership have closed boundaries

Hypothesised conditions	Findings
Closed boundaries lead to a need to define a system for approving/disapproving membership applications and to specifying membership criteria (Gulati et al., 2012).	The cases show that in indirect resourced meta-organisations due to the dependence on the member organisations and due to difficulties of defining clear criteria for approving members whose contribution is of crucial importance, the approval of members demanded involvement of the existing members in the decisions on new members. This, however, could mean that in direct resourced meta-organisations, due to the lower dependence on the contribution by members, the criteria can be formulated more clearly and thus the approval system could after the setting of the criteria only involve an administrative decision.
Not yet hypothesised, but linked to the condition above.	The cases show that *selection of members can be based on the participant(s) from an organisation rather than the organisation as a whole*. This indicates that there can be a difference in the level of involvement of the member organisation in the meta-organisation. The level of involvement again has important consequences, for example, for member turnover. If the member organisation is involved via only one participant, this can, for instance, lead to the need to replace a member organisation when their participant changes employer. If the member organisation is involved, then a leaving participant will be replaced by another participant. This again may lead to changes in view promoted, the focus on particular issues and the way in which tasks are performed by the member organisation.
Closed boundaries give the meta-organisation the right to enforce compliance with its commands and rules (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).	Although the meta-organisation formally has the right to enforce compliance, the cases show that indirect resourced meta-organisations have difficulties doing so. Indirect resourced meta-organisations deal with the difficulty of enforcing compliance by avoiding, externalising or formalising the control and granting processes.

Table 22   Summary of key findings (2): Organisations with constitutional membership have low stratification

Hypothesised conditions	Findings
Low stratification demands clarifying the division of votes to be able to come to collective decisions. Differences between member organisations (such as resources, power, interests, and input) can, however, lead to the equality of members being called into question (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).	The cases which had a members-as-owners meeting all used a one vote per member system. None of the cases report having called this system into question due to differences between the member organisations. They, however, did mention the informal rules which relate to the use of the votes, whereby involvement leads to legitimacy for making decisions (see findings related to indirect resources on participation and legitimate influence). Not following this informal rule may make member organisations to question the division of the votes.
Low stratification leads to extensive multilateral negotiations and consensus-building efforts between the members (Gulati et al., 2012).	The cases show that: (1) Extensive multilateral negotiations were avoided by the development of defined and tailored tasks as well as division of funding for each member organisation during the initiation phase or a formalised system in order to decide on the division of tasks and funding. (2) Extensive multilateral negotiations were not to be avoided when rules or policies needed to be decided upon in the operational phase. These negotiation and building of consensus processes could, but most often did not, involve all members. Often only some of the members, those with strong opinions about the particular issue discussed, would actively participate in the negotiation and consensus-building process. (see also the findings related to indirect resources for an insight into the consequences of not participating in such a process).
Not yet hypothesised.	The cases show that a clear conceptual difference needs to be made between members and participants. *Low stratification of the members does not mean low stratification of participants*. The organisation of participants may include several hierarchical levels within the meta-organisation. In addition, other ways of stratifying may be used, for example, through status based on position or seniority, as well as position in the social network of participants. Finally and perhaps most importantly, participants from one member organisation can also have hierarchical linkages and status differences which will influence the stratification of the participants in the meta-organisation. All these more informally defined ways of stratifying among participants can, due to cultural and organisational differences, lead to conflicts as well as difficulties in working together.

Table 23 Summary of the findings (3): Organisations with constitutional membership can utilise indirect resources

Hypothesised conditions	Findings
Members of meta-organisations can supply it with a great capacity for action and access to resources right from the start (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).	The cases show that although the members have great capacity for action as well as access to resources, this does not mean that the capacity for action and these resources will be (1) suitable for the undertakings of the meta-organisation, or (2) available directly from the start.
Meta-organisations utilising indirect resources are dependent on their members in order to gain capacity for action, which makes it difficult to exclude members (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).	The cases show that indeed *meta-organisations utilising indirect resources are dependent on their members*. However, this does not necessarily mean this leads to difficulties of excluding members. More importantly, the dependence leads to insecure resources whereby it is not sure if the resources will be made available when needed. This resulted in the cases having formalised motivational systems. Three different types of systems were identified: punishment system, rewards system and social control system.
Not yet hypothesised.	*Member organisations will in uneven manner contribute to the meta-organisation.* The cases show that *uneven contributions lead to a need to compensate for the contributions made.* Two different systems were identified: financial compensation and influence compensation. Not all meta-organisations will (be able to) financially compensate their members for their contributions and also not all investments may get financially compensated for as show by the cases. Influence compensation is, however, expected to be used more generally. *Financial compensation leads to complex administrational systems which need to cross organisational boundaries.* *Influence compensation leads to undermining the agreed upon voting system* as higher level of involvement or investment in a particular activity creates higher legitimacy for deciding about that particular issue while no or low involvement leads to lower legitimacy for deciding. The cases show that this is even the case when the member organisations get compensated for their contribution. As the dependency on each member differs, this also influences the possibility to exclude members. Those members not contributing to the meta-organisation may be excluded from the meta-organisation (see condition on dependence above).

Hypothesised conditions	Findings
As the members account for the capacity for action, it is the members rather than the meta-organisation that can be successful (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).	*The cases show that meta-organisations can be successful even if their members account for the capacity for action.* The successfulness of the meta-organisation would then, however, need to be linked to what the meta-organisation does. A meta-organisation can, as a minimum, be seen as (un)successful in providing a useful playing field and functional rules of the game which makes it possible for (the participants of) the member organisations to be successful in reaching the collective goals.
Member organisations become simultaneously principals and agents of the meta-organisation (Gulati et al, 2012).	*Meta-organisations in which members are principal and agent can more easily minimise conflicts between principal and agent, but if conflicts arise these can be much more complex and difficult to solve.* (1) (Already mentioned in relation to unequal contributions). Member organisations contributing more as active agents gain legitimacy to decide as principals in those areas they are active in. (2) Principal and agent may be the same people, which can be expected to result in fewer conflicts. On the other hand, the agents are less steerable as they have no employment relation to the meta-organisation and also may have no employment relation to the participant acting as principal. This can create much more complex conflicts, especially as influence compensation (discussed above) lower principals' legitimacy for decision-making.
Not yet hypothesised.	*Participants have no employment relation with the meta-organisation.* (1) This leads to combining governance, management and administration processes with the implementation of activities. (2) This leads to the possibility for participants to fill different functions or positions simultaneously and thus wear multiple hats. This again leads to different possible conflicts of interests (within the meta-organisation or as participant of member and meta-organisation) and, relatedly, possible lower trust in the loyalty of participants to represent the member organisation.

10.2.2 UTILISING DIRECT RESOURCES

The cases were examples of indirect resourced member organisations, and therefore little can be said based on my data in relation to the consequences of utilising direct resources. Some issues discussed in relation to indirect resources, do however give some ideas and are reflected upon in brief.

When the meta-organisation only utilises direct resources, it is likely to be less dependent on the member organisations; the problems created by uneven contributions by member organisations do not exist, and the compensation solutions to handle uneven contributions are not necessary. Therefore, this organisation can have simpler administrative systems as the transactions between the member organisations and meta-organisation can be minimised to the collection of membership fees.

Table 24   Assertion 3: Indirect and/or direct resources: Utilising direct resources

Assertion 3	Hypothesised conditions
Organisations with constitutional membership can utilise indirect and/or direct resources.	Utilising *direct resources* means that: - The meta-organisation gets a life of its own (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) which may lead to the situation in which the meta-organisation lose sight of the needs and wishes of the member organisations

The dependence of the meta-organisation on the member organisations to gain capacity for action is far less than in those meta-organisations utilising indirect resources. However, other dependency structures such as the dependence on the financial contribution by member organisations, the dependence on the willingness of members to stay as member, and the dependence on the status of the member organisations will remain as important, or even more important than in those meta-organisations utilising indirect resources.

The use of direct resources in the form of hired personnel may also create socially or mentally a more distant relation between the meta-organisation and its members as the role of principals and the role of agent are separated. This may mean that the knowledge of the wishes and needs of the member organisations is lower, while the members in their role as principals can have difficulties making clear and agreeing on their collective wishes and needs. This means that it can be expected that the member organisations will have more extensive multilateral negotiations as the members have not been involved in the preparation. Thus, their differences in opinion, wishes and needs will still need to be dealt with while discussing particular proposals made by the personnel. In cases where member organisations cannot agree on the wishes and needs that the meta-organisation needs to focus on, this weakens the directions given to the personnel. The personnel then will be in the difficult situation to find a way forward which would be acceptable to

all members. This may enhance a feeling of ownership in the personnel of the meta-organisation. The feeling of ownership and identification with the organisation by the personnel may again create additional conflicts with the actual ownership exercised by the representatives of the member organisations.

10.2.3 *UTILISING BOTH DIRECT AND INDIRECT RESOURCES*

The meta-organisations utilising both resources will need to deal with the issues discussed earlier in relation to indirect and direct resources, but in addition will need to deal with conditions arising from utilising both types of resources.

Table 25   **Assertion 3: Indirect and/or direct resources: Utilising both resources**

Assertion 3	Hypothesised conditions
Organisations with constitutional membership can utilise indirect and/or direct resources.	Utilising *both indirect and direct resources* means that: - The division of labour between participants from the member organisations and the employees of the meta-organisation needs to be clarified. - Conflict and tensions can rise due to differences (such as status, power, identification, responsibility and experiencing of consequences) between participants and employees.

The cases gave very little insight into the possible conditions related to the combination of indirect and direct resources. Conflicts can be expected to arise from the difference between the employees (direct resources hired by the meta-organisation) who are expected to be dedicated to the meta-organisation and participants (indirect resources hired by a member organisation) who are only partially dedicated as they have a link and responsibility towards the member organisation. This means that the effort put in by employees can be higher that the effort put in by participants. Participants, however, can frustrate any of the efforts of employees, by initiating and influencing decisions about these efforts as principles. This is where most tensions are expected. Future research, however, is needed to examine this in more detail.

10.2.4 *ASSERTIONS ABOUT ORGANISATIONS AS MEMBERS*

In table 26 the findings as presented and discussed in chapter 9 are connected to the assertions not focused on in chapter 9, those related to the dimension of organisations, instead of individuals, as members. As the findings in relation to the constitutional members are based on data of organisations as members, the findings were also important for these assertions. If the findings lead to specifying of new conditions or to suggestions for changes or further specifications, the new hypothesised condition will be presented in italics.

Table 26 Summary of findings on assertions related to organisations as members

	Assertion	Findings
4a	*There are fundamental differences between individual and organisation* (1):Member organisations compared with individuals as members have a large own capacity for action; they have access to a larger pool of own resources and have their own employees and/or members (reformulated, based on Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).	The cases confirm that the capacity for action and access to resources by member organisations are essential for setting up organisations with constitutional members and that these stay essential in the operational phase in indirect resourced organisations. The contribution by members in meta-organisations, however, can be expected to be much larger than the contribution by members in associations due to their capacity for action and access to resources. This was seen to lead to experiencing the membership to be relatively cheap. The cases show, however, that the contribution asked from the member organisation may come from only one participant. This means that if too many for the participant irrelevant contributions are demanded, these participants will lose interest and/or get frustrated. In the cases it was especially the demanded administration caused by the financial compensation system which was seen as a high price to pay, especially in those meta-organisations and member organisations which had little or inexperienced administrative support. Thus, variation can be expected in the experience of costs of membership, depending on the level of involvement by the member organisation (see also findings related to closed boundaries).
		The cases show furthermore that although the capacity for action and access to resources in meta-organisation is large, this does not mean that all needed human resources, tools and materials are necessarily present in the member organisations. The necessary resources may need to be acquired by the meta-organisation or member organisations.
4b	*There are fundamental differences between individual and organisation* (2):Member organisations can only be met through its representatives, while individuals can be met directly (reformulated, based on Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).	The larger capacity of organisations means that *participants as well as representatives can be replaced* (this was already discussed in relation to the consequences of indirect resources). This replacing of participants and representatives can result in a (radically) different opinion, view, focus or approach by a member organisation even from one meeting to another. In associations member and representative are one and the same, their view, opinion, focus and approach can therefore be expected to be more stable.
		The participants of member organisation are representatives of this organisation. They can be representatives formally, such as when representing the organisation in the governing group, but also informally by being a participant which is employed and thus in a way made available by the member organisation. The opinions, views, focus, and approach of these representatives, as also above mentioned, may differ. When no coordination takes place between the different representatives this may lead possible contradicting statements and the formal representative may lose legitimacy to vote against suggestions due to the system of influence compensation (see also influence compensation).

	Assertion	Findings
5	*Organisations are more differentiated than individuals:* Organisations have more varied identities than individuals do (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).	No related findings.
6	*There is a fundamental similarity between a meta-organisation and its members: they are all organisations:* Member organisations in order to maintain their own capacity for action, need to maintain their own uniqueness (reformulated, based on Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008).	This assertion strongly relates to the different conditions developed and the finding presented in relation to the assertion of utilising indirect resources. For example, a reason why the resources provided by member organisations are insecure is that these member organisations are organisations which need to maintain their own capacity for action and thus when the member organisations need the resources they are expected to prioritise utilising them themselves instead of providing them to the meta-organisation.

In the next section, the focus will be on discussing various issues that seem of importance to theorising of meta-organisation, but which have not featured in this study or have not been focused on in this study. This section will also present suggestions for future research aimed at develop meta-organisation theory.

10.3 REFLECTING ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

In this section I will first present some more personal reflections on the process. After this I present some of the limitations in relation to the presented conditions.

> Gaining understanding can be great. The most joyful moments for me in my research process have been the finding of meta-organisation theory, getting to understand how to conceptualise the steering processes and the realisation that I could aim to contribute to meta-organisation theory. These moments have been combined with a flow of thoughts that make many things clear and, for example, helped with writing about as well as explaining what I saw. At those points writing came naturally, without thinking, without pain, just flowing effortlessly. When I had the language, the linguistic tools to describe and explain what I saw, it was an extreme joy to write.
>
> The research process was, however, not always a joyful process. The moments of joy often came after a period, sometimes feeling to be a very long or even a never ending period, of frustration, confusion, anger, and searching. Keeping trust in finding a solution or in finding a way to solve what actually is not clear to oneself is not always easy, especially as often it was not even clear to me what was not clear. While continuing writing sometimes helps, it seems to me that most important and most difficult thing for me was to accept that something was not working. The moment I decided it was no good, I gave myself the possibility to look and reflect in a very different way than when I was writing.

Although, the data gathered during the research process was not gathered with the aim to theorise meta-organisations, the cases did give valuable insights into the conditions of meta-organisations and the way the cases dealt with these conditions. With the knowledge I now have, however, I would have gathered different data. I would, for example, have asked different questions, which could have given insight into levels of identification of participants having different roles. I might also have used different selection criteria for the cases. I could have considered different types of meta-organisations, for example, having some cases with direct resources or having some cases with other types of participants.

Theorising meta-organisations with the data gathered about the Network of Excellence consortia means that the following four issues needed to or were taken into account when describing new conditions. These issues, however, still may influence the outcomes, especially the ways in which these meta-organisations dealt with the meta-organisational conditions.

First, the meta-organisations studied were expert organisations whereby the participants, the researchers, were autonomous actors in relation to the work they undertook, they were not very bound to the member organisation. Although indirect resources can be expected to be experts, their work for the member organisation and meta-organisation may be much more hierarchically steered. In the cases, the participants were also used to self-steering in their own organisation. In addition, this also meant that the reputation of participants was much more at stake than one might see in other meta-organisations as everything they did was their choice, their prioritising. The participants therefore had not much chance for externalising of responsibility.

Second, the meta-organisations studied were externally funded. Due to its demands, the research collaborators needed to become a consortium, they needed to follow the rules set and the demands by the Commission in order to receive funding. This means, for example, that the planning and reporting cycle set by the Commission needed to be followed. Although this was often seen as burdensome, it may also have stimulated and motivated the participants to continue putting an effort in. This is combined with the exercise of external control by the Commission which may make it easier for peers to put pressure on one another.

Third, the meta-organisations studied were temporary. The consortium agreements all had a time span linked to the funding contract with the Commission. However, the consortia were at the same time required by the Commission to create or work on creating durable collaborations and most consortia were built on collaborations with long histories. In 2011, about two years after the consortia ended their contract with the Commission, I did a review of the 50 consortia of which I had a consortium agreement as this gave me information on the institutes included and the topic of research and development concentrated on. Of the 50 consortia, 32 collaborations could be traced back and most had established a new meta-organisation. At least 12 of these had received funding from the Commission for a new project, and at least 14 collected membership fees. In addition, some were financing themselves with other funds or sponsorship. This means that there is less of a temporary orientation than might be concluded from the temporary contract.

Fourth and finally, the meta-organisations studied were multinational, but they did not have a shared office, location, or place. This seems to give more meaning to

meetings as this is when the organisation is experienced in a more explicit form. One of the interviewees pointed out that this meant that the focus on the work for the consortium followed the rhythm of the meetings. The meetings intensified the focus on the work for the meta-organisation. This would indicate that regular meetings in meta-organisations can be important to stimulate work to be done.

10.4 FIVE SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH ON META-ORGANISATIONS

Five different themes are discussed in this section relating to the particular conditions in meta-organisations. These conditions have not been addressed in the research presented in this thesis, and they are also not, at least not very extensively, addressed in meta-organisation theory. The themes addressed arose during the research process, while working with the consortium data or reflecting on meta-organisations more generally, but remained as open questions or unexplored themes. The discussion of these themes leads to several suggestions for future research.

10.4.1 CHOICE OF SYSTEMS

The cases show the importance of the initiation phase in creating of systems - the rules, the processes and the structures of the meta-organisation. The choices made or design of these systems is difficult to change and demands much more multilateral negotiation and consensus-building if they need to be created or changed in the operational phase. This indicates the necessity for those initiating and participating in the setting up of meta-organisation to have an understanding of the consequences of particular choices.

For example, the choices made in terms of motivational systems, ways of dividing tasks and compensation, ways of dealing with control and granting as well as the administrational processes set up have a great influence on the dynamics and the experience of participants and member organisations in the meta-organisation. This study however was unable to give clarity on this and urges further studies to help create a better understanding of these consequences.

Some initial insights, however, can be given. For a punishment motivational system to function it seems important to deal with control and granting through formalising as this gives participants and member organisations clarity as to what is being valued and expected from the participants and member organisations. Externalising can also be used, but this does not create clarity and may give participants and member organisations the idea that control and granting are random and not to be anticipated. For a reward system to work there seems to be a need for formalising control and granting, this also means that the expectations of participants and member organisations need to be clear and clear rules need to have been set in terms of consequences of particular behaviour. A social control system was mainly used

when control and granting were tried to be avoided and found to be impossible or very difficult.

Another example is the importance of administration processes needed to cope with a financial compensation system. The experience of participants who take part in reaching the goals of the meta-organisation will more or less negatively be influenced by the type of administrational system implemented. The cases indicate that the more seriously the administration processes are taken and professionally developed, the less heavy the administration is considered to be, which seems to reflect on a more positive evaluation of the meta-organisation as a whole. Investment in administrative processes and personnel as well as communication between administrative personnel from meta-organisation to the member organisations are seen as key in making the experience of participating in meta-organisations more positive.

10.4.2 USE OF INDIRECT OR DIRECT RESOURCES

Although the reasons for utilising indirect or direct resources were not studied in this research, in this section I will try to discuss some of the possible reasons for utilising one or the other.

Meta-organisations have different purposes, and these purposes, due to the difference in need for member contribution and level of interaction between members, will influence if the meta-organisation utilises direct or indirect resources. Meta-organisations can have one or several purposes: information and knowledge exchange, lobbying (changing the environment of the organisations), regulating competition, upholding or enhancing the status of members, cooperation (enabling members to work towards their own goals), concerted action (working together to our own, but concerted goals), and collaboration (active working together towards a shared goal) (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2005, 2008). Some of these purposes more clearly require active interaction between and involvement of the members, which would mean a higher chance of utilising indirect resources. Information and knowledge exchange and collaboration need the members to be actively involved. For the other purposes there is a need for shared decision-making, this is, for example, crucial for lobbying, regulating competition, cooperation and concerted action. In these situations the meta-organisation has a higher chance of hiring personnel to take care of the lobbying, to control and suggest action, to produce services or goods for the members, or to assist in coordination. The members, however, may also decide to provide the resources needed themselves.

Meta-organisations also differ in size. We can expect that the larger the size is of the meta-organisation agency, the higher the chance will be that the meta-organisation will have hired personnel. The larger size will make the administrative processes more demanding and will need more permanent maintenance. This would be possible

with indirect resources, as long as they are available and as long as they can be relied on. At one point, however, the need for resources may grow such that these are no longer available in the member organisations and thus would need to be hired. In this situation the chance exists that the meta-organisation moves towards a direct resourced meta-organisation.

The type of skills needed or the tasks of the meta-organisation also play a role. If expertise of the member organisations is necessary to the work of the meta-organisation, the meta-organisation will need to work with indirect resources. When, however, resources are needed that none of the member organisations has (such as, for example, a lobbyist), there is a higher chance that meta-organisation will hire this person directly. Related to this, the higher the chance of free-riding and the more difficult it is to deal with free-riding, the higher the chance that the meta-organisation has direct resources.

The duration and age of the meta-organisation can be expected to play a role as well. In temporary meta-organisations the chance is higher that the meta-organisation works with indirect resources. In permanent meta-organisations we can expect that the meta-organisation due to the expected long-term lifespan, does hire direct resources more readily. This may not be directly the case at the start, as in the initiation phase one or more organisations build up the meta-organisation and they may keep it going for some time. The meta-organisation may keep utilising indirect resources, but changes such as growth, additional purposes and tasks make the chance that the meta-organisation starts to utilise direct resources larger. This means that the older the meta-organisation, the higher the chance is that direct resources are being utilised.

Thus, the purpose(s), the needed type of resources, needed amount of resources, the tasks to be undertaken, and the expected or experienced resource availability, security and reliability, the size, duration, age all seem to influence if a meta-organisation will utilise indirect or direct resources. This might mean that most meta-organisation actually utilise both type of resources. Studies which would be able to gain a better insight into the importance of the different possible reasons for utilising either indirect or direct resources would be very interesting. In addition, studies which would be able to give an estimate of the proportion of meta-organisations utilising direct, indirect or both resources would help to get a better idea of the practice of meta-organisation.

10.4.3 POWER AND CONTROL

When considering power in relation to meta-organisations, as I have done during the fourth phase of gaining understanding, two things seem to be important. First, when thinking of meta-organisations, both the cases and earlier meta-organisations I had

worked for, I identified different types of links or relationships. There seem to be five links which are summarised and illustrated in figure 23. Three of these types of relationships are formal[98] and two are informal[99]. Each type of relationship has its influence on the power dynamics of a meta-organisation. To understand the power dynamics more holistically, each relationship would need to be understood in terms of the influence on the whole. Second, power is often combined and considered together with control. In this thesis the governance process included different types of control.

The first formal relationship is one from the member organisations to the meta-organisation, which can be compared to an ownership relationship or citizen relationship. By being a member, the organisation gets a formal say in the broad, overall questions concerning the meta-organisation, such as its vision, mission and membership. Conceptualisations of power as present in, for example, political science (democracy) and corporate governance (shared ownership) may be able to help to understand aspects of this relationship.

The second formal relationship is the one from the meta-organisation back to the member organisations through the collective decisions often formalised into rules and policies. From being a member it follows that the organisation commits to what is being decided by the collective, also if it does not agree with a particular choice and had voted differently, as often the majority decides in such democratic systems. By being a member, an organisation thus gives up some of its autonomy in those questions which are or have become meta-organisational questions. The meta-organisation can thereby limit the playing field and possible behaviour of the member organisations. This is the key difference between for instance strategic alliances, which create limits for the member organisations, and joint ventures, which do not regulate in the same way what the parent organisations can or cannot do. The playing field is thus created by the collective, by the members. I find Göhler's (2000, 2009) concept of intransitive power especially useful as a tool for understanding this relationship better.

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[98] Formal is here understood as the links that have been agreed upon on paper such as a consortium agreement and organisational charts.

[99] Informal is here is understood as having a social, and no formalised relationship. These relationships can still have some hierarchy, such as, for example, through knowledge and other relationships.

Member s as the owners/citizens of the meta-organisation
Direct link from each member to the meta-organisation, especially through the governing body/assembly meetings

Meta-organisation as the judge/police of the 'society'
Direct link from meta-organisation to each member through rules and regulation

Indirect participant as double agent
1. power through coordination, active involvement, ideas, etc. (members influencing the meta-organisation)
2. power through identity, shared understandings, translation (meta-organisation influencing members)
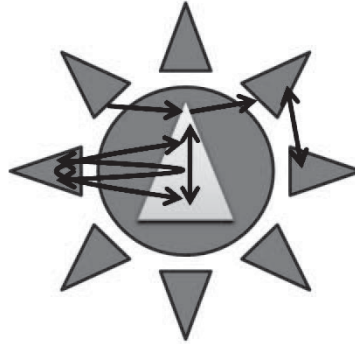
Members as social and political actors:
1. power through coordination of wished direction - creation of blocks of power etc.
2. Power through resources available and resource dependencies (real and imagined)

Hierarchical relations within the meta-organisation
1. Power through position, legitimacy, capabilities, involvement, ideas
2. Power through resource dependencies
3. Impact on indirect participants

Figure 23   Types of power relationships or links

The third formal relationship concerns a relation inside the meta-organisation, which is often hierarchical. In almost all meta-organisations, work extends beyond the collective decisions made by representatives. Thus, in a meta-organisation we can find workgroups with workgroup leaders, committees with heads, projects with project leaders, and sometimes these leaders form a group that is responsible for a particular cluster, work area. Furthermore, projects may be fragmented into sub-projects and so forth. Thus, similar to other organisations in a meta-organisation, those working for the organisation form the agent, which has its own internal power relations. In meta-organisations these relationships can, however, be more complex than in other organisations due to the different type of human resources, utilised employees and/or participants. Different power theories concerning transitive power (Göhler, 2000, 2009) such as the different dimensions of power (Lukes, 1974) are useful in mapping out this relationship. It is important, however, to find a way to include not only the perspective on employees but also consider how to understand the dynamics created by the participants and the combination of employees and participants.

The fourth link, the first informal relationship concerns those between individual member organisations. Often several of these exist. First, they exist because of the shared work of participants of several member organisations within the frame of the

meta-organisation. At minimum, these are the same as those of the representatives, but when the co-operation is broader, others will often also have these links with participants of the other member organisations. Second, these informal relationships can and often exist as the participants of the member organisations may know one another and maintain relationships outside the frame of the meta-organisation. Social network concepts of power, such as the power of structural holes (Burt, 1992) and weak ties (Granovetter, 1973, 1983) can be helpful in gaining a better understanding of role of this type of relationship in the overall power dynamics.

The fifth link, the second informal relationship, is only present in those meta-organisations with indirect resources. It concerns the relationship between individual member organisations and the meta-organisation through the presence of "indirect" links between the member organisations and the meta-organisations through the presence of indirect resources. The multiple positions of the participants create the possibility of coordination of participants both in the member organisations and in the meta-organisation. Importantly, as pointed out and discussed by Huxham and Beech (2008), this would demand individual level power analysis and concepts.

The analysis of the steering processes showed that, through the formal relationships, member organisations are able to control the direction, performance, and behaviour of the meta-organisation, but may suffer from the lack of legitimacy. Member organisations are able to control the meta-organisation through the governing board and in addition some members were able to exert even more influence because of being engaged in the preparation of proposals and suggestions. In addition, the analysis showed how the meta-organisation could also control the member organisations through the governing board. This was more difficult, as the members here were to control each other and not the collective. This resulted in avoiding, externalising or formalising control. And finally, the analysis showed how participants, and in some cases the member organisations, had a lot of control over the activities undertaken. Only if members or the meta-organisation, through the governance board and management, were willing to take action, could this control over activities undertaken be challenged. As excluding of activities seems to have been the only possible formal way to steer the activities, this was rarely done. Social control, however, was in most cases more important as the direction, performance or behaviour may be changed through comments on presented ideas as well as undertaken projects. This type of control, through active engagement, seems to be important, especially as this active engagement enhances the legitimacy for formal steering action.

This study did not concentrate on pointing out the difference between the different types of control or the differences in how the control was precisely organised. The study does give initial hints that behaviour control often became an administration

process[100] as expected behaviour and consequences for not following of the formalised rules in relation to this expected behaviour were clear. Furthermore, the study shows that performance control also can become an administration process whereby it is monitored if formalised plans are followed. Direction control seems to some extent to be avoided in the cases, though this may be subject to much more social control. This would mean that different relationships or links within the meta-organisation can be utilised with the different types of control. These very initial findings and ideas would be worth future study.

10.4.4 *WHO IS THE META-ORGANISATION: THE ROLE OF LOYALTY, COMMITMENT, FEELING OF OWNERSHIP, INFLUENCE, AND INPUT*

In this thesis I have argued that the boundaries in terms of members were clear: this is, however, not the same as being clear where individuals actually belong. Although this was discussed to some degree, one issue that remains more of a serious question is what the relationship is of individuals in relation to the meta-organisation. It seems that loyalty, commitment, feeling of ownership, influence, and input are, to a degree interconnected, elements which influence the question of who the meta-organisation is, that is who identifies themselves as being the meta-organisation.

This thesis discussed three different groups - employees, participants and representatives – which have their own understanding of who the meta-organisation is, their own identification, and their understanding of the identification of others. These are often unshared, while expectations about input, initiative and influence are built upon them. This then becomes an important source of potential conflict.

The level of involvement of particular groups and even individuals seems to me to be linked to commitment, loyalty and a feeling of ownership. The influence on the meta-organisation, which was explained in this thesis to be linked to the involvement, may play an import role in linking these.

This then creates an interesting tension, as it can lead to conflicts of interest for particular individuals or to a loss of influence. For example, if those individuals representing the member organisations are heavily involved in the meta-organisation, they are more loyal and committed to the meta-organisation. They become the meta-organisation. This can mean that they lose sight of the will of the member organisation. On the other hand, when these representatives are not significantly

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[100] See section 10.5.2 for a discussion about the need for further operationalising, for example in relation to control (governance process) and monitoring (management process) as these fall into the category of handling of information (administration process) when rules, policies or plans are made to guide the control or monitoring.

involved at all, they may not have enough legitimacy needed to exert influence on the meta-organisation, as they do not become enough a part of the meta-organisation.

Similarly, participants may experience conflicts of interest as their loyalty and commitment to the meta-organisation needs to be balanced with a loyalty and commitment to the member organisation as the member organisation remains their employer. The more the participant, however, identifies with the meta-organisation, the more the participant may lose an understanding of the will of the member organisation as well as the possibility to influence the will of the member organisation. This then becomes a source of potential conflicts between the participants (who feel they are the meta-organisation – while being the agent) and the member representatives (who feel they are the meta-organisation – while being the principal). This would mean that both for the member organisation and the meta-organisation, it would be very important that participants maintain good links with the member organisation, which could be expected to be easiest through direct involvement in the member organisation. Other options which would make sure that the participants would have well-developed links with the member organisation would be to change participants regularly. This, however, would be far less desirable for the meta-organisation, as meta-organisational knowledge would then leak away and time would need to be invested in socialising these new participants into the meta-organisation.

Another tension can arise when employees are hired to the meta-organisation. As employees are hired their input into the meta-organisation is high, their connection is only with the meta-organisation and thus they can be expected to have a high loyalty and commitment to the meta-organisation. In addition, through their input they have an influence on the meta-organisation. When, however, their feeling of ownership of the meta-organisation, their identification with the meta-organisation becomes very high, they may try to change the nature of the organisation from an association into a hierarchical organisation, losing the connection to the members. This means that the input of the members needs to stay high to keep the member organisations loyal and committed to the meta-organisation. This would mean that successful meta-organisations with direct resources will also have an active involvement of the member organisations. Thus, although member organisations could easily say that the meta-organisation has resources, why would we need to invest our own resources, this line of thought could mean that the member organisations slowly lose their grip on the meta-organisation. If the input of members and employees are out of balance this may lead to conflicts, similar to those discussed in agency theory between principal and agent.

Finally, tensions may arise between employees and participants. While employees only have loyalties towards the meta-organisations, the participants also need to have

loyalties towards both the meta-organisation and the member organisation. The involvement as mentioned above by employees is fully in the meta-organisation, while for participants it was argued to be important that they had well developed links with the member organisation, the investment in the meta-organisation may therefore be (far) less. The question which then needs solving is how the meta-organisation keeps a good balance between the participants and employees, so that employees do not take over the needed investment by participants of the member organisations, but support such that their investment becomes most useful. This ability of employees of the meta-organisation to support the participants (as well as representatives) such that they are able to do their work may be crucial in the success of meta-organisations with direct resources.

Future research on the relation between involvement and influence as well as their link to loyalty, commitment and feeling of ownership would help us understand some of the key dynamics in meta-organisations much better. In addition, studies on the role played by employees in supporting the participants and representatives to gain influence on the meta-organisation and the possible tensions this brings with their own influence on the organisation would also be much needed. Finally, research which would map the different potential sources of conflicts of interest caused by the meta-organisational setting would be essential to bring meta-organisation theory forward.

10.4.5 DIVERSITY IN META-ORGANISATIONS

Differences along dimensions such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies are not much discussed in the cases. The references to differences made by interviewees are often not very extensive, but when references are made interviewees use them to explain conflicts or explain the existing power structures or ways people deal with the power structures. The differences mentioned are, for example, juniority versus seniority as scientist or academic, age such as young, middle-aged or old, occupation-related differences, for example, whether one was researcher or not, the degree of proficiency of the English language, as well as degree of extroversion. Furthermore, cultural differences (national, organisational, professional) were mentioned to be involved, such as in relation to the way of working in relation to e.g. preparation of meetings and keeping to rules between the north (protestant) and the south (catholic) of Europe.

Sex or gender as a possible difference was mentioned in most cases; however, this was mostly dismissed by interviewees themselves as an unimportant difference. Some of the female interviewees considered their meta-organisational setting to be much more equal than the situation they faced in their own organisation or country, while most male interviewees did not mention sex or gender as creating important

differences. It is important, however, to note that in two of the cases no female researchers occupy managerial positions, which in one case was noticed half way through the five year funding and an additional female member was asked to join the management team. This situation is not at all specific to these cases, as the Commission report on progress towards gender equality shows (European Commission, 2009). The report shows that both in the funding proposals submitted and in the funding proposals accepted 16% of the representatives of partner organisations are female researchers and 17% of all projects had female coordinators, though this was much less in large funding schemes like Networks of Excellence. Based on the names of the co-ordinators which I had gathered concerning 101 consortia, this percentage would be closer to 10% of the Networks of Excellence. Amongst other reasons, this can be the result of the way in which these projects are built up. In both cases which did not have a single female in a managerial position, the social, professional network of the initiator(s) can be expected to be predominantly male. The initiator(s) in these cases gathered a small group of people they knew (reasonably) well to build up the proposal; these were men. As managerial positions are divided amongst those active in the initiation phase, male-dominated managerial positions are the result of male initiators, which have male-rich social, professional networks. Not all cases, however, had male-dominated managerial positions, even though all coordinators were male. In the other cases, the size of the managerial team was larger, the preparation included more face-to-face interaction in the starting point and the role of the member organisation was somewhat bigger. This meant that not only the social, professional network of the initiator led to the selection, but also other considerations played a role such as the knowledge, active involvement in the initiation meetings, and having a leading position in one of the invited member organisations. The demography in terms of seniority between male and female researchers might play a role as well, but this I was unable to check.

Future research could focus on the importance of diversity in the setting of meta-organisations and especially the impact on the meetings, collaborations and connections within the meta-organisation.

10.5 DISCUSSING THE STEERING PROCESSES FRAMEWORK

10.5.1 THE GENERIC NATURE AND USEFULNESS OF ANALYSING STEERING PROCESSES

Although the conceptual framework of steering processes was developed with the meta-organisation setting in mind, the concepts were conceptualised in such a generic way that the framework can be used successfully in other organisational settings as well. The framework is not even limited to the analysis of an organisation; it may be used to analyse much smaller units, such as how an individual activity is steered, or a far larger unit, such as how a society, is steered. Due to the inclusion of the Simonian-overlap, the framework specifies the links between hierarchical levels,

which makes it possible to analyse hierarchical, both bottom-up and top-down processes, as well as self-steering processes. As will be discussed in the next section, the framework does need to still be further developed and operationalised. In addition, in order to visualise the results of the analysis, tools could be developed, which would enhance the usability of the conceptual framework significantly. Furthermore, the conceptual framework can be of use to both researchers and practitioners. Some examples will be presented in the remainder of this section.

In research the framework can be used in several different ways. One example is to use the framework to analyse and show the design of a steering process or the way it is implemented in practice. It can also be used to show the influence exerted on the steering process by different actors and, taking an actor network approach, by other possible artefacts. It can also be used in action research to be able to understand better, where a change could result in a better-functioning steering system. In quantitative research the framework can be used, though this would demand much further operationalisation, to study, for example, how the participation in steering processes affects motivation of individuals or the individuals' identification with the outcomes or with the organisation, function, etc.

In practice it can be used in various ways. Some examples in which the use of the framework could be used are (1) to reflect on the organisational design question, (2) to uncover where conflicts of interests would be probable, (3) to uncover where more input in governance and management processes would be needed, or (4) where administration processes are necessary and possible to be developed or where they are uselessly burdensome and should be dismantled (for example because they are unconnected to governance or management processes).

Thus, the conceptual framework of steering processes has the potential to be utilised widely. The framework, however, is still in the need of further operationalisation. In the next section this will be discussed in more detail.

10.5.2 *THE NEED FOR FURTHER OPERATIONALISING OF THE CONCEPTS*

The conceptual framework has been useful in analysing the data. It has given insights into the processes of governance, management and administration in the different stages and in relation to particular activities. The concepts, however, would benefit from some further operationalising, especially to give those who would wish to use the concepts more handles during the analysis and thereby make the framework more easy to use. There are however some difficulties in operationalising by creating a list of specific tasks or activities which would belong to each of the categories. First, the activities can be very similar, but depending on the precise type of decisions made, the activity would be interpreted as belonging to the category of governance/management versus that of administration. Second, as the framework

does not fix the perspective which can be taken by the one analysing and as the perspective taken will make a difference as to how to interpret a particular activity, for example as part of governance or management, this means that the same activities can be given different meaning depending on the perspective. These two difficulties will be discussed in a bit more detail below.

The difference between governance or management on the one hand and administration on the other are difficult to operationalise. In relation to framing for example, there is a need for preparation of decisions concerning the field, direction, rules, policies and members. This preparation can solely consist of the handling of information (collecting all the information such that it is available for evaluation) and thus would need to be considered an administrative process supporting governance, while in other cases this preparation consists of (consciously or unconsciously made) decisions limiting the options presented and thus needs to be considered an integral part of the governance process. This difference in approach means that we cannot use the task of preparing framing documents as a way to operationalisation; the operationalisation needs to be more precise. This could be done, for example through specifying that if any decision to limit the options in the preparation of framing documents are made, this needs to be considered part of the governance process. However, there can be logical limits resulting from the rules and policies set, when the decisions to limit options were based on these rules and policies, then the activity would need to be considered again as part of the administration process. This means that instead of a precise list of activities, it would be more useful to actually operationalise the possible circumstances in which an activity could be considered governance/management and in these could be considered administration.

The most important difference that needs to be highlighted is that in administration processes action is taken along agreed upon rules, policy lines and plans. The evaluations and choices made are also based on these rules, policy lines and plans, which often are specified in specific criteria. Governance and management are concerned with evaluation and choices in which judgement is needed as to whether a change in the rules, policy lines or plans is needed or if something or somebody can be allowed to diverge from these rules, policy lines or plans in a particular situation or case. Thus also when no rules exist, evaluation and choices are part of the management or governance processes. This difference needs to be further highlighted in the conceptual framework, for example, in relation to control and monitoring. In both cases the activities could belong to the administrational process of handling information when rules, policy lines or plans exist. This type of further operationalisation could also be done in relation to other elements especially in relation to administration.

Besides the difference between governance/management and administration, the difference between governance and management also needs further attention as one activity can be understood to be governance or management depending on the perspective taken. The Simonian-overlap which was considered part of the framework will thus need to be operationalised further. The basic distinction between governance and management is that governance refers to abstract steering through defining the framework of action and maintaining the framework through checking that the invested resources bring the desired outcomes, while management refers to concrete steering through bringing about concrete action within the framework set through governance. However, what exactly of the management process and thus concrete action creates the governance framework for hierarchically lower levels, as well as what of the management process and concrete action creates the governance framework of the same level or management process of the level above will need more operationalisation as well as future research. A suggestion on a way to handle the difficulties created by crossing the hierarchical levels will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

10.5.3 USE OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Due to the possibility to analyse the steering processes in great detail as well as across several layers, the conceptual framework can easily develop an overwhelming amount of observations which can reduce the usefulness of the framework as it may lead to more chaos than clarity. One of the ways to limit this possible chaos is to narrow down the analysis to one particular activity, individual, role or function. This will make the analysis much simpler and will give insight into possible disjoining, overlapping or lacking connections between the governance, management and related administration processes. Another way to limit the possible chaos is to not analyse each of the separate elements in detail and instead use the concepts to guide a looser, broader analysis. That is, by broadly analysing the process of creating and maintaining the framework for, for example, an activity, individual, role or function (governance), the process of bringing about concrete action within the limits of this framework (management), and the process of preparing and implementing those parts of governance and management processes for which explicit rules and formal procedures can be established (administration). Another way of simplifying is to concentrate only on part of the whole conceptual framework, for example by only focusing on the difference between governance and administrative processes supporting governance.

In addition to limiting the detail and scope of what is to be analysed, it also can help to clearly separate the analysis into smaller parts. If the framework is used to analyse the steering concerning a process, for example, it would be best to undertake the analysis separately for each stage in the process. This does not only help to simplify the analysis, it is also important as each stage of a process may be steered differently

and it may therefore be most crucial to undertake a second level analysis covering the links between the processes from one stage to the next. This may uncover where the change of steering is fluent and where not, and when additional steps would need to be undertaken to prevent leaking of key knowledge concerning choices or decisions made and systems built upon these decisions.

Furthermore, if the framework is used to analyse the steering of multiple hierarchical layers, the analysis would be best undertaken for each hierarchical layer at a time. Visualisation of the steering processes for each hierarchical layer may then be developed and connected (where possible!) to the layer above and below. This would, for example, be able to be used to show more clearly how particular units are not hierarchically steered while others are steered by two or more units. This can then help in making sure that on the one hand the self-steering unit remains connected and on track about the processes in other units, while the steering of a unit from multiple directions may be streamlined by more interaction of those involved in the governing of the unit to prevent contradictions.

10.6 FINAL WORDS

The research on governance, management and administration has developed in isolation from one another to some degree, and has concentrated on a particular position or role within the organisation, or macro-level organisational processes. The conceptual framework, developed in this thesis, helps to connect and clarify the differences between governance, management and administration. It also helps to show the micro-level processes of steering. Earlier in this chapter several suggestions were made on possible ways to use the conceptual framework. As these suggestions were, intentionally, kept general, in this section I will try to formulate some more concrete examples of research where the steering processes framework can be fruitful.

A process perspective on governance, management and administration as steering can be utilised in various fields. The steering process framework, although still needing some further development, strengthens the ability to look beyond the static and hierarchical functions created. In research on the human resource function, the framework can help to analyse the way in which the function contributes to steering processes in the organisation. In research on multinational companies one may utilise the framework to analyse the spread and adoption of policies. In mergers and acquisitions the framework can be utilised to see how the steering processes develop over time. In political science the framework may be used to analyse the way in which international governmental organisations, multinationals and nations participate in the steering of global processes. In public administration the framework can be used to analyse the participation in the steering of policy development or implementation processes.

As meta-organisation theory is still in its early development, there are many different contributions that could be made which would further extend our understanding of meta-organisations. I will suggest just a few of the many possible lines of inquiry which would be of interest. In relation to testing of claims it would be interesting to see work testing whether the conditions hypothesised also hold in other settings, with other member organisations, in other fields, with different purposes and if those conditions hypothesised to relate to indirect resources hold as specific to the use of these resources. In addition, it would be interesting to see if the initial ideas related to when direct and indirect resources are used hold ground as well as if the difficulty of enforcing compliance is specific to indirect resourced meta-organisations or if similar difficulties can be found in direct resourced meta-organisations. In relation to adding of new conditions, themes such as identity, power, trust, and evolution process are very promising, especially when combined with the type of resources utilised by the meta-organisation. In relation to the ways in which the specific conditions met are dealt with, it would be fascinating to see work exploring how contributions of indirect resources are made more secure.

To conclude, in carrying out this study and writing this thesis, I have become convinced of the crucial importance of meta-organisation theory for understanding a range of organisations which are largely ignored in organisation studies, and which rarely get enough attention in inter-organisational relations studies. I would therefore much welcome further studies aiming at developing meta-organisation theory and practice.

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Appendix 1   Overview of NoEs published by January 2005

Project acronym	Full Name of Consortium	Project started	Number of members		Number of countries		Number of members from country…
3D-EM	New Electron Microscopy Approaches for Studying Protein Complexes and Cellular Supramolecular Architecture	.03.2004	small	15	small	7	CH (2), DE (3), ES (1), FR (1), NL (2), SE (2), UK (4)
3DTV	Integrated Three-dimensional Television - Capture, Transmission and Display	.09.2004	small	19	small	7	BG (1), CZ (1), DE (7), FI (2), GR (1), TR (5), UK (2)
4M	Multi-Material Micro Manufacture: Technologies and Applications		medium	30	medium	14	BE (1), BG (1), DE (10), DK (1), ES (1), FR (2), GR (1), HU (1), IT (1), NL (1), RO (1), SE (3), SI (1), UK (5)
ACCENT	Atmospheric composition change: an European network	.03.2004	big	44	big	21	AT (1), BE (1), BG (1), CH (2), DE (7), DK (1), ES (1), EUR (1), FI (3), FR (2), GR (2), HU (1), IE (1), IT (2), LT (1), LV (1), NL (4), NO (2), PL (1), PT (1), SE (1), UK (6)
ACE	Antenna Centre of Excellence	.01.2004	big	45	medium	13	BE (1), CH (1), DE (4), DK (3), ES (4), FI (1), FR (8), GR (3), IT (6), NL (1), PT (2), SE (6), UK (5)
ACTINET-6	Network for Actinide Sciences	.03.2004	medium	27	medium	13	BE (3), CH (1), CY (1), CZ (2), DE (5), DK (1), ES (2), FI (1), FR (3), NL (1), PL (1), SE (3), UK (3)
AIM@SHAPE	Advanced and Innovative Models And Tools for the development of Semantic-based systems for Handling, Acquiring, and Processing Knowledge Embedded in multidimensional digital objects	.01.2004	small	14	small	8	CH (2), DE (3), FR (2), GR (1), IL (2), IT (2), NL (1), NO (1)
ALISTORE	Advanced lithium energy storage systems based on the use of nano-powders and nano-composite electrodes/electrolytes	.05.2004	small	16	small	10	CH (1), DE (1), ES (2), FR (5), IT (1), NL (1), PL (1), SE (1), SI (1), UK (2)
ALTER-NET	A Long-term Biodiversity, Ecosystem and Awareness Research Network	.04.2004	medium	24	big	17	AT (1), BE (1), CZ (1), DE (3), DK (1), ES (1), FI (1), FR (2), HU (1), IT (1), NL (3), NO (1), PL (1), RO (1), SE (1), SK (1), UK (3)
AMICOM	Advanced MEMS For RF and Millimeter Wave Communications	.01.2004	medium	25	medium	14	BE (2), CH (1), DE (4), FI (1), FR (3), GR (3), IL (1), IT (2), NL (1), PL (1), RO (1), SE (2), TR (1), UK (2)
AOSD-EUROPE	European Network of Excellence on Aspect-Oriented Software Development	.09.2004	small	11	small	8	BE (2), DE (2), ES (1), FR (1), IE (1), IL (1), NL (1), UK (2)
APSN	Network of Excellence on advanced passive safety	.04.2004	big	52	big	19	AT (2), BE (1), CH (1), CZ (3), DE (10), ES (3), FR (7), GR (1), HU (1), IE (1), IL (1), IT (4), NL (2), PL (2), PT (2), SE (1), SK (1), TR (1), UK (7)

Acronym	Title	Date					Countries
ARTIST2	ARTIST2: Embedded Systems Design	.09.2004	big	35	medium	12	AT (1), BE (1), CH (1), CZ (1), DE (6), DK (2), ES (3), FR (7), IT (3), NL (2), PT (2), SE (5)
BioMalPar	Biology and Pathology of the Malaria Parasite	.06.2004	small	20	small	10	DE (2), FR (3), GR (1), IT (2), ML (1), NL (3), SD (1), SE (2), UG (1), UK (4)
BIOPATTERN	Computational Intelligence for Biopattern Analysis in Support of eHealthcare	.01.2004	medium	31	small	10	BE (1), FI (1), GR (7), IT (5), MT (1), NL (1), PT (1), RO (1), SE (3), UK (10)
BIOSAPIENS	A European Network for Integrated Genome Annotation	.01.2004	medium	25	medium	14	BE (1), CH (2), DE (5), DK (1), ES (2), FI (1), FR (2), HU (1), IL (1), IT (2), NL (1), PL (1), SE (1), UK (5)
BIOSECURE	Biometrics for Secure Authentication	.06.2004	medium	29	medium	15	AT (1), BG (1), CH (2), DE (1), ES (3), FR (6), GR (1), HR (1), IT (3), NL (2), SE (1), SI (1), TR (1), UK (3), US (2)
BrainNet Europe II	Network of European Brain and Tissue Banks for Clinical and Basic Neuroscience		small	10	small	9	AT (1), DE (1), ES (1), FI (1), FR (1), IT (1), NL (1), SE (1), UK (2)
CASCADE	Chemicals as contaminants in the food chain: An NoE for research, risk assessment, education and information		small	18	small	8	DE (4), ES (2), FI (2), FR (3), HU (1), IT (3), NL (1), SE (2)
CCPRB	Cancer Control using Populationbased Registries and Biobanks		small	19	small	9	BE (2), DE (2), FI (3), IS (2), IT (1), NO (2), PL (1), SE (4), UK (2)
Cells into Organs	Functional genomics for development and disease of mesodermal organ systems	.04.2004	small	12	small	8	AT (1), CH (2), DE (1), FR (1), IT (1), NL (2), PT (1), UK (3)
CMA	Complex Metallic Alloys	.12.2003	medium	24	medium	12	AT (1), BE (1), CH (2), DE (7), ES (1), FR (5), IT (1), LU (1), PL (2), SE (1), SI (1), UK (1)
CO2GeoNet	Network of Excellence on Geological Sequestration of CO2	.06.2004	small	13	small	7	DE (1), DK (1), FR (2), IT (2), NL (1), NO (3), UK (3)
COGAIN	Communication by Gaze Interaction	.09.2004	small	20	small	9	CH (1), DE (3), DK (5), FI (1), IT (2), JP (1), LT (1), SE (2), UK (4)
CONNEX	Efficient And Democratic Governance In A Multi-Level Europe	.07.2004	big	43	big	21	AT (2), BE (1), CH (1), CZ (2), DE (4), DK (1), ES (2), FR (2), GR (2), HU (1), IE (2), IT (3), LT (1), LV (1), NL (5), NO (1), PL (1), RU (1), SE (1), SI (1), UK (8)
COREGRID	European Research Network on Foundations, Software Infrastructures and Applications for large scale distributed, Grid and Peer-to-Peer Technologies	.09.2004	big	42	big	18	BE (2), BG (1), CH (2), CL (1), CY (1), CZ (1), DE (7), ES (1), FI (1), FR (3), GR (1), HU (1), IT (5), NL (2), PL (1), PT (1), SE (2), UK (8)
DELOS	Network of Excellence on Digital Libraries	.01.2004	big	47	medium	13	AT (4), CH (2), CZ (1), DE (6), DK (1), FR (3), GR (6), HU (1), IT (9), NL (3), NO (1), SE (2), UK (8)
EADGENE	European Animal Disease Genomics Network of Excellence for animal health and food safety		small	13	small	10	BE (1), DE (1), DK (1), ES (1), EUR (1, in NL), FR (1), IT (1), NL (2), NO (1), SI (1), UK (2)
ECO-ENGINES	Energy conversion in engines	.02.2004	medium	24	small	9	The core: AT (1), DE (1), ES (1), FR (1), NL (1), SE (2), UK

							(1) + 17 other partners
ECRYPT	European Network of Excellence in Cryptology	.02.2004	medium	32	medium	15	AT (1), BE (3), CH (1), DE (5), DK (2), ES (1), FR (7), GR (1), IT (2), NL (1), NO (1), PL (1), SE (2), UK (3), US (1)
EC-SARNET	Network of Excellence for a Sustainable Integration of European Research on Severe Accident Phenomenology	.04.2004	big	51	big	19	AT (1), BE (4), BG (2), CH (1), CZ (1), DE (9), ES (4), FI (2), FR (6), GR (1), HU (3), IT (4), LT (1), NL (1), RO (1), SE (3), SI (1), SK (3), UK (2)
EMIL	European Molecular Imaging Laboratories	.07.2004	big	58	medium	13	
ENACTIVE	Enactive interfaces		medium	24	medium	11	BE (1), CA (1), CH (2), DE (2), ES (2), FR (8), IE (1), IT (3), SE (2), UK (1), US (1)
E-NEXT	Emerging Networking Experiments and Technologies	.01.2004	big	41	big	20	AT (1), BE (2), CH (1), CY (1), DE (4), DK (1), ES (4), FI (2), FR (4), GR (2), HU (1), IE (1), IS (1), IT (4), NL (2), NO (1), PL (1), PT (3), SE (2), UK (3)
E-PHOTON/ONE	Optical Networks: Towards Bandwidth Manageability and Cost Efficiency	.02.2004	big	38	big	16	AT (1), BE (2), DE (6), ES (5), FR (3), GR (3), HR (1), HU (1), IT (5), NL (1), NO (1), PL (1), PT (1), SE (1), TR (1), UK (4)
EPIXNET	European Network of Excellence on Photonic Integrated Components and Circuits	.09.2004	medium	33	medium	11	BE (1), CH (2), CZ (1), DE (9), DK (2), ES (3), FR (4), IT (1), NL (3), SE (1), UK (6)
EPOCH	European Research Network on Excellence in Processing Open Cultural Heritage	.03.2004	big	86	big	18	AT (5), BE (8), BG (1), CH (4), DE (6), ES (7), FR (6), GR (6), HU (1), IT (12), NL (4), NO (1), PT (3), RO (1), SE (4), SI (1), UK (15), ZA (1)
EUR₂EX / EURNEX	European rail research Network of Excellence	.01.2004	big	65	big	17	AT (3), BE (1), CZ (3), DE (10), DK (1), ES (6), EUR (1), FI (2), FR (8), GR (1), HU (1), INT (1), IT (6), NL (1), PL (2), PT (2), RU (1), SE (7), SK (1), UK (7)
EURO NGI	Design and Engineering of the Next Generation Internet Towards convergent multi-service networks	.12.2003	big	57	big	19	AT (2), BE (2), CH (1), DE (6), DK (1), ES (5), FI (2), FR (7), GR (2), IL (3), IT (5), NL (2), NO (2), PL (3), PT (3), RO (1), RU (1), SE (3), UK (6)
EURON	European Robotics Network	.05.2004	medium	26	big	21	AT (1), BE (1), BG (1), CH (1), CZ (1), DE (3), DK (1), EE (1), ES (3), FI (1), FR (1), GR (1), HU (1), IL (1), IT (1), NL (1), PL (1), PT (1), SE (1), SI (1), UK (2)
EUROPEAN LEUKEMIANET	Strengthen and develop scientific and technological excellence in research and therapy of leukemia (CML, AML, MDS, CLL, adult ALL) by cooperation and integration of the leading national leukemia network	.01.2004	big		big	23	* AT, BE, CH, CZ, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, HU, IE, IL, IT, LU, NL, NO, PL, RU, SE, TR, UK
EVGN	European Vascular Genomics Network	.01.2004	medium	28	small	10	AT (3), CH (2), DE (3), FI (1), FR (3), IL (1), IT (4), NL (4), SE (1), UK (6)
EWA	European Windtunnel Association	.04.2004	small	14	small	8	BE (1), CZ (1), DE (3), FR (1), IT (1), NL (2), SE (1), UK (4)

Acronym	Title	Date					Countries
EXPERTISSUES	Novel Therapeutic Strategies for Tissue Engineering of Bone and Cartilage Using Second Generation Biomimetic Scaffolds		medium	26	medium	14	BE (2), DE (3), ES (2), FR (3), IL (1), PT (1), UK (3)
FAME	Functionalised Advanced Materials Engineering of hybrids and ceramics	.10.2004	small	15	small	7	BE (3), CH (3), CZ (1), DE (7), FR (2), GR (1), HU (1), NL (2), SK (1), UK (2)
FIDIS	The Future of Identity in the Information Society		medium	24	small	10	BE (1), CH (1), DE (4), DK (1), FR (1), NL (2), SE (1), UK (1)
FRONTIERS	NoE Research and facilities directed at instrumentation for manufacturing and analysis of single molecules and individual nanoclusters, targeted at life sciences	.08.2004	small	12	small	8	BE (1), CH (1), DE (4), DK (1), FR (1), NL (2), SE (1), UK (1) (1)
GA2LEN	Global Allergy and Asthma European Network		medium	27	big	16	AT (1), BE (1), CH (1), DE (3), DK (1), ES (2), EUR/INT (2), FI (1), FR (1), GR (1), IT (3), NL (2), NO (1), PL (2), PT (1), SE (2), UK (2)
GMOSS	Global Monitoring for security and stability	.03.2004	medium	24	medium	11	AT (2), BE (1), CH (2), DE (6), DK (1), ES (1), FR (2), IT (3), NL (1), SE (3), UK (2)
GOSPEL	General Olfaction and Sensing Projects on a European Level	.01.2004	medium	25	small	8	CH (2), DE (6), ES (1), FR (4), IT (5), PL (1), SE (4), UK (2)
HIPEAC	High-performance embedded architectures and compilers	.09.2004	small	16	medium	11	BE (1), CH (1), DE (2), ES (1), FR (2), GR (1), IL (1), IT (2), NL (1), SE (2), UK (2)
HUMAINE	HUMAN-MACHINE INTERACTION NETWORK ON EMOTION	.01.2004	medium	27	medium	11	AT (1), CH (2), DE (4), FR (4), GR (1), IE (1), IL (2), IT (3), PT (2), SE (1), UK (6)
HUMANIST	HUMAN centred design for Information Society Technologies	.03.2004	medium	22	medium	14	AT (1), BE (2), CZ (1), DE (3), DK (3), ES (1), FI (1), FR (3), UK (1), GR (3), NL (2), NO (1), PT (1), SE (1)
HYCON	Hybrid Control : taming heterogeneity and complexity of networked embedded systems	.09.2004	medium	23	small	10	BE (1), CH (1), DE (4), ES (1), FR (4), GR (1), IT (4), NL (3), SE (3), UK (1)
HySafe	Safety of Hydrogen as an Energy Carrier	.03.2004	medium	25	medium	13	CA (1), DE (5), DK (1), ES (2), FR (3), GR (1), IT (1), NL (2), NO (3), PL (1), PT (1), SE (1), UK (3)
I*PROMS	Innovative Production Machines and Systems		medium	30	medium	14	AT (1), CZ (1), DE (6), ES (2), FI (1), FR (4), GR (1), IE (1), IT (3), NL (1), PL (1), PT (1), TR (1), UK (6)
IMISCOE	International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in Europe	.01.2004	small	19	medium	11	AT (2), BE (1), CH (1), DE (2), ES (1), FR (2), IT (1), NL (3), PT (3), SE (1), UK (2)
INFOBIOMED	Structuring European Biomedical Informatics to Support Individualised Healthcare		small	17	small	10	BE (1), DE (1), DK (2), ES (4), GR (1), IT (1), NL (3), PT (1), SE (2), UK (1)
INSIDE-PORES	INSIDE-PORES - IN SItu study and DEvelopment of processes involving nanoPORE Solids		small	14	small	9	BE (1), DE (3), ES (1), FR (1), GR (2), IT (1), NL (2), NO (2), UK (1)

Acronym	Title	Date					Countries
INTEROP	Interoperability Research for Networked Enterprises Applications and Software	.11.2003	big	50	medium	15	AT (2), BE (1), CH (2), DE (6), ES (3), FI (1), FR (7), GR (2), IT (13), LU (1), NL (3), NO (4), PT (1), SE (2), UK (2)
INTUITION	Network of Excellence on virtual reality and virtual environments applications for future workspaces	.09.2004	big	58	medium	15	BE (2), CH (4), CY (1), CZ (1), DE (6), ES (5), FI (2), FR (15), GR (5), IT (6), NL (2), PL (1), RO (3), SE (1), UK (4)
KALEIDOSCOPE	Concepts and methods for exploring the future of learning with digital technologies		big	76	big	23	AT (2), BE (3), BG (1), CA (1), CH (2), CY (1), DE (4), DK (3), ES (2), FI (3), FR (13), GR (5), HU (2), IE (1), IT (5), LV (1), NL (4), NO (2), PT (7), RO (1), SE (3), SK (1), UK (9)
KMM-NoE	Knowledge-based Multicomponent Materials for Durable and Safe	.09.2004	big	38	medium	11	AT (2), BG (1), DE (5), ES (3), FR (6), IT (6), PL (7), RU (1), SK (2), UA (1), UK (5)
KNOWLEDGE WEB	Realizing the semantic web		small	18	medium	11	AT (1), CH (1), IT (2), BE (1), DE (3), ES (1), FR (2), GR (1), IE (1), NL (1), UK (4)
MAIN	Targeting cell migration in chronic inflammation	.01.2004	small	16	small	7	CH (3), DE (3), ES (1), FR (2), IL (1), IT (4), UK (2)
MARBEF	Marine biodiversity and ecosystem functioning	.02.2004	big	56	big	16	BE (2), DE (5), DK (2), ES (2), FI (1), FR (6), IE (2), IT (4), LT (1), NL (10), NO (3), PL (2), PT (2), SE (1), SI (1), UK (12)
Marine Genomics	Implementation of high-throughput genomic approaches to investigate the functioning of marine ecosystems and the biology of marine organisms	.01.2004	big	44	big	16	BE (1), CL (2), DE (8), DK (1), ES (3), FR (3), GR (2), IL (2), IS (1), IT (4), NL (1), NO (2), PL (1), PT (1), SE (2), UK (10)
MARSTRUCT	Network of Excellence in marine structures	.03.2004	medium	33	big	17	BE (1), BG (1), DE (4), DK (1), ES (1), FI (3), FR (3), GR (1), IT (2), NL (2), NO (2), PL (2), PT (3), RO (1), SE (1), TR (1), UK (4)
MED-VET-NET	Network of prevention and control of zoonoses		small	16	small	10	DE (1), DK (2), ES (2), FR (1), HU (1), IT (1), NL (3), PL (1), SE (1), UK (3)
METAMORPHOSE	MetaMaterials ORganized for radio, millimeter wave, and PHOtonic Superlattice Engineering	.09.2004	medium	23	medium	13	BE (1), CH (1), DE (1), ES (4), FI (1), FR (3), GR (1), IT (2), PL (2), RU (1), SE (1), TR (1), UK (4)
MUSCLE	Multimedia Understanding through Semantics, Computation and Learning		big	35	medium	15	AT (4), CZ (1), DE (2), ES (1), FI (1), FR (9), UK (4), GR (4), HU (1), IE (1), IL (2), IT (1), NL (2), SE (1), TR (1)
NANO2LIFE	A network for bringing NANOtechnologies TO LIFE	.02.2004	medium	24	medium	12	CH (2), DE (9), DK (1), ES (1), FR (3), GR (2), IE (1), IL (1), IT (1), NL (1), SE (1), UK (1)
NANOBEAMS	Nanoanalysis using finely focused ion and electron beams	.12.2004	small	12	small	5	BE (3), FR (3), DE (3), LU (1), UK (2)
NANOFUN-POLY	Nanostructured and functional polymer-based materials and Nanocomposites	.06.2004	medium	26	big	19	AR (1), CH (1), CZ (1), DE (2), ES (2), FR (2), GR (2), IL (1), IT (2), NL (1), PL (1), PT (1), RO (1), SE (2), SI (1), TR (1), UA (1), UK (2), US (1)
NANOMEMPRO	Expanding membrane macroscale applications by exploring nanoscale material properties	.10.2004	small	13	medium	13	BE (1), CZ (1), DE (1), DK (1), ES (1), FI (1), FR (1), GR (1), IT (1), NL (1), NO (1), PT (1), UK (1)

Acronym	Title	Date					Countries
NANOQUANTA	Nanoscale Quantum Simulations for Nanostructures and Advanced Materials	.06.2004	small	10	small	7	BE (1), DE (3), ES (1), FR (1), IT (2), SE (1), UK (1)
NEMO	Network of Excellence for Micro-Optics	.09.2004	medium	30	medium	12	BE (4), CH (3), DE (4), ES (1), FI (3), FR (2), IT (1), NL (1), PL (5), SE (2), TR (2), UK (2)
NEUROPRION	Prevention, control and management of prion diseases		big	52	big	20	AT (1), BE (1), CH (1), DE (7), DK (1), ES (4), FI (1), FR (8), GR (1), IE (1), IL (1), IS (1), IT (6), NL (2), NO (2), PL (1), PT (1), SE (2), SK (1), UK (9)
NEWCOM	Network of Excellence in Wireless COMmunications	.03.2004	big	60	big	19	AT (3), BE (1), BE (2), CH (1), DE (5), DK (1), ES (5), FI (2), FR (8), GR (3), HU (1), IL (1), IT (8), NO (3), PL (1), PT (1), SE (6), TR (2), UK (6)
NOE-BIOENERGY	Overcoming Barriers to Bioenergy	.01.2004	small	8	small	8	AT (1), DE (1), FI (1), FR (1), NL (1), PL (1), SE (1), UK (1)
NUGO	European Nutrigenomics Organisation – linking genomics, nutrition and health research		medium	22	small	10	DE (2), ES (1), FR (1), IE (2), IT (1), NL (6), NO (1), PL (1), SE (1), UK (6)
PASCAL	Pattern Analysis, Statistical Modelling and Computational Learning	.12.2003	big	56	medium	15	AT (2), AU (1), BE (2), CH (4), DE (4), DK (3), ES (3), FI (2), FR (9), IL (4), IT (3), NL (4), SE (1), SI (2), UK (12)
PATENT-dfmm	Design for Micro & Nano Manufacture	.01.2004	medium	22	small	10	BE (3), DE (3), FR (5), HU (1), IE (1), IT (1), NL (1), PL (1), RO (1), UK (5)
PHOREMOST	Nanophotonics to realize molecular-scale technologies	.10.2004	big	35	big	17	BY (1), CH (1), DE (3), ES (3), FI (1), FR (4), GR (1), IE (2), IL (1), IT (5), LT (1), NL (1), RO (1), RU (2), SE (2), TR (2), UK (4)
PLASMO-NANO-DEVICES	Surface Plasmon Nanodevices : Towards Sub-wavelength Miniaturization of Optical Interconnects and Photonic Components	.01.2004	small	16	small	7	AT (1), CH (2), DE (3), DK (2), ES (2), FR (3), UK (3)
POLYSACCHARIDES	The European Polysaccharide Network	2004	small	16	small	9	AT (2), DE (4), FI (2), FR (2), NL (2), PL (1), RO (1), SI (1), UK (1)
PRIME	Policies For Research and Innovation in the Move towards the European Research Area	.12.2003	big	40	big	16	AT (1), BE (1), CH (4), DE (2), DK (1), ES (4), FI (1), FR (7), HU (1), IL (1), IT (6), NL (4), NO (3), PT (1), UK (5)
PROLEARN	Network of Excellence Professional Learning		small	19	medium	13	AT (2), BE (1), CH (2), DE (4), ES (1), FI (1), FR (2), GR (1), IT (1), NL (1), SE (1), SI (1), UK (1)
REWERSE	Reasoning on the Web with Rules and Semantics	.03.2004	medium	26	medium	14	AT (1), CH (2), DE (6), ES (2), FR (1), GR (1), IT (3), MT (1), NL (2), PL (1), PT (1), RO (1), SE (2), UK (2)
SAFE	Special Non-Invasive Advances in Foetal and Neonatal Evaluation Network	.03.2004	big	52	big	19	AT (1), CH (4), CN (1), CY (1), CZ (1), DE (3), DK (3), EE (1), ES (2), FI (1), FR (6), GR (1), IL (1), IN (1), IT (6), NL (3), PL (1), SE (2), UK (13)
SANDIE	Self-Assembled semiconductor Nanostructures for new Devices in photonics and Electronics	.07.2004	medium	28	medium	11	AT (2), BE (2), DE (8), ES (3), FR (3), IT (1), NL (1), PT (1), RU (1), SE (1), UK (5)

SATNEX	Satellite Communications Network of Excellence	.01.2004	medium	21	small	9	AT (1), DE (3), ES (2), FR (3), GR (3), HU (1), IT (4), SI (1), UK (3)
SEMANTICMINING	Semantic Interoperability and Data Mining in Biomedicine		medium	23	medium	11	CH (1), DE (5), DK (1), FI (1), FR (1), GR (1), HU (1), IT (1), NO (1), SE (6), UK (4)
SIMILAR	The European research taskforce creating human-machine interfaces SIMILAR to human–human communication	.12.2003	medium	33	big	16	BE (3), CH (2), DE (3), DK (1), ES (4), FI (1), FR (6), GR (3), IE (1), IT (1), RO (1), RU (1), SE (1), SN (1), TR (1), UK (1)
SINANO	Silicon-based Nanodevices	.01.2004	big	42	big	16	AT (1), BE (3), CH (2), DE (8), ES (2), FR (4), GR (1), IE (1), IT (3), LT (1), NL (1), NO (1), PL (1), SE (5), UA (1), UK (7)
SOFTCOMP	Soft Matter Composites - An approach to nanoscale functional materials	.06.2004	medium	24	small	10	BE (1), DE (6), DK (1), ES (2), FR (3), GR (1), IL (1), NL (3), PL (1), UK (5)
TARGET	Top Amplifier Research Groups in a European Team	.01.2004	big	48	big	16	AT (2), BE (3), CZ (1), DE (10), ES (5), FI (1), FR (3), GR (3), IE (2), IT (9), NO (1), PL (1), PT (2), SE (2), TR (1), UK (1)
THE EPIGENOME	Epigenetic plasticity of the Genome	.08.2004	small	19	small	6	AT(2), CH (2), DE (5), FR (2), NL (1), UK (7)
TRANS-BIG	Translating molecular knowledge into early breast cancer management: building on the BIG (Breast International Group) network for improved treatment tailoring	.03.2004	big	39	big	22	AT (1), BE (5), CH (2), CL (1), CY (1), CZ (1), DE (5), DK (1), ES (2), FR (1), GR (1), IE (1), IT (3), LU (1), NL (3), PL (1), PT (2), RU (1), SE (1), SI (1), TR (1), UK (3)
VIRGIL	European Vigilance Network for the Management of Antiviral Drug Resistance	.05.2004	big	55	medium	12	
VISNET	Networked audiovisual media technologies	.12.2003	small	15	small	10	BE (1), CH (1), DE (2), ES (2), FR (1), GR (1), IT (1), PL (1), PT (2), UK (3)

Appendix 2   **SIZE OF CONSORTIA AND PROMISED FUNDING**

Consortium research number	Number of member organisations	Amount of funding	Duration of funding in number of months	Estimate of number of researchers to be integrated
101	14	€ 1.970.000	60	20
102	24	€ 6.000.000	48	75
202	43	€ 14.110.000	48	176
203	19	€ 19.410.000	60	194
205	40	€ 7.000.000	60	70
301	51	€ 24.350.000	48	304
302	27	€ 10.500.000	48	131
401	18	€ 14.400.000	60	144
402	13	€ 11.500.000	60	115
403	27	€ 14.400.000	60	144
404	16	€ 14.400.000	60	144
405	52	€ 14.400.000	60	144
406	22	€ 17.300.000	72	144
501	19	€ 6.150.000	48	77
502	45	€ 5.400.000	24	135
503	14	€ 5.740.000	48	72
504	25	€ 5.500.000	36	92
505	11	€ 4.400.000	48	55
506	35	€ 6.500.000	48	81
507	31	€ 6.400.000	48	80
508	29	€ 3.000.000	36	50
509	20	€ 2.900.000	60	29
510	42	€ 8.200.000	48	103
511	47	€ 6.000.000	48	75
512	32	€ 5.600.000	48	70
513	24	€ 5.000.000	48	63
514	41	€ 2.880.000	24	72
515	38	€ 2.900.000	24	73
516	33	€ 6.000.000	48	75
517	86	€ 7.880.000	48	99
518	57	€ 5.000.000	36	83
519	26	€ 3.340.000	48	42
520	24	€ 6.100.000	60	61
521	25	€ 5.200.000	48	65
522	16	€ 3.900.000	48	49
523	27	€ 4.950.000	48	62
524	22	€ 5.360.000	48	67

Consortium research number	Number of member organisations	Amount of funding	Duration of funding in number of months	Estimate of number of researchers to be integrated
525	23	€ 4.600.000	48	58
526	17	€ 4.850.000	36	81
527	50	€ 6.500.000	36	108
528	58	€ 6.000.000	48	75
529	76	€ 9.350.000	48	117
530	38	€ 8.100.000	48	101
531	18	€ 6.700.000	48	84
532	35	€ 6.900.000	48	86
533	30	€ 6.400.000	48	80
534	60	€ 8.000.000	30	160
535	56	€ 5.440.000	48	68
536	22	€ 6.200.000	48	78
537	35	€ 4.700.000	48	59
538	16	€ 3.920.000	48	49
539	19	€ 6.010.000	48	75
540	26	€ 5.150.000	48	64
541	21	€ 4.400.000	24	110
542	23	€ 5.000.000	36	83
543	33	€ 6.050.000	48	76
544	42	€ 9.900.000	36	165
545	48	€ 8.000.000	48	100
546	15	€ 2.200.000	24	55
601	15	€ 10.000.000	60	100
602	20	€ 15.500.000	60	155
603	25	€ 12.000.000	60	120
604	10	€ 7.740.000	60	77
605	19	€ 6.050.000	60	61
606	12	€ 7.200.000	60	72
607	58	€ 5.800.000	60	58
608		€ 6.000.000	60	60
609	28	€ 9.000.000	60	90
610	16	€ 10.000.000	48	125
611	52	€ 12.000.000	60	120
612	19	€ 12.500.000	60	125
613	39	€ 7.000.000	60	70
614	55	€ 9.000.000	48	113
701	30	€ 7.000.000	60	70
703	26	€ 7.300.000	60	73
704	15	€ 5.000.000	60	50

Consortium research number	Number of member organisations	Amount of funding	Duration of funding in number of months	Estimate of number of researchers to be integrated
705	12	€ 5.000.000	48	63
708	23	€ 4.400.000	48	55
709	24	€ 8.800.000	48	110
710	12	€ 5.000.000	48	63
711	26	€ 6.600.000	48	83
712	13	€ 6.380.000	48	80
713	10	€ 5.000.000	48	63
715	28	€ 9.200.000	48	115
716	24	€ 6.200.000	60	62
801	44	€ 11.200.000	60	112
802	16	€ 5.000.000	60	50
803	24	€ 10.000.000	60	100
804	52	€ 3.800.000	48	48
805	13	€ 6.000.000	60	60
806	24	€ 2.000.000	36	33
807	65	€ 6.000.000	48	75
808	25	€ 7.000.000	60	70
809	56	€ 8.700.000	60	87
810	44	€ 1.070.000	48	13
811	33	€ 6.000.000	60	60
812	8	€ 8.050.000	60	81

Appendix 3   **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

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Interview guide

</div>

Date   ……………………..

Start and end time of the interview   …………………………………..

Interviewee   ……………………..

Beginning

- Tell shortly about the project and what you want to get out from the interview.

- Describe shortly the structure of the interview.

- Describe shortly the rest of the process (transcribing, anonymising, their consent).

Interviewee's work

Job title in member organisation	(Name position)
Job title/position in consortium	(Name position)

Interviewee's co-operation history

1st time in network co-op	(Year)
How many network co-op	(Amount)
1st time in EU level network co-op	(Year)
How many EU level network co-op	(Amount)

About the co-operation

- Can you tell me about the history of the co-operation between the partners that now form ………………………… (**name of their consortium**)?

   o When did you learn to know people from the different partners?

   o Are there some partners that have known each other longer than others?

      ▪ When and how did these partners meet?

      ▪ When and how did the other partners join?

- Can you tell me about the process of preparing for becoming a NoE funded by the EU?
  NOTE: especially the development of the consortium agreement

  o When did you start preparing for the NoE application?

  o How did this preparation process go?

  o What kind of key decisions do you remember that needed to be made in that process?

  o Who were involved in the development process?

    ▪ How and in which part of the process were they involved?
      (Drafting, commenting, deciding /little, much /early stage, mid stage, last minute)

- Have there been any changes in the co-operation between the partners during the preparation time or since the start of the consortium?

- Have there been new partners joining (or applying for joining) the consortium?
  o If yes:
    ▪ How many new organisations have wanted to become a partner?

    ▪ How have these 'requests' been tackled? Are there differences between the different applications and how they have been tackled?

    ▪ How many have been turned down/accepted. Why accepted, why turned down?

    ▪ Can you describe the process through which this new partner joined the consortium and the decisions involved in this process?

    ▪ Who are involved in this whole process and at which point of the process? What is the role of the different actors in this process?

  o If not:
    ▪ Have there been new activities added to what you planned to do at the outset?

    ▪ Can you describe the process of adding a new activity to what the consortium is already doing and the decisions involved in this process?

- Has any partner left the consortium?
    o <u>If yes</u>:
        ▪ Can you describe the process and the decisions involved in this process?

        ▪ Who are involved in this whole process and at which point of the process?

    o <u>If not</u>: Have there been activities that have been stopped before they ended?

        ▪ Can you describe the process and the decisions involved in this process?

        ▪ Who are involved in this whole process and at which point of the process?

- What are the future-plans of the consortium? (Do you plan to go on with their co-operation after the NoE-funding ends?)

About the consortium rules and structure

- Can you tell me about the role the consortium agreement plays in the co-operation?

    o Do people refer back to the agreement? (often, when?)

    o Are the rules set out in the agreement strictly followed?

- The consortium agreement for instance describes a specific organisational structure for the co-operation. Has this structure been changed – further developed since the agreement was signed?

    o If so, on which points, to what extent and why (can you describe the process of how the structure was changed)?

About planning

- Every year there needs to be made an implementation plan. Can you describe the process of how this plan is being developed?

    o What kind of decisions are needed to be made in this process?

    o Who were involved in the process and at which point of the process?

About specific decisions and decision areas

- What do you think are the most important areas in which decisions or choices are made within the consortium?

  Note these down: you may want to get back to these later, asking them if they can describe the process of making decisions in such area!

- Can you think of (give me) an example of a specific choice/decision (or series of choices/decisions) made by your consortium that has been particularly special to your consortium? (relating to a crisis/disagreement/innovation?)

    o Can you describe the process of how that specific choice was made?

    o Who were involved in this whole process and at which point of the process?

About interviewee

Sex	(M/V)
Year of birth	(Year)
Nationality	
Working languages	

Ending

- Can you think of any thing that you still would like to add or further clarify?

- If you think about anything later on, please feel free to contact me about it.

- Thanks a lot for participating, it was very useful and helpful.

Appendix 4   DEFINITIONS

Steering processes:

Steering processes refers to a totality of intertwined processes of governance, management and administration that has active or visible as well as passive or less visible components and that involves all activity except the actual operational or productive work

Governance:

Governance is the function of guaranteeing that the invested resources bring desired outcomes. The governance function is a generic process that appears throughout the organisation and it consists of the following four elements: framing, controlling, granting and mediating.

The element of **framing** concerns the basic setting of the activities undertaken. Thus framing concerns the direction of the activities, the boundaries and the basic policies. Framing is the activity of developing, deciding upon as well as reviewing and changing the decisions that concern these aspects of collective actions. Through the process of framing, the governance framework for a particular group or individual is created and maintained.

The element of **controlling** concerns the evaluation of past activities and plans for future activities. The aspects that are to be controlled are direction, progress (or performance) and behaviour (or the way in which things were done). This element includes setting the criteria and evaluating the data against the criteria. It is worth noting however, that decisions made based on controlling are not seen as part of controlling but as part of the following element, granting.

The element of **granting** concerns decision-making based on the results of the element of controlling. Thus granting can include actual granting of human or monetary or other material resources. It can also include promising, withholding or threatening to withhold rewards or threatening with or giving punishments.

The element of **mediating** concerns handling conflicting interests between stake-holders. What is essential are conflicting interests which the actors involved are unable to solve themselves in a satisfactory manner, and conflicting interests which concern issues that also need to be treated consistently in the future.

Management:

Management is the function which brings about the concrete actions needed to reach the set goals. Management is, like governance, defined to be a generic process

appearing throughout the organisation. Management consists of the following elements: planning, organising, motivating, coordinating and monitoring.

The element of **planning** concerns the future activities needed to reach the goals set in the element of governance defined as framing. Planning can be done through formal procedures, but can be emergent as well. Furthermore, planning may follow a bottom-up process, a top-down process or an interactive both direction process.

The element of **organising** concerns the means needed. Organising concerns thus the necessary material and human resources. Organising is the activity of deciding about the means needed for reaching the goals along the plans made, assessing the available means and making sure that the missing means can be acquired or developed. In addition to this, organising is the activity of creating a composition for the available or desirable means in relation to the goals set.

The element of **motivating** concerns generating and maintaining of effort to accomplish a task or to perform a process. The activity of motivating is mostly communicating. It is the act of making the knowledge of the mission and the vision and goals as well as the plans and rewards and punishments present and taken into account in the process of the execution of the work.

The element of **coordinating** concerns the integration of operational work as well as managerial work. Coordinating aims at integrating the results of the work executed by making sure that the different tasks and actors interrelate and interact in a way that enables reaching the goals set in the governance element defined as framing.

The element of **monitoring** concerns the execution of the work according to the plans made. It aims at uncovering weaknesses and errors in the execution of the work in order to rectify them and prevent recurrence and thereby make it possible to reach the goals set in the governance element defined as framing. Monitoring concerns also the managerial process itself and thereby can result in changes in managerial practices or existing plans for execution.

Administration:

Administration is the function of facilitating the processes of governance and management. The administration function is concerned with those parts of preparation and implementation of governance and management activities where explicit rules and formal procedures can be established. Administration includes the elements of handling of information needed for the different elements of governance and management, arranging the means lacking in the material and human organisation, as well as practical organising to make governance and management work possible.

The element of **handling of information** concerns collecting, processing, maintaining, protecting and retrieving information in order to support the governance and management functions.

The element of **arranging** is concerned with making sure that the necessary resources, such as raw materials, tools or equipment, facilities, capital and personnel, are available where and when needed. It is thus concerned with implementing the decisions made as part of organising in management.

The element of **practical organising** for governance and management includes such things as organising meetings, sending out needed documents, etc.

Constitutional members:

The term **constitutional member** or **member** in this thesis refers to an organisation that is a member of the meta-organisation or an individual who is member of an association. The members of meta-organisations also are referred to as **member organisation(s)**. The term **individual member** is occasionally used when referring to a single member organisation of meta-organisations.

Organisational members:

Those in organisation studies referred to as organisational member, thus those involved in the work processes of the meta-organisation or association will be referred to in the following manner:

Employee(s) refers to a person or people employed directly by the meta-organisation.

Participant(s) refers to those employed by a member organisation of the meta-organisation or to an individual who is a member of an association and participates in the work of the association.

Representative(s) refers to those participants which have the authority to represent their organisation as a constitutional member, as owner.

Appendix 5   CASE 1: FRIENDSHIP CASE

The analysis of this case is divided into three parts: the analysis of (1) the network-building phase, (2) the contract, and (3) the operational phase. Each part will present the analysis of the governance, management and administration processes. Where possible, the analysis covers both meta-organisational level and group-level.

THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

GOVERNANCE IN THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

FRAMING

The initial framing was done in the expression of interest by two of the five initiators together with an administrator of one of the initiator's organisations. The five initiators together with the administrator did further and more concrete framing to initiate the proposal. This included deciding on the mission and vision on the meta-organisational and group-level as well as on potential members.

The administrator was responsible for drafting the boundaries in terms of policies, procedures and practices. The five initiators were responsible for deciding, based on the suggestion including a list of open issues prepared by the administrator, about the way in which the boundaries were to be set.

CONTROLLING

The initiators together with the administrator were responsible for direction and performance control on both meta-organisational and group-level in the process of developing the network proposal. Behaviour control does not come to the foreground in the interviewee descriptions of the network-building phase.

GRANTING

The initiators and the administrator as well as participants from invited organisations needed to invest human resources in order for the proposal to be made. In addition, financial and material resources have been needed at the minimum for the two day meeting of the initiators. Who has granted these resources does not become clear, but it is most likely that the participants themselves or their organisations have granted these resources.

MEDIATING

In the interviews no major issues were mentioned that would have needed mediation on a meta-organisational or group-level and thus it stays unclear who would have been partaking in the mediation.

MANAGEMENT IN THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

PLANNING

The meta-organisational level planning was done by the initiators, while to the group-level planning both the initiating members and invited members participated. For the group-level planning the participants from the initiating and invited organisations suggested the activities they were willing to contribute.

ORGANISING

The structure of the consortium in terms of organs including the different work groups was created and decided upon by the initiators. The initiators, in addition, decided on who would participate in which organ and in which role, whereby the invited member organisations were organised by the initiators into the different groups that they may be able to contribute to. The particular participants invited as well as the initiators themselves, decided who would participate from their organisations. The budget and division of funding amongst the different participating organisations for the whole period of Commission funding was prepared by the administrator, possibly based on a budget request from each participating organisation, and was decided upon the initiators.

MOTIVATING

The initiating group of participants, especially two of the initiators together with the administrator were very active in driving the proposal forward. The administrator, especially, took responsibility for communicating about the possibilities and the needed actions to bring the proposal forward. The participants and their organisations on the other hand can be argued to have been self-motivated by the knowledge of possible Commission funding. The suggestions for contributions were based on that what the participants were working on or planned to work on. This also, however, can link to the need of each participant as well as organisation to get external funding to make the undertaking of these activities possible.

COORDINATING

The coordination initially was done by meeting face-to-face to create a shared idea of what the network would look like. Thereafter, the coordination was one via sharing of draft plans and ideas, whereby the administrator took the responsibility for making this possible by coordinating through handling of information. The possibility for coordinating by the participants of the participating organisations seems very limited as all communication seems have been via the administrator. The level of integration of activities can, therefore, not be very high. This means that the different activities may be grouped to the same theme, but few highly integrated activities are expected.

MONITORING

The initiators, and most actively the administrator and main initiators, were actively seeking to make sure the whole proposal would be of the quality they expected needed in order to receive Commission funding as well as ready before the deadline. The other participants, however, could have participated through reading and commenting on the various drafts.

ADMINISTRATION IN THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

HANDLING GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

The handling of information during the whole network-building phase –from the expression of interest to the signing of the consortium agreement and contract with the Commission – on both meta-organisational and group-level was taken care of by the administrator. The participants of the initiating and invited organisations did produce texts and provided information, but the administrator was the one collecting, combining as well as sharing the information, to then again collect reactions, combine and share.

PRACTICAL ORGANISING FOR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Although not fully confirmed by the interviews, it seems that the administrator was also responsible for making the practical arrangements for the different meetings between all initiators as well as the meetings between the two central initiators.

ARRANGING THE MEANS FOR ORGANISING

The administrator was responsible for and undertook the work leading to the arranging of means especially in the process of inviting organisations to participate.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ANALYSIS OF INITIATION PHASE IN THE FRIENDSHIP CASE

The most striking thing in this case is how the preparation process from the start to the end has been orchestrated by the main initiators and the administrator, without pacifying the other participating organisations. In short we can see the following in this case: The administrator and two initiators took responsibility for most governance, management and administration processes, while sometimes assisted by others. The additional initiators were taking responsibility in especially the governance process of framing and the management process of planning and coordinating. The invited organisations contributed most to the planning of activities as well as handled information related to their own participation.

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITIES

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOVERNANCE

FRAMING

On the meta-organisational level the framing including the mission, vision, and future of the consortium as well as boundaries such as members and policies, procedures and practices is the responsibility of the network council. If, however, the consortium agreement needs to be changed because of this, then each member organisations will need to confirm by signing the new amended agreement.

The responsibility for the framing on the group level, such as the mission and vision, is given to the network council. Each network area is responsible for their own policies, procedures and practices as long as they do not conflict with meta-organisational level policies,

procedures and practices. The network area leaders, when needing to be replaced, will be proposed by the network steering committee and confirmed by the network council.

CONTROLLING

The meta-organisational direction is controlled by the network council as it is to approve network area plans, budgets and suggestions for restructuring. The meta-organisational performance and well as behaviour control is the responsibility of the coordinator, as the coordinator is to alert the other organs when there are performance or other problems. In addition, the advisory committee is given responsibility for controlling both direction and performance, by giving it the task to issue its opinion about the plans and results.

GRANTING

The network council is to decide on actions needed in relation to direction control, which means it has the task to grant. The need for action as well as a suggestion for the type of action can be suggested by the network steering committee as well as the advisory committee and therefore they do participate in the process of granting. The network steering committee, furthermore, is responsible for proposing actions to be taken in cases when this is deemed needed based on performance control. The member organisations, individually, need to approve the actions suggested.

MEDIATING

There is no responsibility given to any particular group or organ to mediate or handle disputes internally. When, however, the dispute cannot be handled amicably internally, the responsibility for mediating will be given to external arbitrators.

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGEMENT

PLANNING

In the consortium agreement some contradictions can be found in relation to the process of planning. In the overall description of the planning process, the network steering committee is given responsibility for designing the plan of activities, taking into account the input by the network areas.

Based on the specific lists of responsibilities of the different organs, however, the network council is to prepare the plan of activities, the network steering committee is to decide on the plan of activities (before approval of the network council) and the network areas are to schedule their activities.

The contradictions are thus (1) the order of activities and (2) the responsibility for planning of the network council. My interpretation is that the responsibility for meta-organisational level planning is given to the network steering committee and responsibility for the group-level planning to the network areas. The direction of influence due to the order of activities can be expected to be both way – if on the meta-organisational level issues are identified, these may be then taken up on group-level, while if on the group-level issues are identified and action is planned, the meta-organisational level plan may be adjusted. My interpretation in relation to

the responsibility for planning of the network council is that the network council is responsible for meta-organisational level framing (preparation of planning) which then influences the more detailed planning. This would also naturally combine with the responsibility for meta-organisational level organising as described in the next section.

ORGANISING

Organising on the meta-organisational level seems to be the responsibility of the network council, due to its responsibility for issues like the structure and restructuring of the work into work areas and establishing work groups or task forces to undertake the work. These suggestions for changes in, for example, the structure, the division of work and financial means are, however, to be prepared by the network steering committee. This means that the network steering committee is organising, while the network council is controlling (see earlier) the organising by the network steering committee. Each network area, when established, is otherwise responsible for its own structure and restructuring. The organising on the group-level is thus the responsibility of the network areas.

MOTIVATING

The consortium agreement does not give clarity about the responsibility for motivating.

COORDINATING

As the concept of coordination was defined as mutual adjustment, the responsibility for this cannot be given to a single person, it needs to be a responsibility of two or more people (or a group) that are responsible for the different aspects to be coordinated. This means that the responsibility for meta-organisational level coordination given to the coordinator and for group-level given to the network area leaders is not coordination as defined in my framework. This responsibility is interpreted as the responsibility for monitoring. This however means that the responsibility for coordination, as I have defined it, may lay at the network steering committee and the network area, but these organs have not been given this responsibility explicitly in the contract.

MONITORING

Monitoring in relation to the functional requirements of work was given as a responsibility to the network steering committee. The responsibility for monitoring in as mentioned earlier in relation to coordination is given to the coordinator (meta-organisational level) and network area leaders (group-level).

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADMINISTRATION

HANDLING OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

The coordinator is responsible for the handling of most governance and management information on meta-organisational level. First, the coordinator is responsible for this in relation to the meetings and decisions of the network council and network steering committee. Second, the coordinator is responsible for this in relation to all information that needs to be delivered to the Commission. Third, the coordinator has a specific responsibility for

maintaining and keeping financial accounts and contact details. Fourth, the coordinator is due to its linking role also responsible for handling information between the Commission and consortium. The network areas as well as the member organisations are responsible for the handling of their governance and management information, which is especially on group-level and individual member level in relation to their participation, contributions, budget and financial report.

PRACTICAL ORGANISING FOR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The coordinator is responsible for preparing the meetings and decisions of the network council and network steering committee. Although this preparation process is very information rich, and thus was discussed within the handling of information, it is also important to include it here as well as in the next section. Preparing meetings includes making sure the network council and network steering committee can do their work. The practical organising, or maybe better arranging, is related to making sure that the meeting has the right format, has the speakers invited, has everybody in the right place at the right time, that there is space for socialising, that everybody feels good and thus has food and drinks when needed, etc. Part of this same type of process, the coordinator is also responsible for chairing (or appointing a person to chair) the meetings of the network council and the network steering committee. Thus, making sure the network council and the network steering committee are able to do their work. Besides the responsibility for practical organising given to the coordinator, each network area is made responsible for arranging its own meetings.

ARRANGING

The coordinator is responsible for taking care of organising of the financial means, that is all negotiations (for instance in relation to changes in the contract) and delivering all documents (plans, reports, and other results) needed to secure continued funding. In addition, the coordinator, possibly with the support of the network operations office, is furthermore given the responsibility for preparing the meetings the network council and network steering committee. I assume this includes arranging all means needed for these meetings, such as the meeting place and tools needed during the meetings.

The network steering committee is responsible for arranging when they are to put forward a suggestion for candidates for positions as the leader of a network area or a task force when this is needed. In addition, the network steering committee is responsible for agreeing on press releases and publications concerning the consortium or the activities undertaken. This can be interpreted as arranging in terms of legitimacy.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FRIENDSHIP CASE

The consortium agreement as can be seen from the analysis above, focuses mainly on defining the meta-organisational level and to a lesser extend the group level responsibilities for governance, management and administration. The most specifically defined are the responsibility for framing and controlling as well as all elements of administration.

It appears that a division of responsibilities is set out in the consortium agreement based on the perceived role of a particular group. The governance group is responsible for governing, the management group for managing overall and group leaders for managing of the work done

in the groups and the coordinator for administering. What is most striking is that the governance group as well as the group itself were responsible for framing the group level, but no responsibility for framing was given to the management group.

The coordinator, when looking at the consortium agreement, is responsible for most administration processes on meta-organisational level. Although not specified in detail in the agreement, the initial description of the network structure reveals that the operations office will in practice undertake most work in the administration process on meta-organisational level. Member organisations undertake the work in the administration processes related to their participation and group leaders undertake the work related to the administration process of the whole group.

A last observation which strikes me as important is that the consortium agreement, when looking at the analysis of management, mainly deals with planning and organising, whilst to a far lesser extent controlling. It does not deal with responsibilities related to motivating and to coordinating.

THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

GOVERNANCE IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

FRAMING

The framing on different levels was at large done during the network-building phase and has been set out in the contract with the Commission. Three different processes described earlier, however, included the element of framing. These three processes were: (1) adding of new member organisations, (2) adding of new activities, and (3) discontinuing an activity. These framing initiatives were initiated by different groups or individuals and were often the result of other processes.

In the case of adding new members the framing decision can be the end point of the process which starts out as a process of controlling and granting the managerial process of planning and organising. In this process new member organisations are added as their expertise is seen as necessary for the reaching of goals set. Thus, the steering committee suggested as part of their planning and organising processes to accept these organisations as new members and the network council then controlled this suggestion and granted permission for this and thus decided to reframe the boundaries. The adding of new members can also be based on a larger process of reframing. This is to be seen as one of the applicants for membership suggested that they would take a lead on a set of new activities. This application thus initiates a process of thinking about broadening of the field of action and the goals as well as the membership boundary. This suggestion was first controlled by the steering committee and was granted permission to be discussed at the network council. The network council discussed and finally decided to reframe the boundaries, accepting the new member as well as broadening of the activity field and goals.

The process of adding a new area of activity, as was initiated by the steering committee, was a suggestion for broadening the field of activity. It was first discussed with the advisory committee and after this it was presented to the network council. The network council then

discussed the idea and finally decided to grant permission for this activity, thus resulting in reframing of the field of activity and goals.

In the case of the discontinuity of activity, it was the performance controlling done by the advisory committee and the granting suggestion put forward for discontinuing particular activities which resulted in framing. The steering committee, after hearing the opinions of the different members and the advisory committee expressed during the network council meeting, finally decided to redefine the work-package concerned such that part of its activity field and goals set were cancelled.

CONTROLLING

Direction and performance control were present in the processes of (1) developing implementation plans, (2) adding new activities, and (3) discontinuing activities. In all processes, the outline (possibly combined with what has been done) is presented to the network council (by the work-package leader or the initiator). At the network council meeting, the member representatives, the advisory committee and the steering committee discuss and evaluate the performance and the suggested plans. This is followed by possibly a discussion and a decision (explicit or implicit) about granting the right to develop an implementation plan and the limitations to it.

In case already existing work-packages are granted permission for developing an implementation plan based on the outline presented (with or without suggestions for changes), the work-package members are given the possibility to control the direction and make suggestions for changes both on the outline as well as during the development of the implementation plan. When the separate implementation plans have been put on paper and have been compiled into one plan, the member organisations and the steering committee are given a last possibility to control if the final plans are acceptable.

In case new work-packages are granted permission for developing an implementation plan based on the outline presented (with or without suggestions for changes), the steering committee separately controls the development of the implementation plan in a few iterative steps.

In the case whereby an already existing work-package got a negative evaluation concerning one sub-project and the advice was given not to continue with this line of activity, the advisory committee and the network council were involved in the control. In addition, they participated in the discussion of the granting options. The granting decision was, however, made by the steering committee.

In terms of collecting information in order to be able to control as well as notifying those involved when action is or may be needed, the administrators play a central role, as one of them said:

> *"We, from the project office, we just control that we stay in the budget and that*
> *the planning times and deadlines are kept".*

This type of controlling, however, which is concerned with the collection of information and when this information is not satisfactory along given parameters sending the information forward, is the handling of information as part of administration.

GRANTING

Granting was discussed above already to some extent in the previous subsection. The evaluation of the granting options and the final granting decision are started after the process of control. The control of the outline of the implementation plans was done by the network council, while the steering committee controlled the final version of the implementation plans. The control evaluation is described by most interviewees to implicitly result in a granting decision. There is little mentioning of explicit granting discussions or decisions, even if suggestions are given concerning the implementation plan.

Only in the case where the control led to a negative evaluation, was the granting of permission explicitly discussed by the advisory committee and the network council. The steering committee then made the final granting decision to reframing the activity field and goals of the work package. If not described in too much detail, the activity field and goals of the consortium at large may have stayed the same.

The above indicates that granting is largely implicit. This may relate to the fact that these consortia are largely depending on the indirect resources of the member organisations. This means that only in case activities receiving funding from the consortium proving to be non-fruitful or unsuccessful a change in the granting decision made at the start is needed. In all other situations the granting decision, concerning the consortium's contribution, has been made at the start of the consortium.

MEDIATING

The negative control evaluation of part of a work-package resulted in a conflictious discussion about the possible granting options. Although it remains unclear what happened specifically, the decision right on the issue was given to the steering committee. The steering committee, in order to handle the conflict, suggested not to cut the funding directly (as suggested by the advisory committee), but to give the sub-group the possibility to perform its tasks and deliver the results and reports by the end of the reporting period. Also a possibility for re-applying for funding for a better thought through projects was also mentioned as possible in the next planning round. Although, the partner which was cut funding was expected still not to agree with the arguments used, the practice was seen as acceptable academic peer review.

MANAGEMENT IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

PLANNING

From the discontinuation process it becomes clear that work-packages consist of rather independent pieces of work in sub-projects, as without trouble, one part of a work-package could be discontinued. The activity planning, however, was said to be the work-package leader responsibility. Although this may be true in terms of presenting the outline of the activities to be undertaken at the network council and delivering a written plan to the administrators, the earlier indicates that the activities are planned by the member organisations participating.

This is further confirmed by the way in which the budget requests are member organisation bound, they need to deliver their request for the work they plan to undertake in the different work packages they participate in. This means that on work-package level, there seems to be no budget.

The work-package level planning is thus more of a coordination type of planning and on network area level the planning seems non-existing as the information of the different work-packages are integrated into one document by the administrators.

ORGANISING

The organising in terms of filling consortium positions was settled during the network-building phase. In the operational phase no changes were made in terms of these positions.

Also an initial division of funding was settled on before the start. Every year, however, the initial division would be further specified based on the budget requests made by the member organisations in relation to the activities they plan to undertake and the decisions made on new activities. The administrators prepared the suggestion for this specified budget based on the instruction that were given by the steering committee, which also makes the final decision concerning the division of funding.

The selection of those who do the work is done by the member organisations, it seems to be most often by the leader of the group participating but the data is not extensive enough to be certain. On work-package level, work-package leaders may request particular groups to do particular tasks, even though from interviews it becomes clear that more frequently the groups suggest their contribution instead of being requested a particular contribution. The particular contribution given in the end, however, can be influenced by the mutual adjustment which takes place at least to some extend within a work-package.

MOTIVATING

Although the interviews are not very extensively giving a picture of the motivational process, the little that is said hints towards the type of motivational structure common to academic work – very much based on self-motivation. This self-motivation is based on one's own ability to see the value of one's contribution. Recognition and inspiration are, however, important elements that can support the process of self-motivation.

The face-to-face meeting and learning what others in the consortium have done and are planning to do, thus support the process of self-motivation.

COORDINATING

The technical coordinating of implementation plans or plans of activities will not be discussed in this section, but are seen as handling of information and will be discussed as part of administration.

Coordinating and solving coordinating problems, for example which tasks are done by which member organisation participating to a work-package, is undertaken by the work-package

leader and the work-package participants when they arise. As the work-packages are in most cases not involving many participating member organisations there seems little difficulty.

In the work-packages in which many member organisations participate, the work done by the member organisations is often requested by one coordinating member organisation.

On network area level, even though such exists, there is seems no specific interaction or coordination. This impression is strengthened by the way that the planning and the reporting are done, whereby plans and reports are made mainly on member organisation or work-package level.

MONITORING

The way in which the tasks are executed is in the hands of the group or individual of the member organisation responsible for such tasks. Within member organisations the execution of tasks may be controlled externally, for example by the group leader of a member organisation who suggested the task to be included into the work plan of the work-package, while the tasks are done by the members of his/her group. In general, however, operational self-control seems to be more frequent.

ADMINISTRATION IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

HANDLING GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

There are several processes in which governance and management information was collected, stored, compiled, communicated, etc. In the process of developing implementation plans, for example, the work-packages plans were collected by one administrator, compiled into one document. Also in the finalising process comments on the whole were collected and implemented until the document would be sent to the Commission.

A second example is the process of new members in which the membership applications were collected by the administrator and further delivered to the steering committee for evaluation and decision. The results of these evaluations would then be communicated to the different applicants, but there was no observations made about this part of the process. The preparation of the approval of the selected applicants in terms of compiling and preparing the documents for the network council was in the hands of one of the administrators, as was the collecting and compiling of all preparatory documents for both steering committee and network council.

A third example is the process of reporting whereby the administrators are collecting and compiling the consortium-wide information, the work-package leaders collect and compile the reports on the activities and results of the work-packages and the member organisation collect and compile the financial data concerning their part of the Commission funds.

A last example is the information collected in order to make control possible. The administrators collected both financial and result information from the member organisations in order for them to make sure that they stayed within budget and deadlines were kept.

PRACTICAL ORGANISING FOR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Although it is not explicitly presented as part of different key processes, the administrative team seems to be responsible for much if not all of the practical organising. One of the administrators described it the work as follows: *"taking care of (....) everything around meetings, meeting agendas, taking part in the (...) meetings, helping people with information to decide on what we are going to do and things like that"*. Thus, although practical organising was not discussed in more detail, the impression is that at least this administrator does all needed for the meetings to get organised. This, for example, could include making sure there is food and beverages, maybe making sure that signs are hung up so that everybody can find their way, that transportation is arranged, that maybe social programme is organised and so on.

ARRANGING

This element of administration is not directly evident in the data. Similar as with the practical organising, arranging of means can be seen as included in 'taking care of everything around meetings'. When in more physically present organisations arranging would be concerned with making sure there is a building, office material, production tools, etc., in consortia this may concern the same things, but for a meta-organisation which is not having an office of its own, it is concerned with making sure there is a meeting place with all the facilities needed for those meetings and an information and communication system which facilitates the working together.

Furthermore, although not discussed with interviewees, most means must be acquired and maintained by the member organisations, as most work is undertaken in their facilities, with their tools and using their material. Even the information and communication system of the consortium may be acquired and maintained by one of the member organisations, as seems to be the case in this case.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ANALYSIS OF OPERATIONAL PHASE IN THE FRIENDSHIP CASE

The central role played by the five initiators as presented by one of the interviewees, did not become directly obvious from the analysis. This is due to the fact that these five individuals are not only members of the steering committee and thus participating to the governance, management and administration from this position, but they are also their organisations' representative in the network council, they are work-package leaders of one or two work-packages each and they may represent their organisation in other work-packages in which it participates. Furthermore, the two most central characters in addition have a hierarchically structured relationship within their own organisation with the network administrators. Thus, in order to understand the influence of particular individuals, one would need to combine the participation to governance, management and administration processes in different positions to understand the centrality of these individuals. Although this was not the initial idea behind the development of the framework, it can show to be very useful for analysing the lines and centres of governance, management and administration processes. In relation to the governance, management and administration, the framework can thus show if these processes are actually governed, managed and administered by one limited group of individuals or a wide and diverse group of individuals.

The central role in the handling of information, practical organising and arranging by the administrators is not surprising one could say, as they were hired to do administrative work. Indeed, much of the meta-organisational administrative processes were taken care of by the administrators, but the most interesting part shown by the analysis is the rather large participation of the member organisations in the different administrative processes especially related to the governance and management of the execution of work.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

While the initiation phase showed a very clear central role played by the five initiators and one of the administrators, this central role was not directly obvious in the analysis of the consortium agreement or the operational phase. As mentioned in the reflections on the analysis of the operational phase, the central role played by these individuals on especially meta-organisational level does not show in the analysis as these people are fulfilling multiple positions simultaneously. They form the management group, they are the group leaders and although they may not be the only members of the governance group, their influence in the governance group can be expected to be rather great. This indicates, as will be further discussed in the discussion chapter, that the analysis in this case would have benefitted from an individual level analysis. An analysis on individual level would have better shown the extent to which these individuals participate in governing, managing and administering at different levels and the extent to which these processes where self-steered.

A large gap exists between the meta-organisational level and group level. The group level analysis shows that the activities implemented by participants of member organisations are largely governed, managed and administered by these participants or their organisation. These activities are fitted into the overall topic of the group and where possible links are made between the different activities undertaken by the participants of the different member organisations. Thus bottom up coordination takes place, while the overall topic and goals of the group only create a loose governance framework in which the activities are fitted. Only when activities of participants are having large discrepancy with the topic or if the undertaken activities do not result in any contribution to the goals of the group, action is taken from outside the group based on the routine control on meta-organisational level. Taking action is, however, seen as difficult as it involves taking action against colleagues. The role of the advisory committee is thus to legitimise the governing of group level activities by the governance group and management group.

Finally, although not specifically looked at in the study, one comment of an interviewee in this case, leads me to consider the way in which the communication between the member organisations and the administrators is organised to be of high importance to the experience of administrative load by the participants. In case the administrators of both member organisations and meta-organisation have the possibility to interact directly, the experience of administrative burden, which is often seen very high in Commission-funded projects, may get very much less. In order for this to be possible, however, there need to be developed administrational systems which both the meta-organisation and the member organisations are able and capable of working with. In addition, the administrators of member organisations would need to be able to handle the information. As the administrators from the member organisations are normally not involved in the research process of the participants, they may lack the tools to understand the information that is to be gathered and the way in which it

needs to be handled. The administrative collaboration within the member organisations may thus also play a role in the experience of the administrative burden.

Appendix 6 CASE 2: CROSS-DISCIPLINE CASE

The analysis of this case, like the previous one, is divided into three parts: the analysis of (1) the network-building phase, (2) the contract, and (3) the operational phase. Each part will present the analysis of the governance, management and administration processes. Where possible, the analysis covers both meta-organisational level and group-level.

THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

GOVERNANCE IN THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

FRAMING

Initially, a small group partook in the framing of the collaboration, specifically in relation to initial field and idea for the collaboration as well as the partners to be involved. Those invited, however, were able to suggest reframing – adding more partners of a particular field.

When selected partners were invited and agreed to partake, the framing became a collective responsibility of those participating to the face-to-face meetings. The finding of common ground in terms of areas of importance to work on together was thereby most important though reported to be extremely difficult. The areas boundaries and their goals or mission were defined during the face-to-face meetings. In these meetings also the way in which funding would be divided was settled and collectively agreed upon.

The clusters further specified the goals to be reached and the field they would contribute to. This was done in different ways per cluster. While in some clusters the cluster heads specified the field and goals further, in other clusters this was done by all participants. In one cluster this additional, more specific framing was done at the end, which made it more difficult and demanding.

In a later stage, a further framing step was taken – that of creating the consortium agreement. The preparation was done by the coordinating organisation, which then was discussed by all partners, which lead to a conflict between the coordinating organisation and the other partners.

CONTROLLING

The persons chosen to lead particular clusters were responsible to make sure the cluster developed a plan. Each cluster did this in a different way. Some clusters had those responsible for a cluster write the suggestion of the work plan. The other participating groups then commented on the drafts. Direction control was in these cases thus in the hands of those participating – at least partially. Other clusters had those responsible for the cluster to coordinate the writing of the plans by those participating. In these clusters those responsible were to control direction.

In addition, as could be seen in the framing done concerning the consortium agreement, direction control is also performed by the participating organisations. This, however, may also be the result of controlling the direction of the participating organisation itself, focusing on the

question if participation to the consortium with these plans and agreements is desirable and fits within the framework set. The direction control of the participating organisation may thus result, via the granting of permission for continued involvement or not, in the control of the consortium.

GRANTING

The decisions based upon control were not explicitly discussed. One of people responsible for a cluster mentions that it was needed to grant permission, or in other words demand participants to shorten their contributions.

In addition to the meta-organisational level, the participating organisations allow personnel time to be invested by those participating from their organisation. This choice may be made by the participants themselves, their bosses, or others based on direction and possibly performance control. The coordinating organisation did not only allow personnel time to be invested, but also allowed financial and material resources to be used to support the building of the network.

MEDIATING

The conflicts and arguments which arose during the network-building stage were at large mediated by the group itself through face-to-face discussions.

One conflict reported that did not resolve internally (concerning intellectual property rights) was resolved by gaining clarity from the Commission on the possibility for changing the coordinating organisation in case the conflict was not resolved. As the Commission made clear it would allow the changing of the coordinating organisation, the coordinating organisation agreed on the suggested changes by the other participants.

MANAGEMENT IN THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

PLANNING

The planning in the network-building phase was done per cluster. The interviews describe three different ways of planning. In the first, most central planning cluster, the cluster heads of the cluster discussed amongst themselves and wrote a suggestion for the cluster to be commented upon by the participants. In the second, most decentralised planning cluster, the participants wrote their plan to be included into the cluster plan which led to too much text and adjustment and coordination at the end. In the third, all cluster participants (including heads) discussed initial ideas to be included in the plan for a few weeks after which these developed ideas were written out.

The planning process thus differed clearly within the case. In all instances, however, the participants were able to add that what they could contribute to the cluster, even though this was done at different time points.

ORGANISING

The first organising activity was the choice of people to be invited to partake in the initial face-to-face meetings. This was done by a small group of initiators, though some of the people invited by these initiators were able to influence the list of people invited by demanding a few other people to be invited. The person invited was often a leader of a particular department or research group working in the area.

Most of the organising after this point is done by the people invited to participate in the face-to-face meetings – collectively as a group as well as individually as representatives.

Due to being invited to the face-to-face meetings the invited people became the representative of their organisation, being able to select the people in their organisation which could partake in the consortium. These initially invited people were also able to influence the domain and goals aimed at. The knowledge of the expertise available in the organisation of the invited person as well as the willingness and capability to understand the expertise areas available in the organisation thus influenced the participation of the organisation in the consortium.

The organising in terms of selecting cluster leaders (coordinators and deputy coordinators) seems to have been done by the coordinator, but the interviews do not give a full picture of the way in which this choice was made and thus others can have been involved as well. It at least becomes clear, from comments of the cluster coordinators, that they were asked to become such by the coordinator.

During the network-building phase the invited participants also decided on the way in which the financial contribution of the Commission would be distributed amongst the participants. They decided on a maximum possible contribution as well as on the organising principles.

MOTIVATING

In early phases, the initiating organisation allocated funding to organise the preparatory face-to-face meetings. The organising of these meetings created the possibility for finding common ground and made it possible to articulate shared goals. This was the basis for the participants to continue to develop the proposal.

Although motivating was not explicitly discussed during the interviews, the overall impression from the interviews is that those invited to lead a particular cluster are in the position to enhance motivation of the participants. The participants however need also to rely on self-motivation as the cluster leaders are only having tools to enhance the motivation by showing links and meaningfulness of the whole. The cluster in which the participants were not familiar with one another, it is clearly to be seen that the participants were driven mainly by self-motivation – the topic and perspective of each individual was most important as driver.

The interviews also give a strong impression that motivating comes forth from self-motivation and the interests each of the participants has in developing further what they are working on. This impression is stronger in some cases than in others and can be most clearly seen from the way in which the planning of activities was done.

The possibility to receive funding may also motivate to participate. As the funding was mainly to support the collaboration and coordination, and not the research itself, it was argued to be not to be very significant amounts. Thus the funding was not seen as a very strong motivator.

The cooperative aspect can thus be expected to be the main motivator, while for some participants the funding can be an additional motivating factor. Due to the decision to set a maximum of possible funds that could be gained, the possible motivational factor of the funding is further minimised. On the other hand, the performance based division of the funding can be seen as a way to prevent demotivation of those putting in time to making the collaboration possible – as work done to make sure that people are able to meet and collaborate are seen as important in the evaluation besides the contribution to reach the goals set.

COORDINATING

The face-to-face discussion between all participants at the beginning of the network-building phase was important as it created the possibility for mutual adjustment and finding common ground. The shared development of clusters made it possible for all participants to gain an understanding of the overall picture and the links between the clusters, before the detailed planning took place.

The coordination within each cluster was done in different ways. In one of the clusters coordination was reached by having the cluster leaders write a suggestion which was then developed further by the ideas and suggestions of the cluster participants. It seems that these suggestions were send to the cluster leaders – who then needed to adjust the different suggestions to fit together. In one of the clusters the coordination was reached by having a period in which ideas could be developed. All participants were involved in this discussion and able to coordinate through linking and adjusting their ideas to those of the other participants. After this, the cluster leaders wrote the suggestion which then could be further developed. In a third cluster in which the participants were not familiar with the work of the other participants, the participants were asked to write their suggestions of what they could be doing. These suggestions then needed to be linked and adjusted to one another. This adjusting was done by the cluster leaders – which was reported to be very difficult, leading to several conflicts.

The participants who participated in more than one cluster further enhanced the coordination between the clusters. In addition, the initiating member organisation when combining the cluster proposals needed to adjust the proposals to create a unified proposal, for example by making suggestions for combining similar types of tasks suggested by different clusters. All participants were further able to contribute to the coordination of activities by providing suggestions and comments on drafts of the whole proposal. The interviews do, however, give little insight into the extent to which this was done.

MONITORING

The monitoring the network-building phase especially comes to fore in the development of the proposal. Although there are differences between the clusters, in most clusters participants had a shared responsibility for making sure the work was completed with the highest quality

possible. In the cluster in which the participants were given the responsibility for writing the proposal, the cluster leaders took a larger responsibility for monitoring than the cluster leaders of other clusters did.

In relation to the work done by the coordinating organisation in terms of combining of the different cluster proposals and writing about the overall organisation, all participants were to control the operations. The coordinating organisation, however, seems to have been controlling these operations mainly oneself, seeing to it that the final proposal matched the criteria set by the Commission.

ADMINISTRATION IN THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

HANDLING GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

In the network-building phase, the actual work is to write a proposal, to put into writing the framing, planning and organising. The handling of governance and management information is thereby difficult to separate from the writing of the proposal as this writing is the handling of governance and management information.

Initially, however, the handling of governance and management information was especially concerned with keeping track of decisions made during the initial meetings and collecting and spreading information needed for making decisions in the initial meetings. The coordinating organisation took on this task.

Later, in the creation of the cluster proposals whereby several participants contributed to the writing, the cluster leaders kept on track of decisions made and of who is responsible for writing what within their cluster. Furthermore, the coordinating organisation kept on track of the overall picture such as all the needed pieces of texts, of who is responsible for delivering which pieces and of the progress made. The interviews do not give a complete picture of the handling of governance and management information. It can, for example, be expected that information on progress would be spread to all participants to keep them on track. This may even be used to motivate the participants in the process. These issues were however not discussed in the interviews.

PRACTICAL ORGANISING FOR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

In the network-building phase, the coordinating organisation was taking care of the practical organising on meta-organisational level. This included making sure the face-to-face meetings are organised in which most governance and management activities were taking place.

After this initial phase, in those clusters in which participants partake in the management and governance of the work, cluster leaders are undertaking work to make this possible, for example, by organising conference calls or creating shared email lists. In those clusters in which the cluster leaders were undertaking most management and governance work, there was no need for practical organising.

The actual inviting of the initial participants was done by the main participant of the coordinating organisation. This main participant may also have been the one to acquire the financial and organisational support from his organisation, but the interviews are not giving enough insight into this to be conclusive.

The initially invited participants were responsible for arranging or making sure additional people from their organisation would participate in the work of the consortium.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ANALYSIS OF INITIATION PHASE IN THE CROSS-DISCIPLINE CASE

The face-to-face meetings at the beginning of the network-building stage were very important in creating a collective of the participants (the representatives of the member organisations). The meetings made it possible for the participating organisations to frame the collaboration collectively, both on meta-organisational level and on group level. Thus also the collective planning and organising on meta-organisational level was done in the meetings held. In addition, the meetings made it possible for participants to mutually adjust their ideas, and thus through conversation coordination on meta-organisational level took place and ideas started to fit together.

An additional consequence of making all participants (representatives of the participating organisations) to be collectively responsible for the meta-organisational level results, were the strong bonds created between these participants on meta-organisational level. These strong bonds made it possible for these participants to collectively decide on meta-organisational level policies and issues even in those cases where the coordinating organisation wished and proposed differently. In the process of making the participants collectively responsible, the power balance has thus shifted from the coordinating organisation to the collective.

On group level this case presents three different ways of steering. First, in one of the clusters a similar structure as the overall structure was chosen, whereby all participants are collectively working out what the cluster is going to do. Thus the group collectively manages the group level and governs the individual level.

Second, in another cluster the cluster leaders made the proposal and the participants were able to contribute to the ideas laid out by the cluster leaders. This means that the cluster leaders governed and managed the activities on group-level, creating the specific framework in which the activities of the participants needed to fit. The planning and organising contributions by the participants on individual level are then governed by the cluster leaders.

Third, in the last cluster the focus was put on individual level (participating organisation) management and governance. The cluster leader reports two of its important tasks. First, the cluster leader undertook the administrative control task – by concentrating on the length of the contributions and giving participants notifications when the length of their contribution was too long. Second, the cluster leader was involved in mediating in case individual level contributions were conflicting and the participants were unable to settle their conflicting views. This cluster thus seems to have had very little group level managing or governing beyond the governing and managing that was done on group level during the face-to-face meetings by all participants.

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITIES

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOVERNANCE

FRAMING

Almost all of the groups described in the consortium agreement participate in the process of framing. On cluster level the work package leaders in the cluster sub-committee are specifically responsible for the direction of the cluster. On meta-organisational level the executive committee as well as the liaison managers are responsible for developing the proposals defining the field and future direction to be decided upon by the institutional board or, in relation to new or changes in existing contractual bonds, the member organisations separately. The executive committee can also decide to propose to accept new members on meta-organisational level, while the work package leader can propose to accept a change in participation of particular member organisations in the cluster to be decided upon by the cluster sub-committee.

CONTROLLING

As with framing also controlling, especially in terms of direction and progress, is described in relation to many a group in the consortium agreement. The member organisations participating to a cluster assist the work group leaders in the cluster sub-committee in monitoring of progress. The cluster sub-committee also monitors the direction in relation to the suggested plans by the work packages. The executive committee then monitors direction of the clusters by reviewing the cluster plans. The executive committee also monitors the progress of clusters by reviewing progress reports. The executive committee also reviews progress in relation to particular meta-organisation wide priorities. The institutional board is monitoring both direction (for example, by reviewing of plans, budgets, filling of positions) and progress (for example, by reviewing of reports and evaluations). The institutional board is assisted in the monitoring of both direction and performance by the scientific committee and of performance specifically by the coordinator. The consortium agreement does not specify control of how things are done and if the way in which things have been done is in accordance with the policies decided upon, the behaviour control.

GRANTING

The decision on what to do in relation to the results of performance control on both meta-organisational level, but also cluster, and work group level lies in the hands of the institutional board. These decisions are prepared by the executive committee, a cluster sub-committee and/or work package and can be influenced by the advice of the scientific committee. The decision on what to do with the results of direction control is made by those exercising the direction control.

MEDIATING

In the mediation process described in the consortium agreement, the institutional board may, on request of a (disagreeing) member organisation, reconsider and overrule decisions made by the executive committee. In case of conflicts between member organisations, the member organisations will first attempt to settle their dispute amicably in at least two minuted

meetings. In case of disputes related to intellectual property rights the first meeting is to be held in presence of the IPR task force, if such has been established. The second meeting is always to be organised in the presence of the institutional board. In case the member organisations are unable to settle their conflict, external arbitrators will be asked to settle the conflict.

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGEMENT

PLANNING

The planning as described in the consortium agreement is a two way adjustment process, whereby every level suggests a plan and when a higher level suggests changes these are to be agreed upon with the lower level. Thus, seen form top-down, the executive committee is responsible for preparing the plan of activities and prioritising the activities to be undertaken on meta-organisational level, both concerning short and longer-term plans. When the short-term plans are different from earlier plans of activities (previous year or long-term plan), the executive committee is to negotiate and agree with each cluster on these changes and update the longer-term plan accordingly. Each cluster is responsible for planning its activities within the boundaries specified by and agreed with the executive committee. The planning of work-package activities is done by each work-package (leader and participants) within the boundaries agreed upon within the cluster sub-committee. On the other hand, there is a bottom up process described whereby the work-package activities are combined within each cluster plan and that each cluster plan is combined into the overall plan. This would suggest that planning is creating or changing the existing boundaries. This bottom-up process can be expected to be existing in the setting of meta-organisations and these consortia especially because of the use of indirect resources. The expertise of the member organisations and the willingness to share this expertise is in the hands of the member organisations. In addition, the activities planned by the member organisation (and its personnel) may influence what the organisation is able and willing to do for the meta-organisation.

This description of both top-down and bottom-up processes shows the need for making sure there is a process of limiting or focusing of activities, creating boundaries and making sure that the activities taking place within these boundaries create a meaningful whole. Whilst at the same time accepting that the member organisations will undertake the activities and that these activities thus need to be meaningful to them for them to undertake them.

ORGANISING

The executive committee is responsible for preparing the overall structuring of the network based on the work priorities set by the executive committee as well as overlap and synergies identified in the work planned by the clusters. The result of restructuring is to be negotiated and agreed upon with each cluster concerned. After this, each cluster is responsible for structuring and restructuring (who is doing what and who gets compensated for what) within the cluster work plan and budget boundaries set by the executive committee. Furthermore, although not described in detail, within the plan and budget boundaries set by the cluster sub-committee, the work-packages decide on who is doing what and with which compensation.

The executive committee is, however, also responsible for specifying the contribution of each member organisation in implementing the work-plan in order to decide on the financial contribution to the member organisation. This seems to contradict with the possibility for clusters to structure and restructure the division of financial means at least. The executive committee may, therefore, be responsible for rephrasing the organising done by the clusters, through listing the work that each member organisation has agreed on doing in all the work areas and the means each member organisation will get to do this work. This impression is strengthened by the responsibility given to the executive committee for approving any call for sub-contracting by a member organisation for performing network activities. The approving of calls for sub-contracting can mean that when the organising is done, the member organisations may request outsourcing some of the work they are responsible for to third parties.

Not only the structuring and dividing of work and the division of financial means are described in the consortium agreement, also decisions concerned with the filling of particular positions are discussed in the consortium agreement. Each cluster (sub-committee) is responsible for deciding itself on its leader, where after these leaders and one representative of a particular group of members (appointed by this particular group of members) form the executive committee. In relation to the task leaders there is a contradiction in the consortium agreement. If appointed, the task leaders may be decided upon by the cluster sub-committee or by the executive committee. In addition, the executive committee is responsible for establishment of advisory committees including the appointment of its members.

MOTIVATING

One paragraph in the consortium agreement points out that all member organisations are responsible to do all possible to be actively engaged. This can be translated such that the member organisations are not to be externally motivated but these organisations themselves need to make sure that they generate and maintain effort.

In addition, the executive committee and coordinator, when responsible for overseeing or monitoring the integration of all aspects of the consortium activities, as well as the work group and sub-work group leaders, when responsible for coordinating the cluster or group activities, and the liaison managers, when responsible for facilitating and overseeing inter-cluster efforts could be argued to be responsible for motivating. These organs are responsible for noticing possibilities for further integration and coordination, but not necessarily could or would be directly involved in the process of coordination. This would mean they would use motivation tools to make others aware of further integration and coordination possibilities. This is, however, not made explicit in the consortium agreement, as will be discussed in a little bit more detail in the section on monitoring below.

COORDINATING

Coordinating as understood in this thesis as mutual adjustment is the responsibility of the work group and sub-work groups. These groups are to see to it that the different activities within the (sub-)groups are coordinated. The coordination between the groups within a cluster is entrusted to the group-leaders coming together in the cluster committee. Clusters may, as

discussed above in relation to motivation, get motivated to coordinate with other clusters. This is, however, not made an explicit responsibility of clusters nor of their leaders.

MONITORING

Several different groups are made responsible for monitoring. First, the coordinator is made responsible to oversee the network activities, priorities and integration and the compliance to the programme, schedule and objectives. In relation to this, it is not clear if this includes taking action, making suggestions or informing other organs about this. This means that this can also be an administrative activity of handling information. Second, the executive committee is to monitor the progress of clusters according to the set plan, expected results, schedule and allocated budget. besides a responsibility for motivation, be a form of monitoring. Also in this case no clarity is given if this is mere administrational handling of information or if the information to be acted upon and in which way. Third, the cluster committee can be expected to responsible for monitoring as it is to alert the executive committee in case of delays or other problems in the execution of the work. The consortium agreement, however, does not make the cluster committees explicitly responsible for monitoring. Fourth, the liaison managers are responsible for monitoring the inter-cluster activities, as they are to facilitate and oversee these efforts. Finally, the fifth organ that has gotten an explicit responsibility for monitoring is the scientific committee. They are to review the activities undertaken by the consortium.

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADMINISTRATION

HANDLING OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

There is a lot of issues mentioned which could be seen as the handling of governance and management information. This most importantly includes preparing, gathering or sending out of documents for meetings, reporting past activities or future planned activities, and gathering, keeping or sharing of financial records. Most groups discussed in the consortium agreement have explicit responsibilities to do some or several of these activities. I will present the activities for each.

The coordinator has the formal responsibility of being the focal point for all technical and administrative content. In addition, the coordinator, as was also the case in the Friendship Case is the intermediary between the member organisations and the Commission and thus particularly responsible for the handling of all information demanded by the Commission as well as handling all information in relation to the funds granted by the Commission. The coordinator is also responsible for distributing any information received concerning the contract performance (from the Commission) to the executive committee and the member organisations involved. Furthermore, the coordinator is responsible for administering and forwarding any unilateral request from a member organisation for the termination of the contract with Commission to the Commission and the governance board. The coordinator is in addition responsible for preparing the meetings of the governing board and executive committee, including the agenda and all supporting material and documentation for decisions to be taken. In addition, the coordinator is responsible for preparing and administering the minutes of these meetings.

The administration team, then, is responsible for administration reporting including financial and payment aspects. This team also supports the coordinator in handling the information needed to prepare for the meetings with the Commission and in handling information needed for the meetings of the governing board and executive committee as well as distributing minutes and reporting outcomes of the executive committee to the governing board. Furthermore, the administrative team is responsible for support in terms of external communication and functioning as a help desk and enquiry centre, including helping work group leaders with presentations and dissemination of results.

The executive committee is also responsible for supporting the coordinator in preparing for the meetings (all documentation needed) with the Commission.

Each cluster leader, with the assistance of the administrative team is responsible for organising presentations about the cluster and dissemination of its results.

Each work group leader is responsible for preparing the work group meetings (agenda and supporting material and documentation needed for making the decisions identified), distributing of the minutes of the work group meetings as well as reporting the outcomes to the executive committee, preparing the reports for the executive committee, and transmitting any document or information concerning the work groups activities to its members and the coordinator.

The work groups are responsible for the preparation of quarterly reports on their activities, documenting any non-performance or shortcoming in performance by any of its members, preparing the minutes of their meetings.

Each member organisation participating to a particular work group is responsible for assisting the work group in fulfilling its responsibilities in terms of reporting through the follow-up and reporting of its use of funding in relation to the work group and delivering reports on progress of the work group activities it is responsible for. In addition, each member organisation is responsible for delivering its financial statements and data, as needed for the reporting to the Commission and for setting up the budget.

Another issue which arose from the analysis of monitoring, the responsibility for monitoring is not very clearly possible to be separated from the handling of monitoring information. Each of the organs responsible for monitoring may thus be responsible for gathering monitoring information.

PRACTICAL ORGANISING FOR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The practical organising is not as extensively tackled as was the handling of information for governance and management. In terms of practical organising the consortium agreement makes the coordinator responsible for chairing the meetings of the governing board (if not decided otherwise), a vice chair person will also be elected from the other representatives of the member organisations, and the executive committee (with the assistance of the administration team). The administration team is responsible for the handling of logistics as well as event management (organising the governance board and the executive committee meetings in practical terms), and assisting the coordinator during the meetings of the

governance board and the executive committee. Furthermore, each work group leader is responsible for chairing the meetings of its work group.

ARRANGING

This is not explicitly tackled in the consortium agreement, but as the coordinator is responsible for all contact with the Commission, the coordinator could therefore be seen as responsible for securing the continuation of funding from the Commission. In this sense, the coordinator can be argued to be responsible for arranging the means for organising on meta-organisational level. On group-level the consortium agreement does not give any clarity on this.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CROSS-DISCIPLINE CASE

There are three key things that arise from the analysis which I wish to further reflect upon and discuss. The first issue is wide spread responsibility for monitoring without clarity as to what type of monitoring a group needs to engage in. The second issue is the extent to which responsibilities for handling of governance and management information are contractually agreed upon. The last issue I wish to discuss is the contractually agreed bottom-up as well as top-down process of framing and planning and organising.

The activities which could be argued to be belonging to monitoring could at the same time be expected to belong to the handling of information in relation to monitoring. The difference between the management and administration could not be made explicit. This is mainly because the consortium agreement does not make explicit what the monitoring is for of for whom the monitoring takes place. The difference made in the conceptual framework was that monitoring aimed at uncovering weaknesses or errors in the execution of work. When the monitoring is mere the collecting of information on progress along the timetables and plans, this can be routinely done and thus be considered handling of information or it can be done with the aim of revealing issues to react upon and thus be considered monitoring. The analysis of the operational phase may give a more complete picture of this. This issue will therefore be further discussed at the end of the chapter.

The need for contractually laying down the responsibility for the handling of governance and management information is another interesting issue. The extent to which this is done could indicate that there is an expectation that different groups will not engage in the handling of information if not contractually agreed. If writing up plans and reports is seen as generally not very useful, thus if it is not viewed as adding value to the work at hand, while it still is needed in obtaining the financial contribution from the Commission, these terms may have been added to make sure that all parties are committed to doing their share. On the other hand, the extent can also indicate that it is a task generally known and observable. Writing reports and plans and collecting financial accounts are very concrete tasks, which is far less the case with the other tasks such as reviewing of plans, overseeing integration and so forth. With such concrete task it can be easier to see the need for the contribution by all the different groups and therefore specify the need for the contribution only in these instances.

The last issue that the analysis pointed at was the contractually agreed two-directional approach to framing, planning and organising. A clear top-down approach was described with

tasks such as reviewing of the activities undertaken, merging groups and making sure gaps are prevented whereby suggestion would go from the executive committee down to the clusters, groups or sub-groups concerned to be agreed upon and a bottom-up process whereby activities planned would be synthesised into a group plan which would be combined into a cluster plan. The frame for any one group was thus created by the ideas arising from the broader setting as well as the ideas arising from synthesising the activities planned by participants.

THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

GOVERNANCE IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

FRAMING

New member organisations as well as associate members were accepted. In contradiction with what is prescribed in the consortium agreement, the governance board does not meet to make formal decisions even though all participants of the member organisations do meet once a year.

In relation to the new member organisations, the executive committee decided on the amount of new members to be accepted and announced a call for new members. When the membership applications are received, the participants in each work group were asked to evaluate the candidates for their work group in terms of potential collaboration with these candidates and potential contributions to the work group in general. Based on the evaluations from the work group members, the work group leader made a suggestion to the executive committee concerning the preferred candidates for membership. The executive committee made the final decision. As the consortium agreement needed to be amended the member organisations did approve the decision by the executive committee. The need to change the consortium agreement was by several interviewees seen as extremely difficult as each member organisation (and several people within these member organisations) needed to sign these amendments.

Associate membership applications were not discussed with the work group participants, but only within the executive committee. They also decided on the candidates that would be accepted. This decision did not demand a change in the consortium agreement.

CONTROLLING

As mentioned in relation to framing, the governance board does not meet, which means that the decisions made by the executive committee in terms of the focus is not controlled by the other member organisations. Each work group is, however, responsible for its own direction control, which means that each work group is to see to it that the suggested activities fit within the frame of the work group.

In relation to new members, the participating member organisations in each work group were able to influence the choice of new members. The final evaluation and decision was, however, made by the executive committee. As this meant that the consortium agreement needed to be

amended, there could have been exercised direction control by the member organisation through refusing to sign the amendments, this however has not been taking place.

Performance and behaviour control is used to establish the budget and especially to divide the funds between the member organisations for the next period. A ranking system was created mainly based on the collaboration rules agreed upon in the consortium agreement, which includes, for example, presence at meetings, participation to consortium-wide tasks, as well as the quality of performing the work assigned and reporting what has been done. The control is based on the reporting done by both the member organisations themselves as well as the work group leaders (the members of the executive committee) concerning the contribution and presence of the member organisations. The coordinator is making the overall performance/behaviour evaluation and based on this suggests the budget division.

GRANTING

As has been discussed in the previous section, this case has an in built system of granting of resources. First, based on the rules that were agreed upon a performance/behaviour evaluation is made by analysing the reports of the member organisations and the work group leaders. The coordinator is does the overall performance/behaviour evaluation and based on this suggests the budget division for the next period. This suggestion is then sent to the executive committee to be decided upon. Mediating

There have not been any particular conflicts arising. One interviewee does, however, mention in relation to the granting of resources that the executive committee discusses at length what to do to prevent conflict. *"We've got to be quite careful about cutting budgets because it is quite a diplomatic balancing act to keep everyone quite happy, and to avoid personal conflict. That can totally destroy a network."* Thus as the budget and also other consortium-wide decisions are made by the executive committee, the executive committee tries to prevent conflicts over the decisions they make.

In addition to the consortium-wide decisions, the work groups seem to be handling the conflicts of interests between their participants themselves. One interviewee reflecting on the results of the consortium tells *"So even if we don't agree on each (…) topic, it is not as controversial any more as it once was. We accept the other person's point of view, opinion and we try to understand it and we try to find common ways to solve controversial issues".*

MANAGEMENT IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

PLANNING

The yearly planning is done by the work groups independently. All interviewees mention that this yearly planning process is relatively simple, something that takes about an hour. As one interviewee explains

> *"so at the beginning of the network all of this was put down in writing (…), the aims, the general projects we are going to be taking, how that work was distributed between the partners both within and between the [work groups]. Of course, each year those aims have to be modified partly because of some aims are met and some aims as it becomes clear that they are not going to be attainable. So*

each year a kind of a new or amended version of those plans has to be made. In practice so far that has really been simple because we simply have taken [laughing] the existing set of aims and simply modify them. You know, it is... so we just, so basically at our [work group] meeting we simply meet for about one hour, we all sit around the table, we have the aims up on a screen and we, you know [laughing].. all in a very open and transparent way. So it has been, it has been very straightforward really it has been very easy".

Although the above seems to indicate that planning is done on work group level, from other interviews it becomes clear that each participant does what they were planning to do, and the plan of the work group is build up from this. One of the work group leaders said

"when we meet in the [work group] meetings, we hear what each other person is doing or thinking about doing and we come up with areas where we can work together and then we each write it up for out particular action. (...) A lot of the planning is done by the individual participant, and of course we listen very carefully what else is happening in the network and being in the network it then makes it a lot easier to establish some collaborative work. So, it happens on the basis of actual opportunities rather than an administrative bureaucratic process". This indicates that the planning is done on individual level, but that on group level adjustments are made and new shared ideas are created in addition. Another interviewee especially focuses on the last saying *"our main meeting is the only forum where we all come together and we all have to discuss, we have to find new research activities, collaborative activities".*

The work group leaders often talk about all participants, one interviewee however pointed out that although all participants of the work group are (expected to be) present, it is often only the most senior participant from each member organisation who actively participate in the discussion.

The planning process of the work groups was by most interviewees seen as a bureaucratic process that needed to be done for the Commission and they mention trying to do this as quickly and efficiently as possible. Only one interviewee reflected on the planning process positively,

Although interviewees point out that most activities are planned in the work groups, some activities, the consortium-wide activities, are planned and decided upon by the executive committee. For example, conferences, seminars, training, calls for new members, additional fundraising, etc. is planned and decided upon by the executive committee.

ORGANISING

Changes were made in the work group leadership as one of the work group leaders, as one interviewee put it, was not *"coming and he was not very efficient"*. From the interviews it however does not become clear who was involved in deciding about the replacing of the work group leader, nor about how the new work group leader was chosen.

The choice of individual participants in the work groups was made by the member organisations themselves. Although this was not discussed in any detail during the interviews, it became clear that the activities that would be undertaken are based on what the participants of these member organisations have been planning to do and thus they also would suggest the people who would be responsible for these activities.

The division of the budget of the first year to the different activities was decided upon by the executive committee. As is mentioned by one of the interviewees

> *"when we knew the funding we would get from the Commission, the executive committee (...) met and then we decided how, what we should do with the money. And then we decided that we should put priority on integrating through a training programme, whereby always two member organisations are responsible for the training of an individual. Others would have preferred to fund the planned activities themselves, but there was not much money for that".*

In the following years, the coordinator prepared the budget, based the priorities set by the executive committee as well as on the performance criteria set out at the start (as has been discussed previously in the Controlling and governance steering). As one of the interviewees mentions

> *"the people who are not participating have had their budget cut, so there is a striating scale of budget cutting at 50 % to 65 % and the by 75% or 80% if people don't attend the meetings or do the report or, you know, generally fall of it".*

The coordinator would then send the budget to the executive committee for approval. As one of the interviewees points out

> *"The budget is obviously very complicated because it can be divided in so many ways (...) so the easiest way, basically the coordinator has taken the responsibility for doing this and in general we have passed that unanimously with very little discussion, because once you start to unpick it and say, in the sense that you know, if you get individual groups saying, you know 'I want 5000 more, 10000 more', you know, the discussion would never finish".*

In addition, the executive committee was also responsible for decides about the need for additional funding that should be applied for and deciding on who would apply for what kinds of extra funds for the consortium.

MOTIVATING

There are two mechanisms that influence the motivating of the member organisations and participants. The first mechanism consists of the shared responsibility that member organisations get for training of particular individuals. Interviewees mention that due to this shared responsibility, the member organisations are forced to work together. This has been seen as very positive. One interviewee mentions *"in the end I am quite impressed by the way it works, and as I said I was very cynical at the beginning"*. The second mechanism is the way in which the budget is decided upon for the member organisations. As the member

organisations get their budget based on the effort they have put into the work for the consortium during the previous year, whereby the underlying idea is that this would generate and maintain the efforts of the member organisations and their participants.

Furthermore, as one interviewee pointed out, also work group leaders and the coordinator do play an active role in motivating, besides the self-motivation that the participants also draw on. This interviewee puts it as follows

> "I mean I think that the [work group leaders] have a key role in motivating and, well, [the coordinator] has had a key role in motivating everyone. (...) The work required to set it all up has been, you know, exactly the, the benefits have been relatively low, but I think now it's becoming something that people around you are aspiring to join, and the people within the network are finding it an extremely attractive way of working."

COORDINATING

The technical coordinating of implementation plans or plans of activities will not be discussed in this section, but will be tackled as part of the next chapter on administration.

The work group meeting and the annual conference are seen as crucial for adjusting and coordinating efforts. Due to this, the presence of all participants at meetings was made one of the key elements of control and has an influence on the budget for the member organisations for the next period. As one interviewee answered on the question if the consortium expects all of the individual members to be present at the work group meetings:

> "Absolutely. It is a must, if they don't, what is the purpose, yeah? Because our main meeting is the only forum where we all come together and we all have to discuss, we have to find new research activities, collaborative activities and if you don't show up, I mean, then you do not participate to the network, yeah?".

As indicated above, the work group meetings are seen as important for coordinating the work undertaken, whereby the sharing of what each participant has done and is planning to do is discussed and shared plans are made. The annual conference is seen as especially important to unify the work across the work groups, through sharing and discussing results and plans across the work groups, for instance by having meetings in which two related work groups meet and by having individual participants attending work group meetings of other work groups.

In addition, one of the interviewees, which discussed difficulties in the network-building phase due to people not know one another, pointed at the need for face-to-face interaction

> "we had lots of problem when we wrote the application. Then we met, we had this [work group meeting] and we met and drunk a little wine and we talked and we found out that we were absolutely fabulous people and after that there is no problem (...) I mean, you have to get to know each other and of course since we talk a bit a different languages, it is simply, it is essential that you are a little bit informal also".

MONITORING

No data was seen to directly talk about monitoring.

ADMINISTRATION IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

HANDLING GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

There are several processes in which governance and management information needs to be collected, stored, compiled, communicated, etc. Processes that are commonly present in the cases are those of planning, budgeting, reporting and decision-making. In addition, in many of the cases also other processes such as membership application and training application processes are in the need for handling governance or management information.

In the interviews the handling of information was not tackled in much detail, but was often mentioned in passing when discussing other issues. The processes in which the handling of management and governance information was mentioned are the planning, budgeting and reporting processes as well as the membership and training applications processes and decision-making processes as part of the meetings of the executive committee.

The consortium broad information, such as compiling, finalising and submitting to the Commission of the overall plans and reports; preparing, finalising and submitting to the Commission of the budget based on the reporting by the participants; the maintaining, collecting and spreading of the overall financial information; the applications for membership as well as the handling of information in relation to the meetings of the executive committee are mentioned to be handled by the coordinating organisation, whereby the coordinator is often mentioned as being involved while supported in this work by different people from his organisation.

In the planning and reporting processes, the member organisations, their participants as well as group leaders are mentioned playing a central role in the handling of information in relation to their activities and the budget they have received. One interviewee, however, points out that

> *"The first reporting was pretty tough, because I mean it was not web-based and you have to send emails. We didn't know how to report, so it was very confusing. But now it is with a form, so standardised and we all know what we are supposed to do and the coordination [coordinator and a secretary], they are doing it very nicely. And for the finances, of course, with the EU it is problematic, but that you have an administrator to do so you only have to tell them to follow the deadlines".*

This indicates that tools that support the filing of information are important in these collaborations, both in terms of making clear what needs to be reported and how as well as making the handling of the information more simple and secure.

The information handling of governance and management information in relation to training is handled by an additional administrator for the training activities. This administrator takes care of amongst other things the handling the training applications, keeping track on the progress of those being trained, course and study administration, internal (with the member

organisations and their potentially interested participants) and external communication (to other organisations and potentially interested individuals) as well as preparing the meetings and decisions for the training work group.

PRACTICAL ORGANISING FOR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Interviewees have mentioned that the practical organising of the annual conference is outsourced to an organisation specialised in organising meetings, and that these meetings are always organised at the same location.

The coordinating organisation is responsible for hosting the executive committee meetings which includes the practical organising in terms of booking facilities, arranging food and drinks, etc.

The interviewees also mention that member organisations are asked to host seminars planned by the executive committee. These member organisations are then responsible for the practical organising of these seminars.

In the same way, the work group meetings are hosted by different member organisations, which then become also responsible for the practical organising.

ARRANGING

The responsibility for arranging additional (financial) means lies with the executive committee, whereby two participants were responsible for preparing and handling additional funding applications for the consortium.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ANALYSIS OF OPERATIONAL PHASE IN THE CROSS-DISCIPLINE CASE

Motivation: executive committee and group/sub-group leaders as they are to coordinate and oversee integration do motivating (they motivate others to coordinate)? This points to an important issue that coordination cannot be done externally. Is this actually more general in the framework, are there other elements which cannot be done externally? It is, however, very interesting to think about this – motivating can be done externally (maybe even more easily than internally) but coordination cannot be done externally and needs the people involved to do it. Or is there a possibility for mutual adjustment through a broker (without adjusting directly to one another? And would this then be external coordination?)

Appendix 7   CASE 3: LONG-TERM COLLABORATION CASE

The analysis of this case will be presented in similar fashion as the previous cases. The analysis divides into three different parts: (1) the division of responsibility and the related processes as described by interviewees concerning in the network-building phase, (2) the contractual or formal division of responsibilities, and (3) the division of responsibility and related processes as described by interviewees concerning the operational phase.

THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

GOVERNANCE IN THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

FRAMING

In the data on the network-building phase, framing can be found on the meta-organisational as well as on the work group level. I will first present the analysis of the meta-organisational level framing process after which the work group level will be discussed.

From the interviewees nothing can be said about the financial limitations, as very little was said about this in the interviews of this case. No clarity can thus be given on this side of the process of framing and the role it has played in or the influence it has had on the other sides of the process of framing.

The presentation of the discussion about themes or areas that the network would work upon shows that two different interpretations exist, those from the participants of the earlier network and those from one of the new members. When for the new member the initial meeting was the only face-to-face discussion about the content of the whole network, the other members were discussing several times over a period of about a year what would need doing. The new members were kept up to date through the writings by the coordinator. The old members thus have had much more possibilities to define and redefine the different themes. The new members can have been participating through reacting on new versions, but will have had less possibility to influence the view points of the other members. The meta-organisational level definition of the field of action can be seen as both self-governance and external governance by the old members.

The meta-organisational level goals to be reached were more than the general field of action. they did also use self-governance by discussing and creating a shared picture of the wished outcomes. New members in principle could also exercise external governance, but no self-governance as they did not participate in the meetings. In addition, for external governance they hardly had any tools.

The boundary of the meta-organisation in terms of member organisations has been decided upon by the coordinator. Although others within the coordinators' organisation, such as the deputy coordinator, can have participated in the choices made, we can expect due to the hierarchical relationship between the coordinator and possible others that the governance was self-governance by the coordinator. One exception was the choice on the administrative member organisation, who on the initiative of the coordinator presented itself at one of the old members' meetings. After this presentation, the old members were given the possibility to

approve the suggestion to include this member. Thus in this case it was partial external governance by the old members. The question that remains is how much space there was to disapprove the suggestion, but this does not take away that the old members did exercise external governance on the suggestion.

The setting of limitations through values, policies and principles on meta-organisational level can be expected to have been done by the old members mainly. As these members were meeting and discussing regularly during the three years of the earlier network, they were able to create shared values. The new members were unable to influence the setting of values during the network-building phase. The policies and principles set in the consortium agreement were governed by all member organisations. Of those that actually participate in the collaboration, however, very few participated in the governing of the choices made. Only the participants from the administrative member organisation and coordinating member organisation participated actively to the choices on the content of the consortium agreement.

The definition of the field of action and the goals of each area were developed by those responsible for the area. The developed definitions were governed externally by the old members mainly as the definitions were discussed in detail during their meetings. The new members could exercise external governance as well, but were only given the possibility to comment on the drafts through email. This limitation together with being a new member, may have limited them in actively exercising external governance. In addition, the structure chosen, in which one member organisation is leading a particular area without clearly defining the group (see next) that would take part in the work for a particular area creates less commitment and therefore the external governance by the new members is naturally low.

On group level we can see that rather much at the end of the network-building phase the definition of members of the group was made. This choice was not governed. All those that had an interest were able to become a member of any of the groups defined.

Policies and procedures on group level have been left to be developed and decided upon by the network areas themselves or by the chair of the network area board. These seem not to have been developed much at all during the network-building phase.

CONTROLLING

Direction control on meta-organisational level and group level was exercised by the old members. They discussed in detail the different ideas and plans as they developed. The new members also had the chance to control the direction, but with very much less tools i.e. only via email on the drafts that they got.

Performance control may have been exercised during the network-building phase. The old members could through their discussions in their meetings take responsibility for performance control, while new members could do so while commenting on drafts delivered (or not delivered). In the interviews, however, there are no hints as to who has actually exercised performance control.

Behavioural control is more difficult to have been exercised as there seems not to have been made explicit deals on how the member organisations or the participants would need to act.

GRANTING

The clearest point of granting is that of member organisations signing the consortium agreement and technical annex of the contract with the Commission. With such signature a member organisation grants particular resources to the consortium.

The process of granting is otherwise in the network-building phase not very explicit, at least the interviews do not give a picture about this process. In the interviews we notice that the old members through discussion gave advice on the direction in which areas could develop further. This can be read as the granting of further planning. This form of granting, however, is very easy when the resources used for this planning are those of your own. The member organisations, explicitly or implicitly, allowed the use of its resources for the further development of plans.

Thus, during the network-building phase, the actual granting was done by member organisations, although these may have not been making any explicit decisions concerning the granting.

MEDIATING

The part of the interviews tackling the network-building phase did not give insight into conflicts or other situations that demanded mediation.

MANAGEMENT IN THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

PLANNING

The initial planning on meta-organisational level was done by the invited member organisations in their shared meeting. Further planning was mainly done by the members of the earlier network.

Those responsible for a particular network area were responsible for planning activities within their area. The drafts of the plans made were then commented on by old members in the meetings and by new members via email. Based on the comments that were given, further planning was done by those responsible.

ORGANISING

The means in terms of human resources on meta-organisational level for coordination between the member organisations were organised by those that accepted to become a member organisation. In many cases the participants that were getting involved were the people that lead the organisation or led the most relevant unit in relation to the goals of the network.

The means needed on meta-organisational level for coordination within the network, such as selecting network area leaders, seems to have been led by the coordinating member organisation. The other member organisations have participated in this organising through deciding on the types of activities they would be willing to lead, i.e. promising to make resources available when this would be wished. In addition, the old member organisations also

participated in the decision-making on the division of responsibilities between the member organisations.

The organising of means for administration in terms of the needed human resources was left to the administrative member organisation, which hired a person to take care of the administration for the network and to the coordinating member organisation, which continued with the person already hired for the previous network.

The organising of means for administration in terms of tools and procedures was also left to the administrative member organisation, but as this was done after the signing of the contract, it will be discussed in relation to the operational phase.

The organising of means in the network-building phase may also include the application for funding and the negotiations with the Commission. The application for funding was organised by all member organisations as each member organisation made some resources available to contribute to the application. For the negotiations with the Commission the coordinating and the administrative member organisations contributed.

The organising in terms of the participants for each network area was left to each member organisation. Each member organisation could choose the network area they wished to contribute to. This led to rather uneven distribution, whereby some network areas had little and some network areas many participants.

As already pointed out in the reconstruction, the financial organising seems to have been done during the network-building phase. Who participated in and the way in which this process went, stays, however, unclear.

MOTIVATING

Although motivating was not explicitly discussed during the interviews, motivating can be seen in several ways. On the one hand, there existed an external motivator, the Commission who with the interaction and promise of funding drove the building of the earlier network as well as this consortium.

On the other hand, the interviews also give a strong impression that motivation comes forth from self-motivation and the interests each of the member organisations or their participants had in the result of the network. The earlier attempts at working on a similar goal are a clear sign of this..

COORDINATING

The coordination of who is doing what was mainly in the hands of the participants of the earlier network. During their meetings different versions of the proposal were discussed in detail and thus coordination could take place between the different network areas these participants were responsible for.

The coordination between the areas for which old and new members were responsible was only possible through the coordinating organisation, which therefor can be expected to have played a role. This seems to have occurred especially at the end of the development of the

application, when the proposal was pulled together (see for details on this the section on handling of information in 11.1.4). The deputy coordinator is then taking responsibility for pointing out the need for coordination and bringing together those network areas that need to coordinate their actions. The coordination itself, however, has been always between those responsible for particular areas that needed coordination due to overlap in planned activities.

MONITORING

The participants of the coordinating member organisation and of the administrative member organisation seem to have been responsible for monitoring in terms of checking that all information needed for the proposal and application was included in the final version.

The other member organisations were mainly involved in controlling the correctness of the information included in the proposal and application about their own organisation and about the area they were responsible for.

ADMINISTRATION IN THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

HANDLING GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

The handling of governance and management information in the network-building phase was needed especially in relation to the selection and accepting of members, the preparation of meetings and the preparation of the proposal and application.

During the network-building phase the deputy coordinator was mainly responsible for the handling of information about the content side of the proposal. This included the collecting of the different content related contributions from the different participants and compiling these into one proposal and handling the requests for changes and implementing these changes into the final proposal.

The participants of the administrative member organisation especially handled the information needed for the application, such as the information about the member organisations, their participants, and the financial contribution requested. This member organisation was also responsible for collecting all the needed documents and finally submitting the application to the Commission. In addition to the application, this organisation was also responsible for the coordination of the development of the consortium agreement.

PRACTICAL ORGANISING FOR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The practical organising for governance and management was not very extensive during the network-building phase as most was done by the member organisations separately. When participants of several member organisations participated in a collective governance or management process, most of the communication took place via email or via meetings of the previous network. This means that also in this case the practical organising was not extensive. The coordinating member organisation can be expected to have been the one taking care of the practical organising. The only, more extensive, organising was the one meeting with all members. About the practical organising of this meeting, however, nothing specific is known but also this meeting can be expected to be taken care of by the coordinating member organisation.

ARRANGING

The inviting of the new member organisations was taken care of by the coordinating member organisation. The coordinator and deputy coordinator were taking care of this.

In order to gain funding, the coordinating and administrative member organisations were taking care of the finalising of the application to the Commission.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ANALYSIS OF NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE IN THE LONG-TERM COLLABORATION CASE

One of the issues that would need some further attention is that those who actively participate in the consortium may have never seen the consortium agreement. The fact that the consortium agreement was negotiated between the legal departments of the member organisations does not help the participants to create a shared understanding of how they will relate to one another. This means that the participants will be able to create policies, procedures and practices that differ from those agreed upon. The representatives of the coordinating and administrative member organisation therefore are at risk needing to 'police'. As much of the work actually is taking place in meetings which are organised and orchestrated by these member organisations, this even further enhances that other member organisations may become less active.

The representatives of those organisations that participated in the earlier network have taken responsibility for much of the governance and management on both meta-organisational and group-level in terms of content. The representatives of the coordinating organisation have, in addition to these responsibilities, also taken responsibility for defining of the boundaries such as the members to be invited to participate and the policies, procedures and practices, and took responsibility for most administration.

DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITIES

FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY TO UNDERTAKE GOVERNANCE

FRAMING

Based on the definition and description of the tasks given in the consortium agreement to the different functions, one can see that elements of framing are a responsibility of (1) member organisations (2) network governing board (3) network coordination committee and (4) network area boards.

The definition of the field of action and the overall aim were set in the network-building phase. Revisions of the definition or aims are to be prepared by the network coordination committee and agreed upon by the network governing board. Also the boundaries (membership and procedures, policies and practices) are to be prepared by the network coordination committee and agreed upon by the network governing board. The financial boundaries are seen as given by the Commission, as only the financial contribution by the Commission is considered for distribution. Thus there is no discussion or decision needed to consider the financial boundaries through the contribution of the member organisations in financial terms.

When a change is suggested that would need a change in the consortium agreement, such as a change in membership, this will be prepared by the network coordination committee and suggested by the network governing board to the member organisations. Each member organisation will then need to resign the consortium agreement before the change is deemed valid.

The definition of the action field and overall aims of the network areas were also set in the network-building phase. Revisions of the definition or aims are to be suggested by the network area board to the network coordination committee, which decides on the version that is to be approved by the network governing board.

The financial boundaries for the network areas is to be prepared by the coordinator (or most probably meant here coordinating member organisation) taking the requests of the member organisations into account. The network governing board is responsible for deciding on the financial boundaries for the network areas and about any changes concerning these.

The choice upon members on network area level was not specified, and as was noticed in the network-building phase, each member organisation has the choice to participate in the network areas they are interested in. The work procedures of the network area are to be decided upon by the network area.

CONTROLLING

The implementation plans and budgets prepared by the network areas are decided upon by the network coordination committee, and thereafter approved by the network governing board. This means that the main responsibility for overall direction control, however, lies at the network coordination committee. In case a change of the longer-term plan is suggested, such as a change in work share or budget, this suggestion will be prepared by the network coordination committee and will be decided upon by the network governing board. The network governing board is thus responsible for direction control when a change is suggested that influences the participation of or financial contribution to the member organisations.

The network governing board is furthermore to consider the activity reports and approve the accounts for the past (financial) year. It thereby thus is given responsibility for performance control.

In addition, the network coordinating committee and network governing board will be alerted by the coordinator in case a member organisation is not delivering or not acting as obliged by the contract with the Commission or the consortium agreement. This means that the coordinator is monitoring the performance and behaviour of the member organisations, while the network coordinating committee as well as the network governing board is responsible for controlling the performance and behaviour.

Finally, each member organisation is given the responsibility to undertake "all reasonable endeavours to perform and fulfil, promptly, actively and on time all of its obligations". This indicates that each member organisation should undertake performance control in relation to its obligations as otherwise the member organisation would not know if and when the member organisation needs to undertake action.

GRANTING

In case action is deemed necessary based on the results of the controlling of performance or behaviour, the network coordinating committee is to make a proposal to the member organisations (all but the defaulting member organisation) on actions to be taken. Note that the network governing board is not given any role in this matter as the member organisations are given the proposal directly.

There is not specified who is to propose or decide upon action in case action is deemed necessary based on direction control. This, however, can be expected to be done by those that are responsible for undertaking the direction control.

MEDIATING

In two places the consortium agreement discusses conflicts or disagreements. First, upon the request of a member organisation, the network governing board is to reconsider and may overrule any decision made by the network coordination committee. Thus if a member organisation disagrees with a decision made by the network coordination committee, the network governing board will be 'mediating' by reconsidering the decision made.

Second, the consortium agreement does not include any additional or more precise procedure for handling of conflicts or disputes internally, but does define that when a dispute is not able to be handled amicably internally it is to be settled through arbitration by external arbitrators.

FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY TO UNDERTAKE MANAGEMENT

PLANNING

In the consortium agreements, the responsibilities in relation to planning are not always clear, because contradicting clauses are included in the consortium agreement. The consortium agreement includes five different sections that deal with planning.

In the first section, which describes the whole process for the development of the annual plan of activities, the coordinator and the network coordination committee are made responsible "for the development, extrapolation and harmonisation of the annual plan of activities in line with the joint programme of activities" and "have to propose to the network governing board any changes". Although, it does not become clear, it seems that the consortium agreement here refers to changes to the joint programme of activities, the long-term plan, and the related distribution of funds. As after this, the same section describes the process of creating the annual plan of activities. Here is described that each network area is responsible for designing a plan of their activities. The network coordination committee is responsible for direction control, granting as well as coordination. An overall plan of activities is then created by the network coordination committee (planning on meta-organisational level) based on the separate plans and the changes deemed necessary as a result of direction control and coordination. This overall plan is then given to the network areas for feedback. This feedback is then incorporated into the overall plan if deemed necessary. The network governing board then is responsible for direction control and granting.

In the second section, describing the responsibilities of the network governing board, the governing board is responsible for both preparing and approving the plan of activities. Based on the first section, the governing board can be expected, however, to be only responsible for approving, and not preparing the plan of activities.

In the third section, describing the responsibilities of the network coordination committee, this committee is to decide on the plan of activities (direction control). In this section there is no mentioning of the responsibility for planning on meta-organisational level.

In the fourth section, in which the responsibilities of the network areas are described, the network areas are responsible for scheduling the work, within the boundaries set by the plan of activities. This means that this contradicts with section one as no specific responsibility is given for designing the plan of activities for the network area.

In the fifth section, describing the responsibilities of the coordinating group, it is mentioned that *"[t]he coordinating group is in charge of supporting and advising the coordinator in (...) proposing new strategies of the 'Joint Programme of Activities'"*. This Joint Programme of Activities is the five-year activity plan which is included into the contract with the Commission. It stays, however, unclear to whom the coordinator is to propose these new strategies, though from the first section it can be interpreted that thus is given directly to the network governing board without input from the network coordination committee.

Thus responsibilities for planning, both the annual and longer-term planning, are not defined in unambiguous manner. It will thus be interesting to see how these responsibilities are divided in the operational phase.

Organising

The structuring and restructuring of work into network areas is the responsibility of network governing board. The structuring and restructuring of the network areas is the responsibility of the network area boards.

Developing suggestions for changing the share of the work for which particular member organisations are responsible and for which it receives a share of the funding from the Commission, is the responsibility of the network coordination committee as well as the network governing board.

In relation to the responsibilities for organising in terms of allocating financial means also some unclarities can be found in the consortium agreement. In the overall description of the planning, the budget is to be allocated based on the plan of activities. It is here not specified by whom it is to be allocated. In the section describing the responsibilities of the network coordination committee, the network coordination committee is responsible for proposing budget transfers to the governance board. In the section describing the responsibility of the coordinator, however, the coordinator is responsible for all budget related matters including preparing of the budget, while taking the requests from member organisations into consideration.

One possible way of reading this division of responsibilities is that the coordinator prepares a budget based on the share of network funding as agreed upon in the contract with the

Commission. The network coordination committee than, based on the activity plan prepared, will suggest changes in this budget suggestion. The budget as well as the changes suggested may then be sent to be decided upon by the network governing board.

Another issue that belongs to the organising element of management is the responsibilities for deciding about the filling of particular positions. In this case the only positions to be filled are those of the network area boards including the chairs of these boards (who then form the network coordination committee). The network area boards are filled with a representative of each member organisation that is to perform tasks in a particular network area. These representatives will be able to choose amongst themselves who is to become the chair of the network area board. The network areas defined already at the time of signing the contract had a chair assigned already from the start.

Finally, the formal responsibility for making sure that the financial means promised by the Commission will be available to the consortium is given to coordinator.

MOTIVATING

As the process of motivating was seen as a communicative act, that is as bringing about awareness of the framework, structure, possible rewards and punishments into the work to be executed, this process is not easily described as it is so multifaceted and intertwined with the other processes. In the consortium agreement, however, some hints towards these processes can be found.

The planning process, for example, has a communication loop that could be seen as a clear communicative act to create awareness of the whole plan and motivate possible changes in the network areas plans that would be needed for a well-coordinated whole of activities. The communication loop I refer to is the request by the network coordination committee for feedback on the meta-organisational level activity plan by the network areas.

The responsibility given to the network area board chairs in terms of coordination (see next sub-section), can be best interpreted as a responsibility for motivating. As coordination is the process of mutual adjustment, the network area board chairs having this responsibility are thus to make this possible. Making this possible will at the minimum include motivating, making those that need to coordinate understand this need, but may also include other elements such as the administrative process of practical organising (i.e. bringing together those that need to coordinate their actions).

In the description of other processes and responsibilities, however, the motivating process is often lacking, even though one might expect this to be integral to some processes. When, for example, the network governing board makes a decision, it is not prescribed what needs to be done with the result except that the meeting minutes need to be send to those that were present for approval. One, however, can expect that also other participants are informed about the assessment of an issue tackled and the final decision, centrally or via the representative of their member organisation or the network area they participate in, this however is not described or prescribed in any way.

COORDINATING

In the consortium agreement 'coordination' is mentioned in connection to the network coordination committee, which is responsible for coordination of the consortium, and the network area board chairs, which are to coordinate the network area activities. Furthermore, in the process of planning the network coordination committee has a clear coordinating responsibility in that they are to *"check them [the network area plans] for possibilities for inter-area interactions, and identify any cross-area topics".*

As coordination was seen as mutual adjustment of operational and management work, the responsibility given to the network area board chairs can be seen more as motivating than as coordinating, as the coordinating can only take place between those that actually undertake the operational or managerial work. Thus the network area board chairs may show the need and create the possibility for mutual adjustment between those that need to coordinate. The consortium agreement does however not prescribe how the coordination of operational work is done. It is up to the network area itself to decide on its own work arrangements.

MONITORING

Monitoring is only explicitly mentioned as a responsibility of the network coordination committee, which is *"to ensure that all work meets functional requirements".*

FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY TO UNDERTAKE ADMINISTRATION

HANDLING OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

The coordinator is the intermediary between the member organisations and the Commission and thus particularly responsible for the handling of all information demanded by the Commission, handling all information in relation to the funds granted by the Commission, distributing any information received concerning the contract performance (from the Commission) to the member organisations concerned and administering and forwarding any unilateral request from a member organisation for the termination of the contract with Commission to the Commission and the network governing board.

The coordinator is also responsible for preparing the meetings of the network governing board and network coordination committee, including the agenda and all supporting material and documentation for decisions to be taken. Also additional points to the agenda, suggested by the member organisations, are handled by the coordinator. The coordinator is also responsible for handling amendments to the minutes of the meetings and redistributing the amended minutes.

The administration team is responsible for taking and distributing the minutes of the governing board and the executive committee.

Finally, each member organisation is responsible for handling its information and documents needed by the consortium and transfer all information and documents needed in relation to the Commission to the coordinator.

The coordinator is responsible for fixing the place of the governance board and the executive committee meetings as well as chairing the meetings. No other responsibilities are made explicit in relation to practical organising.

ARRANGING

In the Long-Term Collaboration Case formal responsibilities for arranging is not set.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE LONG-TERM COLLABORATION CASE

The consortium agreement of the Long-Term Collaboration Case describes the responsibilities of several organs in detail. The consortium agreement is not always clear as to which responsibilities are given to whom, especially in relation to planning and organising the text is ambiguous. Furthermore, the consortium agreement at large focused on organs at the meta-organisational level, including the network governance board, the network coordination committee and the coordinator. The group level, the network areas and their board and chair was described very minimally. The analysis thus became more focused on the meta-organisational level, though several elements concerning the group level were taken care of by those organs on meta-organisational level.

The analysis of the consortium agreement shows that particular elements of governance, management and administration were possible to analyse in more detail and in relation to more levels than others. The results of the analysis are summarised in the table below.

	Meta-organisational level	Group-level
Governance		
Framing	Network coordination committee (prep) Network governing board (decision) Member organisations (decision)	Network coordination committee (prep) Network governing board (decision)
Controlling	Network governing board (final, direction control) Network coordination committee (active direction control) Coordinator (active performance and behaviour control)	Member organisations
Granting	Network coordination committee (prep) Member organisations (decision)	-
Mediating	Network governing board IPR council	-
Management		
Planning	Network coordination committee (annual plan) Coordinator (long-term plan)	Network area board chair

Organising	Network governing board (structure, financial means decision) Coordinator (financial means prep)	Network area board (structure)
Motivating	-	Network coordination committee
Coordinating	Network coordination committee	-
Monitoring	Network coordination committee	Network coordination committee
Administration		
Handling gov&man info	Coordinator (in relation to the Commission, in relation to the meetings of different groups) Project team (taking minutes) Member organisations (in relation to their contribution)	Coordinator (concerning performance)
Practical organising	Coordinator	-
Arranging	-	-

The division of the responsibilities on meta-organisational level seem to be such that the network governing board is responsible for most governance responsibilities, the network coordination committee for most management responsibilities and the coordinator for most administration responsibilities.

One issue that strikes as odd is that the coordinator not only prepares the decisions and chairs the meetings of the network co-ordination committee and the network governing board, but is also accountable to the network co-ordination committee. The question is how one can be accountable while at the same time being the one who prepares and chairs the meeting. As coordinator may refer to the coordinating member organisation, the direct conflict may be less, as another person may report and respond to questions, than the chair.

When looking at the positions that the interviewees have, however, we see an interesting situation as most interviewees hold multiple positions. Six interviewees held the following positions:

1. Participant of the member organisation
2. Representative of the member organisation in the governance group
3. Participant of the governance group
4. Participant of, at least, one network area
5. Representative of a network area in the network coordination committee
6. Member of the network coordination committee

   In addition, by outsiders these interviewees are furthermore seen as

7. Representative of the consortium

One of the interviewees held in addition to the positions above also the following position:

Member of the project office

One interviewee was 'only' member of the project office, but due to the placement of this member at the coordinating member organisation, this interviewee can be seen as holding additional positions, for instance as participant and representative of this member organisation.

The above presented double positions show how governance and management on both meta-organisational and group-level are actually the responsibility of the same individuals. This will be discussed in more detail in section 11.4.

The following section will present how these interviewees describe who is involved in particular processes as well as the analysis in terms of responsibilities for governance, management and administration.

THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

GOVERNANCE IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

FRAMING

In the process of adding member organisations different functions were involved. The framing itself was done at the network governing board meeting, as all membership applications were presented and no pre-selection seems to have been made before the meeting. It stays unclear, if the suggestion for creating an associate membership was made during the meeting, or if this was suggested by those preparing the network governing board meetings. If, for example, the suggestion came from those preparing the meetings, then they would have taken responsibility for framing. The network governing board meeting decision was one step in the framing process, after this the suggestion needed to be confirmed by each member organisation separately.

The process of creating and agreeing on a policy on authorship seems to have been a rather long process. The initial framing was done by the network area chair responsible by writing the suggestion. After this, the framing continued by two rounds of comments by member organisations and two renewed drafts. The member organisations thus participated in the framing through commenting. The one drafting the renewed drafts, the coordinating or administrative member organisation, also put a hand to the framing as the way in which it was redrafted is an issue of framing. After enough support for the third version, the coordinator decided on the final version.

In the case of a change of aims or goals to be reached on the group level, the network area board chair, together with at least some of the participants, took the responsibility for redrafting some of the goals to be reached. This was, at least initially, approved by the deputy coordinator. The network governing board has thereafter, actively or passively, accepted these changes. Also new aims or goals on both meta-organisational as well as group level have been considered. The suggestion for a new activity area was prepared by a representative of a member organisation, and then discussed and decided upon by the network governing board.

CONTROLLING

The processes of developing activity plans, changing existing plans and reporting what has been done all include an element of control.

The development of the yearly activity plans and changes to the existing plans were controlled for direction. It was especially the deputy coordinator that exercised direction control by putting the developed plans alongside the longer-term plan that existed and requesting a reaction by the network area board chair on it. In addition, the network coordination committee and the network governing board were given the possibility to exercise direction control as they were to discuss and approve the plans made.

In the process of reporting of activities the deputy coordinator also took the responsibility for controlling performance. Although both the network coordination committee and the network governing board discuss the progress of the network areas, it is unclear if they take responsibility for controlling the performance along the earlier plans made.

It seems that until the deputy coordinator identifies problems which he decides to report to the network coordination committee or network governing board, the responsibility for active controlling is left to the deputy coordinator. The plans and reports are however presented to the network coordination committee and network governing board and they do also formally decide to accept the plans and reports.

In addition, when the network governing board requests particular changes in a plan, the deputy coordinator is the one to control that this is implemented accordingly.

GRANTING

It seems that the deputy coordinator is to identify the need for action based on the controlling and thus needs to decide when a problem or issue is to be tackled and decided upon. This means that if an issue feels under control, it is not brought to be specifically discussed in the network coordination committee or network governing board but handled between the deputy coordinator and the network areas board chairs. The deputy coordinator thus seems to initially grant the network area board chairs the 'right' to present a particular plan to the network coordination committee and the network governing board. The granting of this right is naturally limited, as all plans will be presented, the deputy coordinator may however raise its concerns with a particular plan.

The network coordination committee and network governing board then, based on the presentation by the network area board chair and their discussions, grant the continuation, grant the right to change and grant the right to end a particular network area or requests particular changes to the plan.

MEDIATING

In the process that resulted in the development of a policy on authorship, the coordinating member organisation has played a mediating role.

PLANNING

The network area board chairs are to prepare a plan and based on the suggestions by the deputy coordinator, the network coordination committee, and the network governing board as well as the suggestions by the network area participants, redraft and finalise the planning of activities for their network area.

The planning of activities on meta-organisational level is the combination of all separate plans of the activities by the network areas. New areas are, however, drafted by member organisations.

ORGANISING

The organising that took place during the operational phase is the organising needed in relation to new network areas. This includes the organising of participants and the financial contribution of the consortium (or actually the Commission) to these new network areas. As was done in the network-building phase, the representative of a member organisation suggesting a particular network area became the network area board chair and those member organisations that wished to participate could do so by signing up. Changes to the budget shares among the member organisations were to be requested by the member organisations after which coordinating and administrative member organisations would create a suggestion which would be agreed upon by the network governing board (direction control).

The organising that needed to be done due to the acceptance of new member organisations was very minimal, as the new members were not given any budget. These member organisations themselves were thus responsible for organising. They also could themselves choose the network areas they wished to participate in.

MOTIVATING

The main goals of the network are to learn from one another and to harmonise processes, procedures and practices. This last aim results in the need for member organisations to agree to and put into place processes, procedures and practices locally. In this process, the member organisations will need to draw on self-motivation that is based on the reaching of particular goals and/or influencing the way in which these goals are reached. In addition, however, the network area leaders seem to take the responsibility of motivating through assisting the different participants in the sharing of different stand points and evaluating the consequences of these in relation to the reaching of the shared goals.

In addition, the deputy coordinator seems to take responsibility in generating and maintaining of effort in relation to the network area board chairs. This picture is most clearly arising in the interview with the person who took over the role as network area board chair from her former boss. She describes how the deputy coordinator directly came over to discuss face-to-face the situation and the way forward with the network area.

The meetings of the network areas seem important for adjusting and coordinating activities. As becomes clear from the quotes in section 11.3.1.3, the meetings are used to share view points and work on finding shared solutions. The role of the network area board chairs seem to be to facilitate this process by bringing issues on the agenda.

The coordinating across network areas seems to be initiated mainly by the deputy coordinator when he identifies areas of overlap when bringing the separate network area plans into one document. He then initiates a discussion with the network area board chairs concerned to find a solution.

The network coordination committee meetings and the network governance board meeting also help in coordination of the activities as each network area board chair presents past, current or future activities of their network area. In these meetings, if not earlier identified by the deputy coordinator, overlap in activities may be identified and dealt with.

Monitoring

From the descriptions of the interviewees it does not become clear if there is monitoring taking place and if it is taking place, how and by whom.

Administration in the operational phase

Handling governance and management information

One of the most heavy information loaded processes includes the handling of information that needed to be submitted to the Commission (financial and content planning and reporting) and the handling of information in relation to the consortium broad meetings. The administrative member organisation was responsible for both these processes and developed a software tool to aid the handling of the information.

The deputy coordinator was responsible for the handling of the content side of the information gathered. This means, for example, that the editing of the content of the plans and reports needed to create one consortium plan and report was done by the deputy coordinator.

The network area board chairs as well as others such as financial administrators of the member organisations were to deliver the information to the administrative member organisation and thus needed to handle the information they needed to deliver.

Practical organising for governance and management

The practical organising for arranging the different consortium meetings, including the yearly meeting at which the network governing board and network areas were meeting, and meeting the network coordination committee was done by the representative of the administrative member organisation. This includes everything from booking of the venue, arranging the food and beverages, and arranging a social programme, to arranging that all tools needed during the meetings are available.

ARRANGING

The hiring of personnel needed to undertake work for the consortium was left to the member organisations. Each member organisation thus would choose if additional personnel would need to be hired and would undertake the needed steps to make sure the needed personnel would be available.

Also most of the material means would be acquired by the member organisations themselves. The material means acquired centrally in these consortia are limited and often of temporary nature. In order, for example, for the members to meet a temporary facility including the necessary tools would be acquired. This, however, could also be seen and was discussed as part of practical organising. In these consortia, the practical organising in order to support the governance and management processes thus overlaps with the defined means that would need arranging.

The only central means for organising which is not temporary in the same way is the infrastructure for communication and information exchange. In this case, the administrative member organisation was responsible for the development as well as maintenance of this infrastructure and thus for the arranging of these means.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ANALYSIS OF OPERATIONAL PHASE IN THE LONG-TERM COLLABORATION CASE

From the operational phase a few issues became afore that would need tackling. First, in the operational phase the extensive need for handling of information seemed to be rather important in two ways. It on the one hand gives the picture that it is very crucial to recruit administrative assistance capable of taking care of the handling of information. On the other hand the software tool developed and taken into use can also be seen as crucial as this made the handling of information much lighter in general. Second, in this case the participants in all different functions were the member organisations and not specific individuals. These three issues will be discussed in a bit more detail below.

The extensive need for handling of information in collaborations, especially those that need to follow the demands of the Commission, creates an important problematic situation in inter-organisational collaborations. The expertise and time needed to effectively handle information in collaborations is rather high. This responsibility for handling of information however easily becomes the responsibility of those initiating the collaboration. They, however, do not always have the interest nor wish to spend their time on the handling of information. This means that careful consideration as to who is taking care of these tasks may thus be crucial in the development of inter-organisational collaborations.

The tools taken into use in this case to aid the handling of information is a very interesting aspect. The rather strong statements on the tools as well as the specialist that took care of the handling of information indicate that this makes a big difference in the collaboration. This element therefore is seen as an important element in the analysis across cases.

The network area boards, the network coordination committee and the network governing board all consisted of representatives of the member organisations. The tasks and responsibilities were thus defined as belonging to the member organisations and not to particular individual participants. This is most clearly to be seen in the situation whereby the

representative of the member organisation chairing a network area board was replaced. The new representative, even though not at all familiar with the consortium or with the work done, did become the new chair of the network area board. As this representative had a different view than did the previous, the approach and some of the goals were changed to fit the new representative. This thus does not much support the continuity of network area. On the other hand, when another representative active in the network area would have taken over this may have been the result as well, especially as the network area board chair is plays a very central role in the development of the network area plan.

An overview of the division of responsibilities for governance, management and administration in the operational phase can be found in the table below.

	Meta-organisational level	Group-level
Governance		
Framing	Network governing board Member organisations	Network area board chair
Controlling	Deputy coordinator Network governing board	Deputy coordinator Network coordination committee
Granting	Network governing board	Deputy coordinator Network governing board
Mediating	Coordinating member organisation	
Management		
Planning	Member organisations (new areas)	Network area board chair
Organising	Coordinating and administrative member organisations	Member organisation
Motivating	-	Member organisation (self-motivation) Network area board chair
Coordinating	Deputy coordinator Network area board chairs	Network area participants (in their meetings) Network area board chair
Monitoring	-	-
Administration		
Handling gov&man info	Administrative member organisation Deputy coordinator	Member organisation
Practical organising	Administrative member organisation	-
Arranging	Administrative member organisation	Member organisation

The responsibilities of the (representatives of) member organisations have become very clear. Besides the individual responsibility for the governance, management and administration of a particular network area, the (representatives of) member organisations are having a collective responsibility in the management and governance of the network.

The deputy coordinator has taken responsibility for very many governance and management elements on both levels.

The responsibilities of the administrative member organisation are limited to processes of administration. Interviewees, however, have reported the representative of the administrative member organisation to be very central and powerful. This indicates that the visible work done by the administrative member organisation, which includes a lot of communication with the members, gives participants the feeling that the representative has power. The coordinating member organisation, however, is taking decisions concerning the content which is then implemented by the administrative member organisation. This, however, is done without it becoming visible to the member organisations.

The administrative member organisation, however, in the way it has taken care of the administration, does keep many processes within the consortium rolling such that the administrative processes do not interfere but support the management and governance processes. This is understandably seen as a great asset for this consortium.

REFLECTIONS AND REMARKS ON THE LONG-TERM COLLABORATION CASE

The double positions of individuals involved, is an interesting issue. The network area board chairs which are responsible for especially the management of the network areas are collectively responsible for the meta-organisational level management. They are, however, with only a few more representatives also responsible for the governance.

When comparing the analysis of the consortium agreement and the operational phase, we see that many of the responsibilities which were given to the coordinator, especially for administration, have shifted to the administrative member organisation. This while the responsibilities the deputy coordinator has taken lean far more towards governance and management than what was prescribed in the consortium agreement for coordinator.

The overall issues important in this case are:

1. The multiple positions held by individuals create a large overlap between the different functions defined in the consortium agreement. This makes it difficult to make a clear difference between the network governing board and the network coordination committee.

2. The administration processes, especially the handling of information, seem to be so extensive that it demands specialist attention as well as benefits from the use of information and communication technological tools. At least in this case both have been seen as very positive.

Appendix 8   CASE 4: SOCIAL NETWORK CASE

The analysis of this case will be presented in similar fashion as the previous cases. The analysis divides into three different parts: (1) the division of responsibility and the related processes as described by interviewees concerning in the network-building phase, (2) the contractual or formal division of responsibilities, and (3) the division of responsibility and related processes as described by interviewees concerning the operational phase.

THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

GOVERNANCE IN THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

FRAMING

The initiator invited a small group of people he knew well to start preparing an application to be funded as a Network of Excellence. This small group of invited participants participated in the selection of additional members to be invited to join the consortium. One of the interviewees recalls: *"We just mailed then, we just emailed each other and gave our opinions, and there was general agreement. It wasn't necessary for anybody to veto or anything like that, you know, it was a collegial discussion and in the end we reached agreements"*. The choice of member organisations seems to be linked to the mission and vision that they had for the consortium. This becomes most clear in the statement of one interviewee who mentions that the selection of members was based on the area of work of the individuals:

> *"If, for example, we had a lot of people in one area and very few in another, then we might have said, well let's not have this person who works in a highly populated area, let's instead try and find somebody who works on [another area] which may not have been properly covered"*. Another interviewee recalled the same a bit differently as he recalls the following *"Only one general decision was the size of the network. So there was some point information from [the coordinator] that we should include more members in the network. So then we send him feedback for new possible members. Then later there was also a discussion that maybe it was getting too big, maybe it should get a bit smaller, and we discussed how we could make it smaller without people getting annoyed. These sort of more key decisions were made by [the coordinator] in the end, but there was a lot of input from (...) everybody in case of these more general issues"*.

The way in which the mission and vision of the consortium started to form and was agreed upon has not been reflected upon by the interviewees. As indicated above in the selection of members, there seems to have been some kind of shared mission and vision idea. When asked about this, interviewees however do not reflect on this at all, which indicates that the mission and vision was taken for granted more than explicitly developed.

The consortium agreement was written by the coordinator when it was clear that the consortium would get funding by the Commission. The terms of the consortium agreement seem not to have been discussed. Different interviewees commented, for example, *"It is a document signed by the legal advisors and that is it"*, *"We pay no attention to it"*, and *"I don't think any of us has had a look at the consortium agreement"*.

CONTROLLING

No data were included which directly talked about controlling.

GRANTING OF RESOURCES

The interviews do not cover the granting of resources during the building stage to a great extent. From the interviews in all cases it however becomes clear that the person responsible for writing and editing the whole proposal (the coordinator or the administrator in close collaboration with the coordinator) did steer the efforts to get the application together.

MEDIATING

In the interviews some conflicts of interest have been discussed, but the way in which these conflicts were handled often stays at a too general level to give any clear picture.

MANAGEMENT IN THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

PLANNING

Each invited member organisation prepared a proposal for the work they could undertake as part of the network. These plans were sent to the coordinator, who compiled these separated plans in to a first draft of the whole plan making the initial suggestions for work groups through combining and building links between the initial plans.

The whole initial plan was then sent out for comments and suggestions to the participating organisations, which then send their comments and suggestions back to the coordinator. These suggestions were then integrated into a new version of the plan by the coordinator, which was then sent out again. This continued until the plan was finalised to be submitted. This means that based on the suggestions and ideas from the different participants, the coordinator wrote the proposal.

The whole planning process was handled through email exchange between the member organisations and the coordinator. This means that the member organisations did not send their suggestions and comments to the whole group, but only to the coordinator. One interviewee did mention that some subsets of people that knew each other and were located close to one another did meet up to support each other in preparing suggestions and to exchange ideas, but that this was done on self-organising basis. Also when people involved met at conferences, they may talk about the proposal and exchange ideas. The coordinator was however central in most communication and also in writing the plan of activities.

ORGANISING

As to an extend already presented earlier, the way in which the division of work into particular work groups was decided as well as the way in which the group leaders selected stays unclear. The coordinator seems to have played a central role in making the final decisions, but the input by the participants from the member organisations was also stressed by interviewees.

The forming of the executive committee however was discussed in the interviews. One of the interviewees took the initiative for this when during the contract negotiations the coordinator and the Commission official were getting into a conflict. The initiator for creating an executive committee described the process as follows:

> Interviewee: "the Brussels person asked me to actually become the coordinator of the network rather than [the coordinator] to which I said "no way, this is not on" and I suggested instead that we form an [executive committee] chaired by [the coordinator] and that is what we did.
> Sanne: "How was decided who was going to be in that [executive committee])"
> Interviewee: "That was basically decided by [the coordinator] and myself and we took people who we knew would be vocal and available. So we took some fairly experienced people."

The establishment of the executive committee was also reflected upon by one of the other members of the executive committee interviewed:

> "The members of the executive group, those are the people who are the most I think enthusiastic and pro-active, I think we, I forgot exactly how it happened, but we met perhaps in [the place of the interviewee quoted above] and decided that one way of making decisions more efficiently was to elect an executive group and have that group take most of the decisions, if not all decisions. And so we told every other member that this is what we were planning to do, and if anybody had any major objections they should let us know. There weren't any, so now we are responsible".

During the network-building phase it was decided to allocate a big part of the financial resources to each of the member organisations at the outset, based on the planned involvement in the shared activities. These financial resources allocated were fixed for the whole period for which the consortium had received funding from the Commission. One interviewee reflects on this decision as the best decision made as this was seen as preventing conflicts and making it possible for the member organisations to know how much money they had to play with. It stays, however, unclear how the decision on the allocation of this part of the financial resources was made and who was involved. The most probable is that this decision was made by the coordinator as until the last stage of the network-building phase he was the central person actually developing the proposal.

One other organising decision discussed in the interviews concerned the outsourcing of the development of the website to an external organisation. This decision was made by the coordinator at the start of the consortium.

MOTIVATING

Although motivating was not explicitly discussed during the interviews, the overall impression from the interviews in all cases indicate that the generation and maintain of effort has several sides.

On the one hand, in each case a small group of more active participants was present that drove the proposal forward. This small group often included all or part of the initiators whereby the person coordinating the writing and compiling of the proposal did play a key role.

The initiator seems to have had a more lonely position in driving the proposal forward. In several interviews it is noted that during the network-building phase all communication went via the coordinator. This means that he also was the person that needed to generate and maintain the efforts of all participants to deliver all needed for the proposal. In some cases, but this seems to have happened mainly after the network-building phase, the members of the executive committee knowing participants of certain member organisations better would be asked to contact these member organisations to make sure that they would deliver what was needed.

The interviews also give a strong impression that motivating comes forth from self-motivation and the interests each of the participants has in developing further what they are working on. This impression is stronger in some cases than in others and can be most clearly seen from the way in which the planning of activities was done.

There is a strong impression that each participant of each member organisation through being active and involved was able to get what they were working on into the plan of activities. This would, I suspect, create a great incentive for self-generation and self-maintaining of effort.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the role that the possibility of getting funding played in relation to motivating. This seems to be more crucial in some cases than in others, but there is not enough supporting data to be very conclusive.

The role the possible funding played in motivating during the network-building phase is not very clear. As will be discussed later concerning motivating in practice, the amount of funding is however considered large as one of the interviewees mentions in relation to executing the activities written in the contract with the Commission *"it is EU, and you have to stick to it, because if you don't stick to it, you won't get the money, and it is quite a lot of money"*.

COORDINATING

The different aspects of coordinating were not explicitly discussed in the interviews, but from the interviews, especially in relation to the planning some observations can be made. No face-to-face discussions with the member organisations were organised in this case. The way in which the different suggestions of the participants were connected was suggested by the coordinator.

In this case a detailed plan of activities was developed which was building on the activities of the work group participants. The level of integration of activities aimed at seems very low. The impression from the interviews in this case is that member organisations suggested what they would do, after which centrally by the initiator the connections with other member organisations were made on paper by creating work groups in which several member organisations would share the results of their work and thereby could learn from one another. These suggestions would mainly come from the initiator(s). The actual activities that would be undertaken were, however, not unified or directly linked to each other.

The main responsibility for coordinating of the whole proposal was in all cases done by one participant or a very small group. The initiator was making sure unity did exist in the activities across the work groups through making sure that there was no overlap and that all issues were covered they thought should be covered.

The need for comments from the member organisations seems to be far higher, as the initiator was the one writing the proposal and developing it further based on the comments from the member organisations. From the interviews, however, the picture arises that some did so far more actively than others.

MONITORING

No data was seen to contribute to this aspect.

ADMINISTRATION IN THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

HANDLING GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

The handling of all information during the network-building phase seems to have been done by the initiator. It is unclear which type of support the initiator got from others within his organisation, but from the interviews this seems to be very little.

PRACTICAL ORGANISING FOR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

There were no collective meetings organised to make governance or management work possible during the network-building phase. In addition, there were no communication structures created for interaction between the different member organisations to support collective governance or management. The practical organising thus seems to be limited, and relied mainly on the information exchange between the initiator and the invited member organisations.

In the interviews, however, it was mentioned that some of the invited member organisations that were closely located did organise one or more meetings to support one another in the management work during the network-building phase, planning especially. In addition, when some participants of the invited member organisations would meet one another at other occasions, the network-building may be discussed but this was never actively organised.

ARRANGING THE MEANS FOR ORGANISING

The initiator undertook all work in relation to the inviting of the other member organisations as well as the securing of the funding. In addition, the initiator also negotiated and contracted a company for the design and maintenance of the network website.

DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITIES

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOVERNANCE

FRAMING

Each member organisation separately is responsible for accepting changes to the consortium agreement. The proposals for changes in the consortium agreement are prepared by the executive committee. In addition, the executive committee is responsible for decision in relation to meta-organisation level membership and preparing and deciding policies and procedures in relation to a specified, limited area. The executive committee is responsible deciding upon work group level mission and vision while each work group is given responsible for its own work procedures.

CONTROLLING

The executive committee is responsible for direction control, approving annual work plans and budgets as well as the human organisation, whereas the coordinator is responsible for performance control.

GRANTING OF RESOURCES

The executive committee is responsible for deciding on the actions to be taken in case of non-performance or shortcoming in performance.

MEDIATING

This is not addressed on meta-organisation level. Although not described as part of the responsibilities for the formal roles, the consortium agreement does provide a procedure for the settlement of disputes.

The procedure for handling of conflicts does not prescribe the procedure for handling the dispute internally, but when the dispute is not able to be handled amicably internally it shall be settled through arbitration by external arbitrators.

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGEMENT

PLANNING

In the consortium agreements, the responsibilities in relation to planning are not always clear. This is mainly due to contradicting statements in the consortium agreement. I will present the contradicting statements there were they occur.

Some contradictions in relation to the responsibility for planning exist. There are three sections dealing with planning. In the first section, describing the planning process, each work group is responsible for preparing the work group plan of activities. These group-plans are evaluated by the executive committee and checked for inter-group connections and cross area topics. The executive committee then develops overall plan of activities, after which the work groups have the possibility to give feedback. After this the executive committee decides on the

final plan of activities. In the second section, describing the responsibility of the executive committee, the executive committee is to prepare and decide on the plan of activities. This contradicts with the first section, as there the executive committee is to evaluate the prepared group-plans. In the third section, in which the responsibilities of the work groups are described, the work groups are responsible for scheduling the work, within the boundaries set by the plan of activities. This means that this contradicts with section one as no specific responsibility is given for designing the group-plan of activities.

ORGANISING

The executive committee is responsible for deciding on structuring and restructuring the work into work areas and establish work groups for these areas. The work groups are responsible for their own organising and reorganising, in terms of deciding the division of work and appointing its leader. The executive committee can suggest changes in the division of work and is responsible for deciding on the budget and the division of the financial means available for undertaking the work.

The formal responsibility for making sure that means will be available to the consortium is given to the executive committee, which is responsible for all contacts with the Commission as well as agreeing on press releases and joint publications.

MOTIVATING

The consortium agreement prescribes that the member organisations undertake "all reasonable endeavours to perform and fulfil, promptly, actively and on time all of its obligations" and "supply promptly (...) all information or documents" which the formal organs of the consortium need to fulfil their obligations.

Thus, the consortium agreements do not prescribe responsibilities for generating and maintaining of effort to any formal role. The member organisations are in all consortium agreements, however, prescribed to make sure that effort is generated and maintained.

COORDINATING

The executive committee has the formal responsibility to coordinate the consortium whereas the work group leaders have the formal responsibility to coordinate the work group activities.

MONITORING

The executive committee is also formally responsible for monitoring (ensuring that all work meets functional requirements, and analysing and approving the results of the activities performed).

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADMINISTRATION

HANDLING OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

The executive committee, contrary other cases, is the intermediary between the Commission and the member organisations and thus has particular responsibilities in relation to the

handling of information. The executive committee is formally responsible for the handling of all information demanded by the Commission.

The coordinator is responsible for supporting the executive committee in its tasks of handling information needed by the Commission. In addition, the coordinator is as in all other cases responsible for handling all information in relation to the funds granted by the Commission, for distributing any information received concerning the contract performance (from the Commission) to the member organisations concerned and for administering and forwarding any unilateral request for termination of the contract with the Commission by a member organisation to the Commission.

Although, no clarity exists concerning the preparation of executive committee meetings or the minutes thereof, the coordinator is to convene these meetings and handle objections to the minutes.

Each work group is responsible for handling its own governance and management information.

Furthermore, each member organisation is responsible for handling its financial information and documents needed by the consortium and transfer all financial information and documents needed in relation to the Commission to the coordinator.

PRACTICAL ORGANISING FOR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

In the Social Network Case the coordinator is responsible for chairing the meetings of the executive committee. It stays unclear who is responsible for the practical organising (bookings, etc.) for these meetings. Each work group is responsible for arranging its own meetings.

ARRANGING

In the Social Network Case formal responsibility for arranging is not set.

THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

GOVERNANCE IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

FRAMING

No further framing seems to have been taken place after the consortium agreement had been signed. One interviewee commented *"I think we try to do this in a less structured way so more by effectively doing. There has not been a problem with the progress of the project as a whole; we have not really tried to connect things in a very formal way"*.

CONTROLLING

There are big differences in statements in relation to the question if and how control is exercised. One of the interviewees tells: *"We don't do internal evaluations,(...) the evaluation is done by the EU. Things go as they go and we write down what we have done. Life is too*

short to evaluate our friends once a year". While another interviewee announces that a main role of the executive committee is "to ensure that the project as a whole is progressing as it should and that outputs are made as planned and as promised, that all the deliverables are delivered in time, to put pressure on individuals, to individual members of the network to deliver their parts of the project and to make sure that everybody knows what deadlines are coming up and make sure that people stick to those".

The executive committee is in terms of my definition however involved in direction control in relation to the part of funding that had not be divided during the network-building phase. They prioritise and select the additional collaborations to be funded by the consortium based on the initial plans provided to them by the member organisations. In addition, although there seem not to be an explicit mechanism for performance control in terms of quality control, the executive committee is responsible for putting together the final report whereby the executive committee does make sure that all members deliver their part of the report as well as, for example, make sure the seminars planned are organised as promised to ensure the continuation of the funding by the Commission.

GRANTING OF RESOURCES

There is some granting of resources through the funding prioritised set by the executive committee concerning only one part of the funding received from the Commission. All members, except the members in the executive committee, are every year able to suggest collaborations which they would like to be funded by the consortium. These are then evaluated, prioritised and decided upon by the executive committee.

One interviewee indicated furthermore that the executive committee also has been involved in other ways in granting of resources.

> *"At one time at the very beginning there were a couple of partners that were not co-operating as much as we wanted to. And then we did put quite a lot of pressure on them that if they did not change their attitude we would kick them out of the network and that completely changed their attitude. So to that extend we did use a bit of force, but other than that we try not to be too prescriptive (...), we try to accommodate as much as we can rather than being very dictatorial".*

MEDIATING

No major conflict of interest were brought up by interviewees when asked about this and several interviewees mention that things are handled in a very consensus oriented way. Furthermore, as pointed out by one interviewee when discussing the central role of the executive committee in decision-making:

> *"It is not set in stone so to speak and it gets discussed. If people don't like particular things, they usually get changed. It is important to remember that everything is on the basis of trust and that is the absolute overriding principle. (...) So many suggestions of members are taken on board and actually carried out."*

PLANNING

Those doing the work that was already agreed upon at the start of the consortium would do the detailed planning for each year. As one of the members of the executive committee comments *"We don't plan the science because we leave that to the individual scientists. We are scientists ourselves and we hate being told what to do"*. These individual plans by the participants are then compiled into sub-plans for each work group by the work group leader who sends it to the coordinator, who would with the help of the administrative assistant compile the different sub-plans into the whole plan of activities for the consortium. This whole plan is then sent back to the members organisations for comments. The coordinator with help from the administrative assistant would then do these changes, send it out to all members again and then finalise the plan.

In addition to the already agreed upon work groups, each participant of the member organisations can prepare additional plans for collaboration, except the members of the executive committee. The executive committee evaluates these plans and selects the plans that would receive funding from the consortium.

In relation to consortium-wide activities such as seminars, meetings, training and the development of the website, the executive committee is responsible for the planning. Other member organisations can give input into the planning of these activities to the members of the executive committee and, as one interviewee mentions; many of these suggestions are taken on board and implemented.

ORGANISING

The senior participants of the member organisations are the work group leaders. The executive committee members were decided upon during the network-building phase. When the consortium had been running for a while, however, a member of the executive committee not involved in the initial selection of the members of the executive committee suggested to include a woman into the executive committee as the executive committee had had only male members, which was not a good representation of the consortium itself. In the whole consortium woman were well represented. Woman in early career represented 50% of all early career stage participants and woman in at the experienced stage of their career represented 36% of all the experience stage career participants. In addition, there were 11 participants in work group leader positions, some of which were responsible for multiple work groups, of which 4 were woman. One interviewee described the process of deciding on who to invite as follows:

> *"It took some time. We had a couple of discussions about who we should invite and sent suggestions [to each other] and in the end this was consensual".*

This choice was thus made by the members of the executive committee.

Most of the budget had been allocated directly to the member organisations for the duration of the funding by the Commission already in the network-building phase. There were no big changes made to this budget. The part of the financial resources that had not been allocated to

a specific member organisation at the outset has been allocated to different activities based on decisions by the executive committee. An interviewee comments on this saying

> *"On the whole [the member organisations] agree with the priorities set by the [executive committee] as long as they are fair and distribute the resources evenly across where they are needed. (...) So far everybody has agreed with the decisions. In fact [the member organisations] are quite pleased that the [executive committee] is taking a lot of the decisions making out of them, because most of the members don't want to be involved in that, they just want to get on with things and be told what happened and that they have money and just do this".*

One other organising decision concerned the discontinuation of the outsourcing of the development of the website to an external organisation. As discussed earlier, the initial decision was made by the coordinator at the start of the consortium. This was reflected upon by the interviewees as conflicts had been arising between the consortium and this company. The consortium thought the quality of the work delivered as well as the responsiveness of the company to the needs of the consortium was poor. The executive committee became involved in trying to solve these problems. In the end the executive committee decided to discontinue the outsourcing of this work to the company initially chosen.

MOTIVATING

Motivating was not reflected upon much. It seems, however, that those that are doing the work are working based on their own motivation and their interest in the topic as well as own learning.

In relation to making sure and motivating everybody to deliver the needed plans and reports, the coordinator and his administrative assistant play a key role. When however a participant is not replying, they may ask another member of the executive committee to get involved. They then *"might ask the member of the executive committee who knows the reclusive person best to give him a ring and say come on what is going on here"*.

COORDINATING

The technical coordinating of implementation plans or plans of activities will not be discussed in this section, but will be tackled as part of the next chapter on administration.

Although not explicitly tackled, from the interviews it becomes clear that, the participants from one member organisations, alone or in collaboration with some other member organisation(s), create a plan for a project to be undertaken and they take care of the unity of the plan, the work and the reporting.

Besides this, one interviewee points out that there are several meetings different sizes to share the results of the work and to generate new ideas for collaborative projects. There are very small meetings concerning collaborative projects themselves, there are work group meetings to share ideas across collaborative projects, there are cross-work group meetings on particular topics to share ideas across work groups and there is an annual meeting where all members meet to discuss results and ideas for collaborations.

As one of the interviewees pointed out, due to the meetings there was knowledge about what the other work groups were doing, which lead to fusing two work groups into one. In this case, one of the work group leaders had noticed the overlap between the work groups and discussed it with the members of the work groups. After this, the work group leader suggested to fuse the two work groups to the coordinator, who discussed the possibilities for this with the Commission. Thereafter the executive committee discussed how to proceed on this and decided to fuse the two work groups.

MONITORING

No data was seen relevant to this.

ADMINISTRATION IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

HANDLING GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

There are several processes in which governance and management information needs to be collected, stored, compiled, communicated, etc. Processes that are commonly present in the cases are those of planning, budgeting, reporting and decision-making. In addition, in many of the cases also other processes such as membership application and training application processes are in the need for handling governance or management information.

The handling of information in relation to the planning, budgeting, reporting and decision-making on consortium level as well as in relation to the application process for funding of training is mentioned to be done by the coordinator, who is supported in these tasks by his administrative assistant. As one of the interviewees mentioned

> *"we have only the assistant of [the coordinator], who is present at all the meetings. She does the actual work for a lot of it. So of the [executive committee] only [the coordinator] together with his assistant do most of the actual work".*

This work includes the compiling of the plans and reports, preparing of the budget as well as preparing of the meetings and making notes of the meetings. In addition, it was mentioned that an administrative assistant of one of the other members of the executive committee was temporarily hired to help out in compiling the report for the Commission. Furthermore, although the website design and maintenance was outsourced to an external organisation, the management and governance information such as, for example, access rights were handled by coordinator and his administrative assistant. In addition, several interviewees indicated that the way in which the planning and reporting was to be done was discussed at the executive committee meeting.

It stays unclear in this case if others from the coordinating organisation were involved in handling, for example, the financial information for the consortium. In the interviews, whereby the administrator and coordinator did not or very limitedly participating, no other people were mentioned. This means that if others of the coordinator's organisation were involved, they were doing so in the background, working for the coordinator and administrative assistant, and not actively involved in relation to other member organisations.

Each member organisation, however, was involved in handling the information in relation to the financial contribution they received and in relation to the activities they undertook. In addition, the handling of governance and management information in relation to work group meetings, seminars or training organised by member organisations as part of the consortium were handled by the member organisation organising.

PRACTICAL ORGANISING FOR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The practical organising was not discussed in much detail. What is mention by different interviewees is that the executive committee is responsible for organising meetings, seminars, etc. What they understand as organising seems, however, to be limited to deciding what types of meetings, seminars etc are seen as needed and finding a member organisations willing to host these meetings, seminars, etc. As one interviewee describes it *"We are responsible for things like organising meetings (....) like where do we hold the annual meeting and who is going to be the local organiser for that and this sort of things".* This is impression is further supported by the discussion on the consortium financial resources, whereby it is mentioned that financial resources are put aside to support the member organisations in the hosting of meetings, seminars, etc. This thus indicates that the member organisations responsible for particular meetings, seminars, etc. are also undertake the practical organising for these meetings.

In relation to the preparation of the executive committee meetings, however, it seems that the coordinator and his assistant are involved in the practical organising.

ARRANGING

The building up and maintaining of the website in order to support internal communication, collaborative working on documents, etc. as well as to be able to communication to the public was outsourced to an external company. The experience of this consortium with outsourcing was negative, as they experienced little responsiveness from the company to the needs of the consortium. The executive committee was, at the time of the interviews, about to decide on the question as to where they would acquire the means for the new design and maintenance of their website. From the interviews it becomes clear that the coordinator, supported or actually done by the assistant, is responsible for taking actions in relation to this.

Appendix 9   CASE 5: FUNDING AGENCY CASE

The analysis of this case, like the previous cases presented, is divided into three parts: the analysis of (1) the network-building phase, (2) the contract, and (3) the operational phase. Each part will present the analysis of the governance, management and administration processes. Where possible, the analysis covers both meta-organisational level and group-level.

THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

GOVERNANCE IN THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

FRAMING

Like the Long-Term Collaboration Case, this case is an extension of collaboration funded by the Commission. Also in this case the initial member organisations discussed how to continue their collaboration. The first discussions (one interviewee indicates that at least during two meetings this was discussed) concentrated on the mission and vision for the consortium as well how to enlarge the collaboration in terms of the number of member organisations as well as participants per member organisation. During these discussions also the way of dividing the funding was discussed as well as the way of structuring the network in terms of who would be partaking in the governance/management board.

After the discussions, the coordinator produced a short outline and suggestion on the different issues. Each member organisation was then asked to provide a one page description per unit or group that wished to join from their organisation, including the contact details, number of participants, overall goal, main achievements to date and future direction. In addition, they were asked to give their opinion on the proposal, the title, mission and organisation, suggest additional groups, indicate what tools and facilities the member organisation would be willing to share with other member organisations as well as indicate their support for some of the initial ideas. Based on the information that the member organisations send, the coordinator put the whole thing together. Some other participants of the previous collaboration took responsibility to check the text concerning one of the four broad areas the consortium was going to concentrate on.

One of the main strategies was to work towards real integration, and to prevent that each member organisation would get money and do what they would have done in any case without making an effort to integrate with the other member organisations. As the coordinator indicated during the interview:

> "So my strategy was basically, rather than allocating resources at the beginning of the network, you know to each [member organisation], I decided that we would, should behave a little bit as a funding agency. (...) In order to apply for money people had to establish connections within the network, real connections. (...) So that is basically the spirit of the network. So we progressively restrain funding to a fewer number of initiatives, but give more money per initiative. (...) [with the aim to make sure there will be progressive integration as the initiatives should increasingly include more and more member organisations]. Basically that was the overall strategy, so people accepted this indication because it was

> *indicated in the consortium agreement, and they signed the consortium agreement. Probably they did not think too much about the potential consequences of that."*

This indicates that the coordinator was the key player in developing the consortium agreement and that the agreement has not been discussed in detail. On the other hand, the way of deciding about the funding was mentioned to be one of the key decisions by most of the interviewees made at a rather early stage in the development of the consortium, so that this was also included in the consortium agreement may have been seen as a confirmation of the choices made.

The coordinator discussed the design of the consortium agreement with the lawyers at his institute or from the member organisation added to provide financial and legal services to the consortium.

CONTROLLING

No specific data has been added in relation to controlling.

GRANTING OF RESOURCES

The interviews do not cover the granting of resources during the building stage to a great extent. From the interviews in all cases it however becomes clear that the person responsible for writing and editing the whole proposal (the coordinator or the administrator in close collaboration with the coordinator) did steer the efforts to get the application together.

MEDIATING

In the interviews some conflicts of interest have been discussed, but the way in which these conflicts were handled often stays at a too general level to give any clear picture.

MANAGEMENT IN THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

PLANNING

The Funding Agency Case did not produce a fully detailed plan on their activities during the preparation stage. The initial member organisations did discuss and participated in describing in more detail the mission and vision of the work areas as well as the time-frame. One interviewee recalls that all the representatives of the member organisations

> *"contributed in some way, by writing portions of the text to deal with what [each member organisation] would contribute to the programme. So they were all involved and I was involved a bit more in coordinating, because we had, I think we had, four different areas that we were covering and I was involved in coordinating one of them and checking the text was correct for that. [The coordinator], he put the whole thing together to make the final document that we submitted, so he was central to that".*

ORGANISING

The participants of the member organisations that collaborated, decided together to treat themselves as the representatives of the member organisations who would from the governance board. They also decided that each of them would be responsible for recruiting new participants from their organisations to join the consortium. The participants invited to join the consortium later automatically became the representatives for their respective organisations responsible for recruiting additional participants.

The initial participants also approved the decision by the coordinator on the way in which the funding would be distributed. In the interview with the coordinator, he indicates that

> "the bold decision I made and people, you know, sort of followed that decision [laughing] also (...) so my strategy was to basically, rather than allocating resources at the beginning of the network, you know, to each participating institution, I decided that we would, should behave a little bit as a funding agency".

In addition, the coordinator added

> "the requirements for budget allocation for Networks of Excellence were vague. They basically ask you to put like a certain figure, there was a certain amount of money that was proportional to how many people were involved with the network, as a grant to integration, that is it. So I took advantage of this like sort of vague indication. I basically said "these are the programmes that we will develop and this is the timing of these programmes, and we foresee that a certain fraction of the total resources of the grant will go into these programmes". So in a way I think I basically took advantage of the possibility that was given to us by this like very vague definition of the budget but surprisingly most people actually preferred to pre-allocate the money to various institutes. But that may or may not work [laughing], and in my experience it doesn't work very effectively to develop real integration".

MOTIVATING

Although the motivating was not explicitly discussed during the interviews, the overall impression from the interviews in all cases indicate that the generation and maintain of effort has several sides.

The role of the different participants in relation to motivating is not very clear. The coordinator does seem to have played a central role in motivating in general, but the representatives of the member organisations more specifically in relation to the participants from their member organisation. In relation to the writing of the work group outlines the coordinator seem to have been central in motivating but some of the representatives have played a central role in motivating to get input from other member organisations into parts of the programme.

Due to the type of proposal made, there was less incentive for self-motivated generation and maintaining of effort during the network-building phases, as the proposal included general programmes and the specific activities to be undertaken within these were to be developed only afterwards. This means that motivating may have been more depending on some of the initiators that took the responsibility to develop the proposal.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the role that the possibility of getting funding played in relation to the motivating. This seems to be more crucial in some cases than in others, but there is not enough supporting data to be very conclusive.

The choice to distribute the funding only at a later stage, makes the direct link between the active participation in the network-building phase and the funding less clear although the opportunity to get funding seems to have been a reason to participate in the proposal preparations. This is one of the reasons for some disappointments with some of the participants as a representative of a member organisation notes

> *"I do feel that the..., it has meant that some [member organisations] have got, by some strange means disproportionately large amounts of money compared to others. (....) I think some people found that a bit difficult because, you know, they contribute a lot to the writing of the thing [proposal] and then they actually did not get that much out of it".*

COORDINATING

Coordinating was not explicitly discussed in the interviews, but from the interviews, especially in relation to the planning some observations can be made.

The initial members met several times during the previous collaboration to discuss face-to-face the ideas for the network.

No detailed activity plan was specified, and what was done was that a broad work group programmes were described outlining the general goals and mission of these work groups. The role of most participants in the planning during the network-building phase was therefore very limited. In addition, it was therefore, similar as in the Long-Term Collaboration Case, much easier to create a unified proposal than in the other cases.

The coordinator of the earlier collaboration was making sure unity did exist in the activities across the work groups through making sure that there was no overlap and that all issues were covered they thought should be covered.

In addition to the main responsibility, all member organisations were able to contribute to the coordinating of the whole proposal by providing suggestions and comments on drafts of the whole proposal. It seems, however, that participants would mainly look at and comment on the part they contributed to.

MONITORING

No data was added on this element.

ADMINISTRATION IN THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

HANDLING GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

The handling of information during network-building phase was mainly done by the coordinator of the collaboration which initiated the network-building. The coordinator got support from others within his organisation as well as from one of the added member organisation invited to take care of the financial and legal issues, organising as well as creating the tools for the handling of information. From the interviews it stays unclear how the exact division of labour was during the network-building phase, but the coordinator seems to at least have been central in the exchange of information between the member organisations.

PRACTICAL ORGANISING FOR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The initiating organisations, like in the Long-Term Collaboration Case, had a working structure supporting the governance and management work due to their then existing collaboration. The meetings organised at the end of this collaboration were used to discuss and agree upon the focus, topics and principles for the -to be build- network. In the interviews the practical organising during this period was not discussed, though the coordinator and coordinating organisation of the then existing network seem to play a central role.

ARRANGING

The coordinator, maybe assisted the personnel of his organisation, undertook the work in relation to the inviting of additional member organisations and the securing of the funding from the Commission.

DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITIES

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOVERNANCE

FRAMING

The governance board is responsible for accepting changes to the consortium agreement as well as changes in membership. The responsibility for preparing these changes is not separately tackled. The mission of the work areas are decided upon by governance board, while each work group is responsible for deciding upon the direction (vision) the work group. In addition, which is not tackled in the agreements of the other cases, the work group is responsible for deciding on its own members.

CONTROLLING

The governing board is responsible for direction control, approving annual and long-term plans and budgets, as well as performance control in terms of approval of financial accounts. The coordinator is responsible for performance control, in terms of monitoring progress and achievements on meta-organisation level, while work groups themselves are responsible for this on group and sub-group level. The coordinator as well as group leaders are also responsible for behaviour control concerning expected behaviour prescribed in the code of conduct. In addition, the external advisory committee is responsible for performance control.

GRANTING OF RESOURCES

The governance board is responsible for deciding on the actions to be taken in case of non-performance or shortcoming in performance.

MEDIATING

Although not described as part of the responsibilities for the formal roles, each consortium agreement does provide a procedure for the settlement of disputes.

The formal procedure of handling conflicts prescribes that the member organisations concerned will first attempt to settle their dispute amicably in at least two minuted meetings, of which the second meeting is to be in the presence of the governing board. When no settlement can be reached the conflict shall be settled through arbitration by external arbitrators.

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGEMENT

PLANNING

In the consortium agreements, the responsibilities in relation to planning are not always clear. This is mainly due to contradicting statements in the consortium agreement. I will present the contradicting statements there were they occur.

The governing board is responsible for preparing and deciding about the overall activities and priorities in terms of the areas of work. The planning of the work itself is not tackled under specific responsibilities of formal roles, but is discussed as part of the financial provisions. Here is described that the member organisations will be requested to submit their initiatives (alone or shared with other member organisations), i.e. plans of activities, in a particular area of work. These plans are evaluated and short listed by the steering committee (based on both quality and integration measures). The budget already set for each area is then set against the short-list, which then results in the final plan of activities funded by the consortium. The administration team is responsible for supporting the governing board in preparing the plan of activities with regard to management and coordination activities.

ORGANISING

The governing board is responsible for the structuring and restructuring of the work into work areas as well as deciding on the budget available to these work areas. Each member organisation (alone or together with others) then prepares initiatives including the structuring (leader and other members) and a budget request for the initiative within these areas specified. After the member organisations have submitted their initiatives and the governing board has short-listed these initiatives within each area, the budget made available to the area is divided from the highest to the lowest listed initiative until the budget maximum is reached. The governance board may, however, also decide on spreading the budget within an area to more initiatives.

Furthermore, the formal responsibility for making sure that means will be available to the consortium is given to the coordinator in terms of contact with the Commission.

MOTIVATING

The consortium agreement prescribes that each member organisation "agrees to participate actively and cooperate in the [consortium activities], according to its specific role and activities, in order to successfully perform and complete the [consortium activities]". In addition, the member organisations are to "make all reasonable efforts in order to diligently fulfil and comply promptly and in due time with all the obligations and undertakings [agreed]".

Thus, the consortium agreements do not prescribe responsibilities for motivating to any formal role. The member organisations are in all consortium agreements, however, prescribed to make sure that effort is generated and maintained.

COORDINATING

The formal responsibility for coordination lies with the individual members of the governing board (to coordinate locally the activities of the consortium) and with the work group leader (coordinating the wok-group activities).

CONTROLLING

The formal responsibility for monitoring lies with governing board (responsible for general supervision of consortium activities), the individual members of the governing board (responsible for ensuring the tasks assigned to their organisation are correctly performed) as well as with the work group leader (responsible for supervising the work group activities).

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADMINISTRATION

HANDLING OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

The coordinator, as in the Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case and the Long-Term Collaboration Case is the intermediary between the member organisations and the Commission and is particularly responsible for the handling of all information demanded by the Commission (in this case specified as collecting and transferring), handling all information in relation to the funds granted by the Commission as well as acting as the intermediary for communication between the consortium and the Commission.

In addition, the coordinator is responsible for drafting, distributing and handling of amendments of the minutes of the meetings of the governing board.

In this case the administration team is responsible for the follow-up and agenda for scheduled meetings, and assisting the coordinator in preparing and collecting of documents as well as forms for internal and external use. The team is also responsible for supporting the coordinator in any other secretarial activities. The team is also responsible for transferring of the funds and taking part in the reporting on budgetary and financial issues.

Each member organisation is furthermore responsible for providing the relevant information and documents to the administration team and/or the coordinator as well as submit for every reporting period a cost statement of the incurred expenses together with the supporting

documents and a audit certificate. In addition, each member is responsible for informing the coordinator of any relevant communication it receives from outsiders concerning the consortium and its activities. Each representatives of the member organisations is responsible for being constantly and properly acquainted with the accounting and administrative situation of the member organisation.

Each work group leader is responsible for keeping regularly and promptly informed the governance board on the progress and possible problems or difficulties in relation to the work group.

PRACTICAL ORGANISING FOR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The coordinator is responsible for chairing the meetings of the governance board, and a representative of another member organisation is the vice-chair for these meetings.

In addition, the administrative team is responsible for organising meetings of the administrative executives of the member organisations if needed. This is not practical organising for governance or management, but for administration.

ARRANGING

Formal responsibility for arranging is set. In this case, the administration team is responsible for supporting the member organisations in acquiring goods and services of relevant amount or critical importance.

THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

GOVERNANCE IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

FRAMING

Two larger changes were made in this case after the signing of the consortium agreement. In both cases the coordinator prepared the decisions. The first change concerned a discontinuation of funding of one part of the programme. Already at the start the usefulness of that part of the programme had been questions and during the first year it proved not useful enough for the consortium. The coordinator then proposed to discontinue the funding for the programme which was then discussed and decided upon by the governance board.

The second change concerns one of the member organisations which due to changes in their focus decided not to further participate in proposals. As this meant that expertise needed to reach one part of the overall goal for the consortium was lacking in the consortium, this lead to discussions as to how to solve the situation. The coordinator thereafter suggested adding a new member organisation and made a proposal for which organisation this may be. In the following meeting the proposed member organisation was invited to present themselves and the role they could play in the consortium. The governance board during this meeting made decision to include the new member.

Controlling is focused on direction control. To start with the governance board every year decides on the overall division of funding to the different programmes and the call for proposals. The focus on these different programmes has shifted over the years, whereby the governance board has, for example, decided that one of the programmes would not be further funded, except for one small part. The coordinator is playing a role especially through the preparation of these decisions and thus initiating the discussion with a particular direction for the consortium. The governance board, however, makes the final decision.

After the decision on the programme and the funding that would be available for executing work for the programme, the call for proposals is made. Based on a peer review system to which the representatives of the member organisations participate, the direction control is further maintained as they evaluate how well the proposal fits in the programme. As one interviewee mentions

> *"You cannot go and say you are gonna work on something completely different, that just won't be funded". In addition, the peer-review also has a behaviour control component in the sense that the collaborative behaviour sought for needs to become clear in the proposal. As one interviewee indicates "If you do an application and you can really see there that there will be collaborative effort, you get a, you get funding, OK".*

In addition, as the coordinator calls it, *"the real test is at the annual meeting that we have, where people present (...) and show how they interacted and how successful that interaction was".* This indicates that there also is a form of performance control that may influence the chances for getting further funded. This also seems to be confirmed by another interviewee who mentions that *"It's not the kind of project that you take the money and you do whatever you want. No, that is not the way, because on the meeting that we had, we had to present all the progress report, all these progress report is..., essentially what is important is that the governance board had to see clearly that you are doing true collaboration".*

GRANTING OF RESOURCES

The governing board is involved in granting of resources through the setting of the priorities, deciding on the overall programme and amount of funding available for each programme.

MEDIATING

One conflict was mentioned by an interviewee, which links to the difficulties of the meta-organisational structure in such way that although an organisation is member of the meta-organisation, the consortium, not all its participants are actively involved. When however the idea of the consortium is that the participants of all the organisations share their results within the consortium with the other participants, those participants of the member organisations that are not financed or actively involved in the consortium may not be willing to share their results with the consortium participants, which could be competitors, even though these results are highly relevant. The interviewee mentions that

> *"the coordinator was sort of go-between, to try to solve the issue". The interviewee also mentions that "mostly it has been individual cases and you know, it is difficult to say, they... you can't force people to communicate, so it is up to them".*

Also in the process of dividing funding, the need to consider conflicts of interests is mentioned. In this process, the coordinator is responsible for assigning the peer-reviewers, whereby the coordinator does need to make sure there is no conflict of interest between the reviewers and the group proposing the plan, as the coordinator explains *"so of course they are not members of the proposal and they don't have obvious conflicts".*

MANAGEMENT IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

PLANNING

The yearly planning in relation to the programme published by the governance board is done by the individual participants working together. At the first general meeting, the participants got the chance to meet each other and discuss ideas for collaboration in relation to the programme. After this meeting, those that had been able to establish fruitful contacts put together an application for funding their collaborative work idea. This then included the planning of the work within one of the areas specified by the governance board, the specific goals aimed at as well as the budget for undertaking the work together. One of the possible negative effects of this type of organising can be that those people from the member organisations that were already well connected with one another would have an advantage in terms of getting a proposal together over newer member organisations and participants that had not been collaborating before. One interviewee however notes that actually a group of participants that had not been working together previously (and had not been involved in developing the initial programme) managed to get more funding than some of those that had been working together. Some of the initiators, according to one interviewee and in between the lines also confirmed by the coordinator, found this difficult as they had been involved in developing the initial programme.

The planning process of the consortium-wide activities does not follow this pattern. How these activities are specifically planned and decided upon does, however, not become clear from the interviews, but it seems that the coordinator together with the administrators are mainly responsible for this.

ORGANISING

Some of the formal positions were decided upon during the network-building phase, such as the coordinator and the representatives of the member organisations. After the consortium agreement was signed, the participants from the member organisations themselves were creating work groups with a group leader, which would then create a plan and budget to be funded by the consortium.

Two separate processes lead to the organisation of financial resources. First, the representatives of the member organisations, based on a suggestion by the coordinator, decide on the division of the financial resources to the different programmes for activities as well as the 'housekeeping' activities.

Second, the participants developing a proposal for undertaking programme activities indicate the budget that they foresee needed to undertake the activities. The coordinator may ask the proposers to change their budget request. As the coordinator indicates *"Of course we ask people, and that is something I do generally, to maybe remodulate their funding request if that is excessive or redundant with other requests and stuff like that"*. After this the coordinator together with the financial assistant prepares the spreadsheets indicating the proposals eligible for funding based on the short-list made based on the reviews, and thus how much each member organisation will receive. These tables are then sent to the representatives of the member organisations which finally decide. The coordinator however indicates in the interview that no changes have been ever requested.

MOTIVATING

The actual generation and maintaining of effort is left to the individual participants, which need to be actively seeking possibilities for collaborations. As funding is only available by being active, the way in which the funding is being distributed does generate and maintain effort to collaborate and build contacts with other member organisations. As one interviewee mentions *"I think the advantages do encourage people to work with other groups and other institutes"*. Another interviewee contributes to this by saying

> *"naturally some of them were not collaborative, weren't that interested in the network and just dropped out. But that was quite a good self-selection mechanism, whereas if they'd been given money right up front and just told you know, you have x euros, then they would have taken it but not been involved at all with anybody else".*

In addition, the representatives of the member organisations do seem to play a stimulating role. This becomes especially clear in one interview whereby the interviewee describes her role as representative of the member organisation

> *"I try to, you know to encourage some, and I did some collaboration, for instance I can say "Well since you do so and so, the other one, taking to account that the other one is doing something that may be of interest for you", and so on, so I can encourage and help in finding the right partner, but essentially everyone, you know, has his own project and so on".*

COORDINATING

The technical coordinating of implementation plans or plans of activities will not be discussed in this section, but will be tackled as part of the next chapter on administration.

As the work groups are created throughout the funding period, the proposal leaders together with the other participants are responsible for the coordinating of their work during the planning, the execution of the work and the reporting.

The annual meetings, in which progress as well as new ideas for collaborations is discussed among all participants, are to support the unity in the efforts of the different work groups, which is supported by the programme produced which included an expectation that every year

the work group proposals would need to become larger and include more member organisation per proposal.

MONITORING

No data was connected to monitoring.

ADMINISTRATION IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

HANDLING GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

There are several processes in which governance and management information needs to be collected, stored, compiled, communicated, etc. Processes that are commonly present in the cases are those of planning, budgeting, reporting and decision-making. In addition, in many of the cases also other processes such as membership application and training application processes are in the need for handling governance or management information.

The coordinator was involved in handling a lot of the governance and management information on consortium level in relation to the overall planning, budgeting, and reporting, but also in relation to the specific planning. In relation to the specific planning the coordinator is to collect all the proposals, assign these to reviewers, handling the reviewers' reports as well as creating the short-list of the proposals to be funded.

The coordinator gets support in the handling of governance and management information from two different sources, a personal assistant as well as one of the member organisations which was added to undertake the financial and legal work.

The personal assistant especially supports the coordinator through the handling of information in relation to the meetings, such as the agenda and taking of the minutes of meetings as well as handling of information in relation to PR activities and external communication. This personal assistant, however, also mentions that she handles whatever information the coordinator asks her to handle.

The special member organisation was mainly involved in the handling of the financial information as well as supporting the consortium at large in the handling of information through the building and maintaining ICT solutions for collecting, keeping, manipulating and sharing information. In relation to the financial administration, this member organisation keeps direct contact with those responsible for the financial administration in the member organisations.

In addition to the consortium broad governance and management information, each work group will need to handle their information in order to plan, budget and report their activities. Furthermore, each member organisation needs to handle the management information in relation to the financial contribution they receive. This is mainly handled by the financial administrators of the member organisations.

The representatives of the member organisations are, however, involved in handling the management information on which participants from the organisation has received, should receive funding for what, when and how long. In addition, they are to keep the participants

informed about the consortium broad processes, such as deadlines for plans, reports as well as decisions made.

PRACTICAL ORGANISING FOR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The practical organising of the meetings of the governance board as well as the annual meeting was mainly done by the assistant of the coordinator. The assistant worked together with the conference organising facilities of the coordinating member organisation in relation to this. The practical organisation includes the selecting and booking of the venue, the food, the facilities and tools needed, etc.

ARRANGING

One of the means acquired for organising concerns a web-based system build for handling (i.e. collecting, keeping, securing, manipulating and sharing) information in relation to the planning, reporting and budgeting as well as supporting communication between the member organisations. Although most interviewees mention that they use the system to fill in forms on the website, only the coordinator actively reflects on the positive effects that this web interface has on simplifying the handling of information: *"And so this was the first thing that proved immediately to be effective (...) it has been very useful and very smooth, and that helps me a lot".*

Appendix 10   Cross-case analysis

Cross-case analysis of the network-building phase

Cross-case analysis of governance during the network-building phase

Cross-case analysis of framing during the network-building phase

In the network-building phase the cases present two different types of framing activities. The Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case and the Social Network Case are framing anew, whereas the Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Funding Agency Case are evaluating and reframing the collaboration they were in.

Whereas framing anew can be done by only one (the Social Network Case), a few (the Friendship Case) or many (the Cross-Discipline Case) of the later participants or member organisations, reframing is done with those already participating (the Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Funding Agency Case).

Although this general view arises from the case, there can be difference in the participation between the setting of mission and vision, boundaries and principles. In the Cross-Discipline Case, for example, the boundaries were to a large extent set by the initiating organisation, while the suggested mission and vision as well as principles were discussed and framed with those invited.

Also in the process of reframing this can be present as in the Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Funding Agency Case the mission and vision was reframed with all participants whereas the boundaries as well as basic principles seem to be decided upon by the coordinator of the previous collaboration and accepted passively by the other participants.

Another interesting observation is that in all cases in which there was more than one participant or member organisation participating to the framing (all cases except the Social Network Case), face-to-face communication was used to discuss and decide on the frame.

Furthermore, the creation of the consortium agreements, the formalising of the governance framework, was in all cases the task for the initiators or coordinators in most cases facilitated by administrative support staff. When a draft version of this formalised governance framework was ready, however, in most cases this version was not discuss with the participants, but the legal representatives of the member organisations. The interesting result of this is that the consortium agreement thereby seems to become an external governance framework for most participants.

Cross-case analysis of controlling during the network-building phase

The controlling exercised during the network-building phase mainly concerns the accepting and non-accepting of suggested plans of activities. In all cases those compiling the proposal exercised a certain degree of controlling through accepting and refusing to accept suggested plans into the overall plan. In addition, the initiators in the Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case, and the Social Network Case as well as the coordinators of the previous

collaboration in the Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Funding Agency Case were involved in making the final decisions on the plans of activities and suggestions of organising.

In some of those cases that had decided on the filling of managerial positions (such as the Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case and the Long-Term Collaboration Case) before the writing of the proposal, there was in action double or triple controlling layers whereby group and sub-group leaders could accept/refuse to accept the plans made within their responsibility area.

Although the governance frame created may focus suggested plans in the network-building phase, when however plans do not directly seem to fit, the frame can still relatively easily be changed. The evaluation of plans suggested seems therefore to become a more speculative question whereby it is more important that these plans are seen as possibly contributing to a positive decision by the Commission for granting resources than that it would fit neatly into the just created frame. The accepting of plans in the network-building phase will therefore easily lead to the need to do some reframing.

GRANTING OF RESOURCES DURING THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

In the network-building stage, most of the resources for the development and further development of plans are granted by each of the member organisations separately. Although there is too little data on this to make very confirmative claims, there seems to be a tendency in the network-building phase to accept plans suggested.

This can be related to the need to get input from people that may not have resources available for the development of these plans. If then they get some plan together, these are not easily turned down, as this could lead to loosing of valuable resources during the operational phase.

MEDIATING DURING THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

Although conflicts have been mentioned to have been occurring during the network-building stage, the descriptions of the situations as well as the actions taken are too thin to make useful cross-analysis possible.

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS OF MANAGEMENT DURING THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

PLANNING DURING THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

In the network-building phase, the cases differ in terms of the planning undertaken. Most cases included in their proposal a detailed planning in relation to the five year period that the Commission was requesting proposals for. The Funding Agency Case is an interesting exception as they in their proposal presented their governance framework (their mission, vision, boundaries and principles). This means that no planning took place in the Funding Agency Case during the network-building phase.

From the cases that did prepare a detailed plan two different processes can be identified. One planning process starts from the (participants of) member organisations presenting what they were planning to do in this period and somehow link these plans (such as done in the Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case and the Social Network Case). The way of linking

(see also coordination) can be technically done through editing of plans (as done in the Friendship Case and the Social Network Case), or more from bottom up through discussions between those involved which leads to ideas for links by those involved (as done in the Cross-Discipline Case). This type of planning seems to lead to rather detailed plans, demarcating the tasks of each (participant of each) member organisation.

The other planning process identified occurred in the Long-Term Collaboration Case in which the activities were not directly linked to the activities undertaken by the (participants of) member organisation. The activities in this case aimed at creating shared principles and practices to be able to work together more easily in the future. Those with ideas of topics or areas in which principles or practices could be useful, were asked to work out a suggestion on the type of work needed to create a shared principle or practice. This type of planning resulted in broad outlines of activities possible to be undertaken to support the shared creation of principles and practices on a topic.

ORGANISING DURING THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

In the network-building phase, the initiators as well as the coordinators of the existing collaborations in all cases chose and recruited the participants that would fill particular formal roles such as the coordinator, leader of work groups, executive committee and governance board during the network-building phase.

Furthermore, the invited participants from the member organisations play a key role in choosing and recruiting other participants from their organisations. Interestingly, however, this only came up as an issue in the interviews with the Funding Agency Case, though this seems to be the practice also in the other cases. This responsibility of the invited participants may play a very important role in relation to, for example, the planning and dealing with conflicts.

As discussed above in the section on planning in the network-building phase, two different types of processes were identified. The type of process followed also reflects on the type of organising done. In the case of presented plans by the (participants of) member organisations, the organising has been already to a large extent been done. In the case of produced plans to reach particular goals that are not directly the goals of the member organisations, it seems that organising is done afterwards. The question is then "to which activities would you (participant or member organisation) be interested in contributing"?

The initiator(s) also play a key role in preparing the proposed budget in which the funding applied for all cases indicated the contributions to the different activities and in all (except the Funding Agency Case) to the member organisations. The other member organisations were in most cases influencing the proposal for the budget through the initial request they prepared, but after the suggestion was made it seemed that in all cases this proposal was approved without discussion. The interviews do not give insight into other processes in relation to how the initial request and suggested budget is matched and how much one to one communication and negation takes place before the suggestion is coming to be decided upon.

Although the motivating was not explicitly discussed during the interviews, the overall impression from the interviews in all cases indicate that motivating has several sides.

The interviews give a strong impression that motivating comes forth from self-motivation and the interests each of the participants has in developing further what they are working on. Those that took coordinating responsibility for the preparation process or in relation to the planning also played a central role in the motivating in order to get input from the participants to the proposal. These participants all also seem to have been (at least partially) motivated by their interest (often ideological) in succeeding to plan activities that would support reaching the vision they had for the collaboration.

Furthermore, the possibility of getting funding also plays an important role in relation to the motivating in the network-building stage. There seem to be two types of relations to the funding, there is however not enough supporting data to be very conclusive. On the one hand there are consortia of which the mission and vision have been a shared 'dream' which is not attainable without the funding possibly available to them. On the other hand, there are consortia for which the reaching of the mission and vision is less crucial and maybe even possible without the funding possibly available to them, but whereby the funding is an important source for being able to attract additional resources (tools, personnel) to undertake the activities planned.

In the cases that draw on the planning of the member organisations (the Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case and the Social Network Case), self motivation was very important in the generating and maintaining of efforts, as through being active during the planning, they were able get the work they would also otherwise have been doing into the proposal and thus have the possibility for getting funding for undertaking the activities with more resources.

Furthermore, the cases seem to also differ in terms of the overall motivational structure present during the network-building phase. In the Friendship Case and the Social Network Case the possibility to get funding is seems to be a major drive for individual participants to participate, while the initiators (especially clear in the Friendship Case) were more motivated by the vision of what the consortium could reach. This picture is enhanced by the knowledge that the initiators were creating what the consortium should concentrate on in general and during the planning each participant delivered their plan of activities after which the connections between the activities were made on paper. In the Cross-Discipline Case and in the Long-Term Collaboration Case there seems to be far more an ideological vision of the field to which the participants wish to contribute. This is picture is enhanced by the way the work groups to be created were discussed by a larger set of participants and a higher level of integration of the activities is aimed at during the planning. The Funding Agency Case differs from the others, as motivations for continuing to collaborate are mixed with the need for funding to do so. As the Network of Excellence was the only funding instrument within their field of research and therefore the only option for continuing with Commission funding, the motivations for some of the choices seem to be based on this rather than a vision of how the field would benefit.

The coordinating during the network-building phase concerned two distinctly different issues. First, it is concerned with the coordination that was needed in the planning and organising that took place as part of the production of the proposal. Second it is concerned with the coordination of the preparation process itself.

In one of the cases (the Cross-Discipline Case), which was one of the three cases that had decided on the filling of formal managerial positions such as work group leaders before preparing the proposal, there was a clear separation of coordinating between the planning (undertaken by those in the managerial positions) and the overall preparation process (undertaken by the initiating institute).

In all other cases the ones responsible for the preparation process were also undertaking the coordination of the planning. The coordination of the overall planning for the proposal was in all cases ultimately done by those responsible for the preparation process while in some cases (especially the Friendship Case and the Long-Term Collaboration Case) facilitated by administrational support staff. The level of coordination, as already mention in the section on planning, differed. On the one hand the coordination could be limited to coordination of the handling of information (as in the Friendship Case) while on the other hand it could extent mutually adjusting of ideas and plans in the planning of the activities (as in the Cross-Discipline Case).

As in the network-building phase not much operations were running, the monitoring limits to the preparing of the proposal, consortium agreement and contract. The person with the responsibility to see to it that the proposal, the consortium agreement and the final contract was produced also undertook most of monitoring. In the Friendship Case this was the administrative support staff, in the Cross-Discipline Case the initiating institute (most mentioned is the later coordinator), in the Long-Term Collaboration Case the coordinator heavily supported by administrative support staff, in the Social Network Case the initiator and in the Funding Agency Case the coordinator.

The need for handling of governance and management information in the network-building phase was present in several processes and mentioned by many to be very extensive and difficult.

In all of these processes the administrative support seems to have been central in handling the information in all cases except the Social Network Case and the Funding Agency Case. In the Social Network Case several interviewees mention that the coordinator handled all types of governance and management information in network-building stage, and there was no mentioning of any administrational support. In the Funding Agency Case interviewees also mention that the coordinator was central in the handling of governance and management information. In the Funding Agency Case, however, the coordinator did himself mention that

he did get some support from support staff of his institute. What seems to be the case however is that as the communication from and to the other (participants of) member organisations were channelled through the coordinator, the impression was created by the (participants of) member organisations that all information was handled by him.

In addition, especially in those cases which draw on the planning by the (participants of) member organisations, these member organisation needed to handle governance and management information concerning their proposed contribution and participation.

PRACTICAL ORGANISING TO MAKE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT WORK POSSIBLE IN THE NETWORK-BUILDING PHASE

In the network-building phase the cases that organised face-to-face framing meetings, did need to do some practical organising. There were two different types of practical organising. First, meetings fully organised by the initiating organisation (the Friendship Case and the Cross-Discipline Case are examples) and facilitated by the administrational support staff of that organisation. Second, meetings of the earlier collaboration that were used in order to prepare a new proposal in order to continue the collaboration which means that these meetings were facilitated by the administrative support staff of the earlier collaboration (as was done in the Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Funding Agency Case).

In addition to the organising of these face-to-face framing meetings, there seems to have been little that needed practical organising.

ARRANGING

In several cases such as the Friendship Case and the Long-Term Collaboration Case the administrative staff supported the initiators or coordinator of the earlier collaboration with inviting of new members chosen to be added to the consortium.

In addition, the initiator(s) or coordinators often together with the administrative support staff also were the main drivers in the arranging to get funding from the Commission.

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS OF THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS OF THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOVERNANCE

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR FRAMING

The framing on meta-organisational level is in all cases done by formally deciding to change the consortium agreement. This includes the mission and vision of the consortium, the boundaries in terms of members as well as principles agreed upon.

The division of the responsibility in all cases, except the Funding Agency Case, is that the highest organ (governance group or management group) decides on the question of proposing a change in the consortium agreement to the member organisations. In the cases the Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case and the Long-Term Collaboration Case this means that the representatives of the member organisations are proposing to their own organisation to change the consortium agreement and not making binding decisions on the frame

themselves. This makes changing the agreement administrational rather burdening, as not only it needs to be tackled in the governance group, it also needs to be send out to all member organisations who all need to react to get the changed agreement. In the Funding Agency Case has been chosen for a lighter version, whereby the representatives of the member organisations are making the decision and with that decision binding the member organisations. This means that it is only the coordinator resigns the agreement to make it formally changed.

In the Social Network Case the structure chosen is better understandable, as the members do not meet together and thus formal decisions by the member organisations can only be made through the resigning of the consortium agreement.

The framing for work groups and, in all cases except the Funding Agency Case, sub-groups as well as individual member organisations has been formalised into the contract (technical annex) with the Commission for the whole funding period. Changes in this framework are in all cases to be prepared by the group it concerns and will be finally decided upon by the organ with highest authority within the consortium. After this, the Commission needs to make its decision on the acceptability of the changes suggested to the contract.

In the Funding Agency Case the 'sub-group level' framing is done by those involved in the sub-group through the proposal they submit. Decisions on the acceptability of sub-group level framing are made through peer review and ranking, and a decision by the governance group based on these.

Framing is thus in all cases, except the Funding Agency Case, done through external governance (member organisations instead of representatives in the governance group and by the Commission). In the Funding Agency Case the governance group is self-governing the consortium framing. The sub-groups in the Funding Agency Case are however also externally governed as the acceptability of the frame they prepare, is decided upon externally, by the governance group on the basis of the peer review and ranking.

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONTROLLING

In the consortium agreements of all cases is the formal responsibility for controlling (direction control, progress control but not behaviour control) is specified.

Direction control are described as responsibility in most cases of the group with the highest authority (management or governance) which in most instances means that this thus concerns external governance (not decided upon by those it concerns). Only the Cross-Discipline Case and the Funding Agency Case make a difference, as they formally give the responsibility for direction control of the work group participants to the work group and of the work groups to the management/governance group.

Formal responsibility for progress control in all case lies with the coordinator. This is especially interesting as the all other formal responsibilities of the coordinators concern administration. This link between administration responsibility and progress control will therefore be discussed in more detail later.

In the Cross-Discipline Case and the Funding Agency Case, we see that besides the formal responsibility for progress control of the consortium done by the coordinator, the management group and the work groups have the formal responsibility to undertake progress control.

In the Friendship Case and the Cross-Discipline Case the advisory committee is formally responsible to give advice in relation to direction and performance.

In all case some behaviour control exists, or at least the cases have laid down some basic principles on what member organisations ought or ought not to do. How is or will be responsible to do any control is in many cases not made explicit. In the Long-Term Collaboration Case, however, the coordinator is formally responsible for undertaking this control.

In the Funding Agency Case is specified that the coordinator on meta-organisational level and group leaders on group level are responsible for behavioural control.

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR GRANTING RESOURCES

In all cases the granting of resources is to a large extent given as the decision to be made by the group with the highest authority. When plans are accepted, the budget related, for example, is decided upon in this group. Furthermore, also when plans are not accepted, the question arises if resources should be granted to continue to work out a new plan. Also these are decisions mostly made in the group with the highest authority. This thus concerns at large external control.

In addition to the final plans that the group with the highest authority is dealing with, the management group and/or the work groups also grant resources. In this case it concerns decisions demanding further work on the planning.

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MEDIATING

The formal division of responsibility for mediating is not tackled in much detail in the consortium agreements. Two different types of procedures are present in the cases however. The first described only a fully external mediation possibility (the Friendship Case, the Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Social Network Case) while the second gives the governance group the formal responsibility to try to mediate in conflicts between member organisations (the Cross-Discipline Case and the Funding Agency Case).

In addition, the governance group in the Cross-Discipline Case is also formally responsible for the mediation between member organisations and management group.

AN OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR GOVERNANCE

The consortium agreements focus mainly on describing governance of the consortium level. The Cross-Discipline Case and the Funding Agency Case do more extensively described responsibilities on group and even sub-group level in relation to framing, controlling and granting of resources. The Friendship Case, the Long-Term Collaboration Case, the Social Network Case only mention that on work group level, each work group is responsible for its

own work procedures, but do not specify controlling or the granting of resources in relation to work groups.

In addition, the governance responsibilities described are spread over different formal roles in the cases, whereby the framing that involves a change in the consortium agreement is in most cases prepared by the executive committee, excepted to be proposed by the governance board and then confirmed by each member organisation. The Social Network Case has a clear centralisation of governance responsibility, which reflects their structure as this case has formally only the executive committee and work groups.

The responsibility for particular governance elements are furthermore given to a multitude of formal roles, especially controlling on meta-organisational level is given as a responsibility to several formal roles, whereby the Cross-Discipline Case is most extreme with four different formal roles responsible for progress control on meta-organisational level.

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS: THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGEMENT

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR PLANNING

In all cases the actual planning of specific activities is done by the work groups themselves. Differences between the cases, however, concern the overall plan, which can be designed or prepared a forehand (the Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case and the Funding Agency Case) or checked for overlap and consistency afterwards (the Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Social Network Case). This gives the impression, that the activities of the Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Social Network Case are more driven by what the participants within the work groups are willing to undertake while in the other cases the overall goals for the consortium and the ideas on how to reach these are driving the initial outline for the plan.

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ORGANISING

The division of the funding to the different activities and member organisations is decided upon by the executive committee in the Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case and the Social Network Case. In the Long-Term Collaboration Case the coordinator decides on the division of the funds to the different work groups, while each work group decides on the division between the participants. In the Funding Agency Case the division of funds to the different work areas is decided upon by the governance board, thereafter proposals are written by the work groups and evaluated. Based on the evaluation as well as the requested budget, the governance board decides on the division of the funds to the different work groups and member organisations

In addition, the overall structure of the consortium into different work areas or work groups is in all cases, except the Cross-Discipline Case, finally decided on by hierarchically highest formal position. In the Cross-Discipline Case, this is to be decided upon by the executive committee.

Furthermore, the work division within each work group is in all cases decided upon by the work group participants, whereby the executive committee in the Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case and the Long-Term Collaboration Case can suggest changes.

In the filling of formal positions in all cases considered that of work group leaders, which in all cases, except the Friendship Case, is to be decided upon by the work group participants themselves. In the Friendship Case this is to be decided upon by the executive committee.

Thus, the Friendship Case has centralised most organising responsibilities to the executive committee, while the other cases have spread the organisation responsibilities to several formal roles.

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MOTIVATING

The consortium agreements do not prescribe responsibilities for generating and maintaining of effort to any formal role. The member organisations are in all consortium agreements, however, prescribed to make sure that effort is generated and maintained.

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR COORDINATING

From the case descriptions it becomes clear that all consortium agreements explicitly divide the coordination on meta-organisational level and that on work group level. The meta-organisational level coordination is in three of the five cases (the Cross-Discipline Case, the Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Social Network Case) a responsibility of the executive committee and similarly in the Funding Agency Case, which does not have a separate executive committee, to the governance board. In the Friendship Case this responsibility is given to one single individual (the coordinator), which is an interesting as it points to a very central role of the coordinator in the consortium. The work group level coordination is in three of the five case (the Friendship Case, the Social Network Case and the Funding Agency Case) is given explicitly to the work group leader, while in the Cross-Discipline Case both the work group and the work group leader have this responsibility and in the Long-Term Collaboration Case it is the work group as a group that has this responsibility. Coordination is thus seen as a type of responsibility for which explicit responsibility is to be given in all cases.

In relation to coordinating as a whole, the responsibility for solving coordinating problems is not explicitly tackled. What however needs to be discussed is how much of the coordination as tackled above should actually be seen to be solving coordinating problems, thus the coordination responsibility given to a central formal role is to make sure that when the work groups are unable to mutually adjust by themselves, unity is still reached. I will discuss this issue in more detail at the end of the chapter, as then also the coordinating practice can be considered.

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING

In relation to monitoring, we see that in three cases (the Friendship Case, the Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Social Network Case) this responsibility is centrally given to the executive committee, while the Funding Agency Case spreads this responsibility to different formal roles. The Cross-Discipline Case does not specify responsibilities for monitoring.

AN OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MANAGEMENT

Some cases have prescribed a formal responsibility to one or more of the formal roles of *managing* the consortium or parts of it. These have not been discussed above as it stays

unclear what is meant with this managing. In the Friendship Case the formal responsibility for management is prescribed the executive committee, but is specified to be management in relation to the activities of task forces on technical, financial and/or exploitation/dissemination issues, as applicable. In the Cross-Discipline Case the formal responsibility for management is prescribed to the work group, which is responsible for management of the work group. In the Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Social Network Case the formal responsibility for management is prescribed to the coordinator (responsible for overall management) and the executive committee (responsible for management in relation to the activities for technical, financial and/or exploitation/dissemination issues, as applicable). In the Funding Agency Case the formal responsibility for management is prescribed to the governance board (management of consortium activities and any issue concerning the proper operation of the consortium) as well as the representatives of the member organisations (responsible for ensuring proper management at the level of the respective member organisation). In the Funding Agency Case the administration group has also the responsibility for the management of the consortium activities, but it is here specified to refer to follow-up and agenda for scheduled meetings, assisting the coordinator in preparing documents and in secretarial activities, which means it is not the 'management' as considered in this chapter but will be discussed as part of administration.

Another issue to be discussed is the budget. Although preparing of the budget is in the definition of management so far used concerned with planning, in most cases (the Funding Agency Case is an exception) it seems more related to organising as the preparation of the budget is dependent on which organisation is undertaking which parts of the work. Thus, the budget is following from the division of activities into different areas and the means that are needed to undertake these activities. This is especially possible, as the member organisations are responsible for carrying any costs for which the Commission does not allow funding and for which no explicit deal is made amongst the member organisations to share the costs. This means that the budget of the consortium only deals with a part of the costs of the member organisation incur in relation to the consortium activities

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS OF THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADMINISTRATION

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR HANDLING OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

The formal responsibility for handling the governance and management information needed to make decisions within the governance or management group, is in most often given to the coordinator or its administration team.

These decisions, for example, concern controlling (which needs data concerning, for example, progress or behaviour), granting resources (which needs a compilation of financial data). In addition, also processes such as

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRACTICAL ORGANISING FOR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The formal responsibility for practical organising is discussed in all cases in relation to the meetings of especially governance and management groups. In all the cases, except the Funding Agency Case, the coordinator has formal responsibilities for chairing the meetings for the management and/or governance groups.

In the Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case and the Social Network Case formal responsibilities for practical organising of work group meetings is set, whereby work group leaders are given the formal responsibility. Only in the Funding Agency Case the administration team is made responsible for the practical organising of meetings of the administrative executives of the member organisations.

The handling of meeting logistics and arrangements is not formally divided as a task except in the Long-Term Collaboration Case whereby the administration team has been given this responsibility.

THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ARRANGING

This responsibility is only described in the Funding Agency Case, whereby the administration team is to acquire goods and services when they are of relevant amount or critical importance.

This question of arranging actually brings up an interesting dilemma that meta-organisations working with indirect resources meet. When the meta-organisation would acquire goods, the question will be who will own these goods and what additional contracts need to be made to make sure that these goods stay available for all.

AN OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE DIVISION OF FORMAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ADMINISTRATION

In terms of administration responsibility in the cases it is mainly the coordinator who carries the main responsibility on meta-organisational level. This administration responsibility seems to be especially coordination ridge in terms of gathering and compiling information and documents as each member organisation is responsible for delivering the information and documents on the activities undertaken, directly or through the work group, and funds it has used. This means that a large amount of the actual handling of information itself is done by the participants of the member organisations. The way in which this is coordinated may thus be making this easier or more difficult both for the participants of the member organisations as well as for the coordinator.

In those cases that have specified the formal responsibilities of an administration team, it is clear that the coordinator is especially supported in handling of information in this respect.

In addition, the role of the coordinator, in terms of handling governance and management information, makes that the coordinator, as a member of the governance board and executive committee, can play a central role. This also is true for the administration teams, although they are not a direct member or the governance board or the executive committee, they do participate in both.

The administration responsibility on group level is in most cases not specified to much detail. The interesting exception is the Cross-Discipline Case, which has very clearly defined responsibilities for the work groups and work group leaders.

It is interesting to see that the responsibility for practical organising in terms of logistics and events is only explicitly set in the Cross-Discipline Case, as in all cases representatives of all member organisations meet regularly, although not for making formal decisions in the Social Network Case.

The formal responsibility for arranging of means was only set in the Funding Agency Case, but it is very possible that the other cases do not see a need for central arranging of means.

It seems difficult to make a real and clear difference between practical organising (which maybe should be called arranging) and arranging. Arranging has meant making sure the human, financial, and material resources needed to undertake the work is present when needed. In one way, arranging is specifically related to the governance and management processes – thus making sure the information, material, etc. is available to make these processes possible. This makes it sometimes hard to know where exactly a process belongs. The organising of meetings can have large overlap. One could see that the arranging may include booking the place and beverages as well as a social programme, while arranging of means also would be able to include these. There thus would need to be made a more clear difference between the two concepts or the will have to be grouped to be concerned with the same things. The last is difficult as I feel there is still a big difference between the arranging of means and the arranging, but I have not been able to articulate this difference well enough so far.

CROSS CASE ANALYSIS OF THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS OF GOVERNANCE IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

FRAMING IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

One of the main observations is that the cases all have a different way in which framing takes place and that even within the cases the formal roles involved can differ depending on the issue concerned.

What seems to be the case, however, is that the coordinators play a much more central role in the framing then what the consortium agreements indicate. Furthermore, there seems to be a link between the role of the governance board and the role of the executive committee. In the Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Funding Agency Case the governance board is presented as an active decision maker, and in both cases no executive committee is assembled to make decisions. In the Friendship Case and the Cross-Discipline Case which do have an executive committee, the role of the governance board is presented as passive or non-existing.

CONTROLLING IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

Due to the contract with the Commission, the Commission exercises direction as well as progress control on yearly bases as well as more extensively at mid-term review the progress towards to mission and vision as well as if the implementation plans presented on a yearly basis will help getting into the wished direction in the pace wished. The reaction in many of the cases is that the documents needed for this need to follow lots of (not always clear) rules which should lead to the only acceptable way of presenting the progress made or the plans created for the next period, which is creating a lot of bureaucratic work. On the other hand, the existence of the controlling by the Commission can also be a reason for not controlling oneself (the Social Network Case is most explicit about this).

An observation is that controlling and granting of resources are very much intertwined. It is sometimes very difficult to separate the two elements, as when control is exercised it directly becomes the granting of resources. Furthermore, the exercising of control is done in most cases by the same people as the granting of resources and at the same time as the control takes place.

An exception to this is the more formal system of progress and behaviour control in the Cross-Discipline Case, whereby the coordinator evaluates based on agreed upon criteria the reports delivered by the different member organisations and prepares the suggestion for the budget which takes into account the progress as well as the behaviour of the member organisation during the last period. Although the final decision is to be made by the management group, the control preparation is done by the coordinator.

In addition, coordinators and administration teams (officially under supervision of the coordinator) are given much responsibility for progress control. This is in accordance with the consortium agreements. Coordinators and administration teams, however, also often play a central role in direction control through the responsibility often given to them for compiling the plan of activities, preparing the budget as well as all other decisions (for instance concerning new members) to be made by the governance board and/or executive committee.

GRANTING OF RESOURCES IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

In the cases in which (most of) the funding was divided during the network-building phase (all except the Funding Agency Case), there is a possibility for free-riding as well as behaving differently than expected. These situations are difficult to tackle as the relationships between the member organisations often draw on personal contacts and friendships. The cutting of funding already promised is therefore problematic as it severely impacts on these relationships. In the Friendship Case the active participation and critical views of the advisory committee seems therefore convenient as this gives a possibility to decide on controversial issues without too much endangering these relationships. In the Cross-Discipline Case a formalised system of rules is used to make sure action can be taken against free-riding and to make sure behaviour is according to the rules. In the Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Social Network Case social pressure is used to get the performance and behaviour as agreed upon, but it seems that in these cases the willingness to act on under-performance is less.

Direction control in practice concerning all activities undertaken was in the Funding Agency Case directly linked to the receiving of funding or not. In the Cross-Discipline Case and the Social Network Case this was linked to the (small) part of the funding not yet divided during the network-building phase. In all other situations the mechanisms used to exercise direction control was more leaning on social pressure and, in addition, as these activities were already at large decided upon during the network-building phase, the need for direction control did not exist in the same way.

The granting of resources in the cases seems to be a difficult issue. Interviewees across the cases reflect that the granting of resources is done centrally, based on the suggestion made by the administrative support staff or coordinators themselves. Although the suggestion on the granting of resources to the member organisations is finally decided upon by governance boards, it is generally seen impossible and inappropriate to demand changes in the suggestion.

The granting of resources is also often done implicitly, for instance if the outline of an implementation plan of a work-package does not give rise to any discussion, the granting discussion and decision may not be separate. The acceptance and granting of permission is implicit in the lack of discussion. When, however, the outline of an implementation plan of a work-package does give rise to discussion and suggestions are made for changing the focus of the outline, it may stay unclear if action is suggested or if it is demanded if no explicit decision is made concerning the acceptance and the limitations to the acceptance.

MEDIATING IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

On the basis of the above descriptions it can be noted that general policies as well as procedures for deciding upon particular conflicting issues were seen as essential in dealing with conflicts and prevent conflicts in the future.

It also becomes clear, especially from the Funding Agency Case, that conflicts of interest are not always easily solved. As not all participants of the member organisations participate in and thus feel bound to the consortium set rules and practices, this can lead to contradictions and difficult situations.

AN OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE GOVERNANCE IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

Although the governance practice is different in all cases and different formal roles are involved in performing different aspects of the governance function, there are some issues that seem to be more general.

First of all, coordinators in all cases except the Long-Term Collaboration Case and administrators especially in the Friendship Case and the Long-Term Collaboration Case do play a much more central role in the governance practice then what the consortium agreements indicate. Often this is linked to the preparation of decisions to be made by the governance board and/or executive committee as well as their role in finalising the reporting and planning of the activities, which is linked to their responsibility for sending these documents on time to the Commission. In addition to their role preparing the meetings of the governance board and/or the executive committee, they also play a steering role through chairing (and participating) to these meetings as voting (coordinators) or non-voting (administrators) members.

Second of all, there seems to be a tendency that either the governance board or the executive committee plays an active role in the governance practice. In the cases in which an executive committee is assembled (the Friendship Case, the Cross-Discipline Case and the Social Network Case), the governance board is not assembled or is said to be passive, approving the decisions made by the executive committee. In the cases that do not assemble an executive committee (the Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Funding Agency Case), however, the governance board does play an active role.

Third, the way in which funding is divided seems to influence the type of steering exercised. The case that did not divide the funding for the whole funding period at the network-building phase (the Funding Agency Case), engages in steering more through direction control on the activities to be undertaken than do the other cases. The cases that did divide (most of) the funding for the whole funding period at the network-building phase (the Friendship Case, the

Cross-Discipline Case, the Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Social Network Case) seem to engage less in steering in general and if they do steer this is done based on performance control.

Fourth, policies as well as procedures for deciding upon particular conflicting or potentially conflicting issues were seen as essential in dealing with conflicts and prevent conflicts in the future. In the Funding Agency Case an important issue is, however, brought up in relation to the potential conflicts between member organisations as not all participants from the member organisations are (actively) involved and therefore do not feel bound to the rules or practices developed in the consortium.

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS OF MANAGEMENT IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

PLANNING IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

The actual planning of activities in the different cases is done on different levels and spans from individual participants (the Social Network Case and the Cross-Discipline Case), to sub-work groups (the Friendship Case), to work groups (the Funding Agency Case) and work group leaders (the Long-Term Collaboration Case).

The level of involvement of others in shaping or commenting on these plans differs and spans from no discussion of plans at any level (the Social Network Case and the Funding Agency Case, though the latter case does have peer-reviewing of the plans in order to select those that get funding), discussions at work group level (the Long-Term Collaboration Case), and discussions at all levels from sub-work group to consortium level (the Friendship Case).

The consortium broad activities such as training and seminars as well as financial, administrative and other general activities such as communication and PR are in all cases planned centrally by the executive committee or coordinators/administrators. These plans seem not to be discussed in any way in broader settings, except if this influences the budget set out at the start.

ORGANISING IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

Choices in relation to work group leaders needed to be made in several cases. This can be done centrally (by the executive committee) or decentralised (by the work group themselves.

Participants in the work groups are in most cases selected by senior participants from the member organisations. In most cases these participants and their role was already to a large extent set during the network-building phase. The Long-Term Collaboration Case and the Funding Agency Case are exceptions, but in different ways. In the Long-Term Collaboration Case it seems that when a member organisation has an interest in a work group and would like to participate, this would be possible even though this was not agreed upon at the start. The Funding Agency Case had no activities set for any participant and thus all the participants, through networking and learning to know each other, build possibilities for participating to or initiating work groups. In addition, as these are decided upon every year, ones role and position in the network-building phase is far less crucial.

The budget in all cases, except the Funding Agency Case, is be prepared and decided upon centrally by the coordinators or administrators. Although in most cases the final decision is made by a larger group, the executive committee or the governance board, these are described as approval of what has been suggested as demanding changes is seen as a sure card for endless discussions.

Differences between the cases are however that in, for example, the Social Network Case most of the budget was decided upon at the outset and only part of the funding needed to be allocated later on, while others adjust the funding along the way based on the actual activities planned (the Long-Term Collaboration Case) or performance measures (the Cross-Discipline Case).

The Funding Agency Case is an interesting exception as the decision on consortium level concerning allocating funding to particular activity areas are made by the governance board, based on a suggestion from the coordinator, but very much discussed. The actual division of the budget to the work groups is based on the evaluation through peer-review, though the coordinator does play a central role asking those that proposed to adjust their request when he sees it fit.

MOTIVATING IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

In all cases whereby the work of the consortium is focused on coordinating or integrating work done by the member organisations, self-motivation of participants seems to be very important.

In most cases there are particular people involved in generating and maintaining of effort of others, though this is not always institutionalised or clear, such as the work group leaders, coordinator, or representatives or more senior participants of the member organisations.

Motivating is in most cases also supported by the way in which the funding is distributed, whereby mechanisms are installed to support motivating. The Social Network Case seems to be an exception in that most funding was divided upfront, and no additional mechanisms are created to make sure that people collaborate.

COORDINATING IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

The coordinating of the activities to be undertaken is spread across different levels, though the coordinating of the work was often done only on sub-work group or work group level.

Some cases did focus on unity on higher levels more than others. The Friendship Case as well as to an extend the Funding Agency Case are examples whereby unity across sub-work groups seemed far less focused on, while in the Cross-Discipline Case as well as the Social Network Case cross work group meetings were presented as a means to share results and generate ideas for future collaboration between the participants of the member organisations in the different work groups. In the Long-Term Collaboration Case the coordinating was centralised, through an active role of the administrator in preventing overlap.

Meetings and especially having face-to-face contact were seen as one of the main means to unify and create new plans in which knowledge of different member organisations would be needed.

No data was seen relevant to this.

AN OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE MANAGEMENT IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

Role of administrators in direction control, planning and coordinating → the support given is not always clearly one or the other. In many cases, but maybe most clearly in the Long-Term Collaboration Case, the administrator when compiling the overall plan of activities is having the possibility to control the direction and may thus suggest re-orientation or re-writing of parts. In addition, this administration is supporting the planning of the whole through noticing overlap and holes in the planning. And then coordinates by bringing those working-group leaders in which the group had overlap together to find synergies and better connections.

Reliance on self-motivation (can be the type of work, but is also influenced by the nature of meta-organisations)

Planning very much bottom up concerning that what the member organisations would undertake in any case, exception is the Long-Term Collaboration Case. Much more top down planning concerning additional, meta-organisational wide activities (the things that somebody needs to plan, but is not central to any of the member organisations, such as meetings, web site, pr, training).

Difficulty of budgeting in meta-organisational setting → centralised to those that prepare – administrators, coordinators (executive committee may be having an influence). Except in the Funding Agency Case, as not linked to the member organisations directly it is more neutral and thus can be done by governance board actively.

Full reliance on member organisations selecting personnel – to do the work, taken for granted, not discussed as issue.

Difference between cases in use of mechanisms to generate and maintain effort – the Cross-Discipline Case and the Funding Agency Case putting mechanisms in place to simulate participation/prevent funding going to participants that after that do not participate

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS OF ADMINISTRATION IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

HANDLING GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

There are several processes in which governance and management information needs to be collected, stored, compiled, communicated, etc. Processes that are commonly present in the cases are those of planning, budgeting, reporting and decision-making. In addition, in many of the cases also other processes such as membership application and training application processes are in the need for handling governance or management information.

From the case descriptions the following issues seem important to point out. First, the handling of governance and management information on consortium level is in most cases done by the administrators working for the consortium. In two cases (the Long-Term

Collaboration Case and the Funding Agency Case) in addition to an administrator working at the coordinator's organisation, a member organisation, specialised in administrative tasks, takes care of a lot of the consortium-wide handling of information. In two cases (the Cross-Discipline Case and the Social Network Case), the coordinating organisation is using its infrastructure to undertake the work needed in relation to the handling of the governance and management information. In the Social Network Case, however, it seems that the involvement (and commitment) of the coordinating organisation is less than that of the Cross-Discipline Case. In one case (the Friendship Case) the deputy coordinator handling most central governance and management information was located at another member organisation than the coordinator and financial administrator, which follows from the development and choice made for changing the coordinator during the network-building phase.

Second, in relation to the content and financial issues the handling of governance and management information is to a large extent done at the member organisations, which need to plan and report on what they do and how they spend the share of the funding they received. This creates a need for well-functioning ways of handling the governance and management information which prevents miscommunication and needing to redo, add or change the way of handling on the way. The cases with added a member organisation specialised, directly from the beginning developed and used internet based tools in order for the member organisation to be able to report their use of funding as well as the activities they undertake. Also in the Friendship Case, which had a very well experienced administrator the reporting seems to have been standardised from early on. In the Cross-Discipline Case and the Social Network Case who did not work with administrators that had less experience in Commission funding, the development of the procedures in relation to the handling of the information in relation to the planning and reporting only developed after difficulties of finding a way to produce the documents demanded by the Commission after the first year (the plan for the upcoming year and the report of the previous year).

PRACTICAL ORGANISING FOR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

The practical organising of governance and management meetings at consortium broad level is in all cases done centrally by one of the administrators. Work group and other type of meetings such as conferences, seminars and training are often left to be organised by member organisations. The Cross-Discipline Case is an exception in relation to the annual meeting (a conference type of meeting) for which all practical organising is outsourced to an external organisation.

ARRANGING OF NEEDED MEANS

No data was seen relevant to this.

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS: AN OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE ADMINISTRATION IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

One of the most obvious observations in relation to the administration practice is the extensive role of the administrators on consortium broad level in all the different elements of administration. In addition, however, also the coordinators do play a role, though more at the background than in the network-building phase.

In relation to the handling of information, however, the key role of the member organisations is sometimes mentioned but not much explored. In relation to this, one notices a difference between the different ways of organising, whereby the need for involvement with, for example, financial administration of the funds received at member organisational level is different. In some cases, the administrators of the consortium directly interact with the financial administrators of the member organisations while in others this seems to be communicated through the representatives.

The cases which had a more professional or experienced set of administrators, created a relative centralised administrative system with direct communication lines with the administrators at the member organisation. In addition, from early on clear procedures, specific forms to fill in and tools for the handling information were created. In the cases which had a less professional or experienced set of administrators, the development of procedures and forms only took place after the first time in which a new plan of activities and a report over the first period needed to be submitted to the Commission. Interviewees reported that the planning and reporting during this first period was very difficult and time consuming. This indicates that especially when planning and reporting are needed for external parties, the process tends to formalise. This may have a positive effect on the collaboration, as the external pressure enhances the member organisations to express their collaboration and results which in turn gives the participants of the whole consortium a possibility to gain a good understanding of what has been done and will be done in the future.

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SANNE BOR

A THEORY OF META-ORGANISATION: AN ANALYSIS OF STEERING PROCESSES IN EUROPEAN COMMISSION-FUNDED R&D 'NETWORK OF EXCELLENCE' CONSORTIA

Organisations collaborate with one another. And they appear to do so more and more frequently in the recent decades. At the same time many of these efforts fail to deliver what the collaboration was set up for. This combination creates the basis for the fascinating and stimulating research field of inter-organisational relations – a field which is still very much in development.

In this thesis the focus is on meta-organisations, associations in which organisations are members. The steering of such inter-organisational structures appears to need a novel approach, a collective, multi-level engagement which I set out to examine. The thesis is structured to foreground the process of the research and the development of my thinking. The study is conducted on R&D consortia funded as Networks of Excellence by the European Commission under Framework Programme 6. The study is based primarily on five case studies, by way of documentation and interviews. In addition, the study draws on data collected on 101 consortia and consortium agreements from 50 consortia.

The thesis develops the theoretical understanding of meta-organisations and their organisational conditions and implications. Meta-organisation theory, thus far, has focused mainly on the implications following from having organisations as members. This thesis suggests adding to this theory the implications created by constitutional membership, that is, members that constitute the organisation. Constitutional membership makes a difference in three ways: it creates a clear boundary of the meta-organisation; it assumes collective ownership of the meta-organisation; and it makes possible the utilising of indirect resources – the resources of the member organisations, and most importantly their personnel – by the meta-organisation.

In addition, the thesis develops a conceptual framework of steering processes, combining governance, management and administration. This framework shows how both decisions and mutual adjustment in top-down, bottom-up, and horizontal directions steer meta-organisations. The framework may, however, be fruitfully used to study other organisations as well.

The findings from the analysis of the steering processes show that the utilisation of indirect resources decentralises the governance, management and administration of activities to the participants of member organisations who are undertaking these activities. The results also demonstrate that the governance, management and administration of undivided tasks centralises to those with formal management responsibility. In addition, the analysis shows how control and granting are avoided, externalised or formalised to deal with lack of hierarchical authority. These and other findings of the study seek to refine and extend the hypothesised conditions of meta-organisation theory.

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