

# Assistive technology – a bright future in Europe ?

25 Sept 2008, Milan, Italy

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# Recent Policy context

- July 2006 - Riga Ministerial Declaration
- June 2007 - **Action Plan Ageing well in the information society**
- June 2007 - **Ambient Assisted Living research programme (AAL)**
- Nov 2007 - **e-Inclusion policy - European e-Inclusion Initiative**



# EU e-Inclusion Policy

## European e-Inclusion Initiative

- e-Inclusion matters is an **opportunity**, but there is too little progress on 'Riga'
- Raise awareness and commitment:
  - Ministerial Debate, 2-3 December 2007
  - E-Inclusion campaign 2008
  - **Ministerial Conference, 2008** ← **participate !**
- Enable – Accelerate – Integrate action framework
  - Broadband; e-accessibility; digital literacy
  - Ageing well; inclusive e-services; marginalised groups
  - Cooperation; benchmarking (Riga Dashboard)



# AT needed to unlock the economic potential of e-inclusion

35-85 B€ economic opportunity of e-inclusion

**Riga scenario = halving the gaps**

*More digital inclusion means:*

- I. Increasing human / social capital and employability
  - **€30 billion** from increased participation to the labour force
  - **€9 billion** from increased productivity
- II. More citizens buying ICT and boosting ICT industry sales
  - **€10 billion** of extra GDP growth from increased ICT industry sales
- III. More take-up of eGovernment and efficiency / productivity gains
  - **€7 billion** of efficiency gains through transaction costs savings
  - **€30 billion** of extra GDP growth from better e-Government



# Some factors influencing the assistive technology field

- **Users demand their rights**
  - elderly, persons with disabilities, mobile citizens, ...
  - demographic change: ageing, and many youngsters left behind...
- **Mainstreaming**
  - Assistive technology ↔ mainstream technology
  - e-policy ↔ policy
  - open innovation and lower barriers to technology (at least some)
- **Technological progress**
  - AT attractive, moving upstream in R&D
- **European and national legislative environment**
  - From laws to soft policy (Directives...good practice exchange)
  - Cost pressures
  - Changes in provision support approach, new actors in innovation
- **Globalisation + adaptation pressures**
  - Need specific solutions, world-market competition
  - New actors in innovation



# Some results of AT study: many SMEs not based on sound business model

A particular need  
is identified  
(i.e., hearing loss)



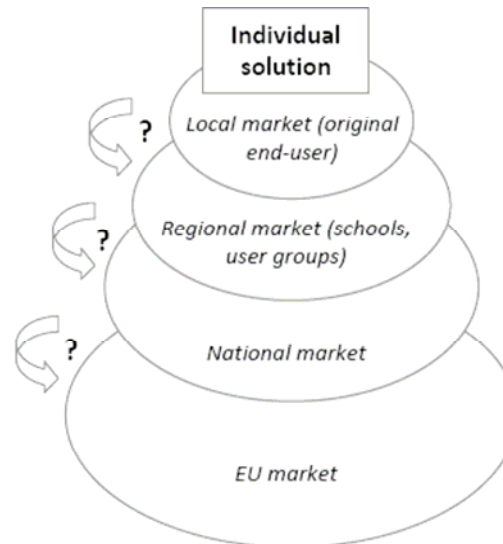
A specific, essentially  
“homemade”,  
solution developed in  
response



The solution has a certain  
appeal to others looking for  
similar functionality (i.e.,  
through end-user support  
groups, education and  
training centres, etc.)

## SOME ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

- **Optelec Tieman Group** began producing a video magnifier for the wife of a very good customer
- The first line of **Siemens Hearing Instruments**, initially intended for hearing-impaired employees and family members
- **BAUM Retec AG** began as one-man engineering office with the aim to provide electronic aids for blind and low vision people
- **B&J Adaptaciones S.L.** founded by an architect who suffers from Multiple Sclerosis and his brother.



A company is born  
based on solving a need,  
and not necessarily on the  
profitability parameters of  
the business model.

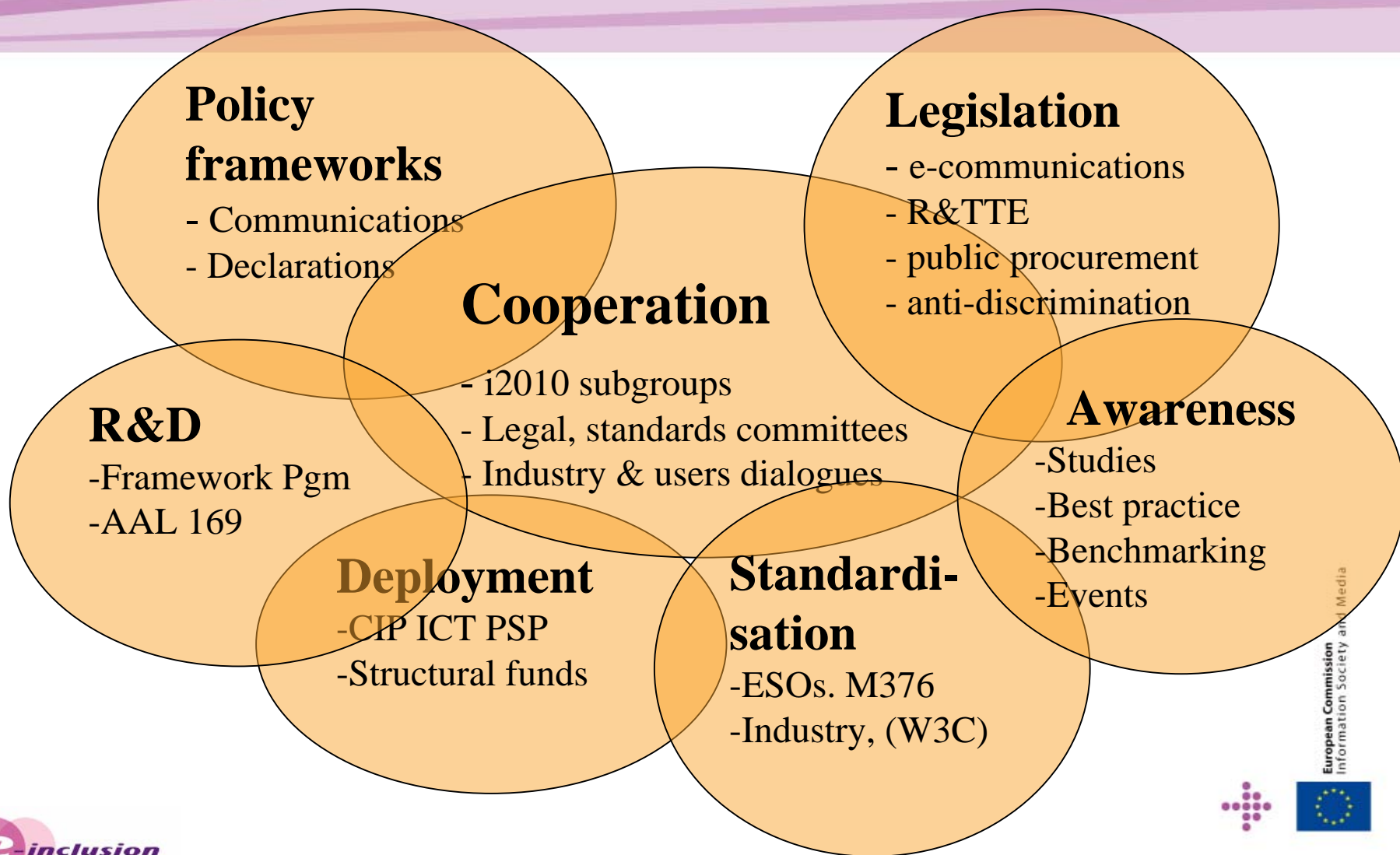
# Some results of AT study: diversity of reimbursement approach

Different models: Social, Medical and Consumer + Different languages<sup>1</sup>

	HEARING AIDS	BRAILLE READERS	APPLS FOR VOICE COMMUNICATION	SOFTWARE FOR COMMUNICATION	ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL SYSTEMS
DENMARK	social	social	social	social	social
FINLAND	medical	medical	medical	medical	medical
FRANCE	medical	social	consumer	social + consumer	social + consumer
GERMANY	medical	social	social	social	social
ITALY	medical	medical	medical	medical	social
HUNGARY	medical	consumer	consumer	consumer	consumer
NETHERLANDS	medical	social	social	social	social
SWEDEN	medical	medical	medical	medical	medical
UK	medical	social	social	consumer	social
GREECE	medical	consumer	consumer	consumer	consumer
AUSTRIA	medical	social	social	social	social
ISRAEL	medical	social	social	social	consumer
SPAIN	medical *	consumer	social + consumer	social + consumer	social
BELGIUM	medical	social	social	social	social
SLOVENIA	medical	medical	medical	social + consumer	social + consumer
SLOVAKIA	medical	social	social	social	consumer



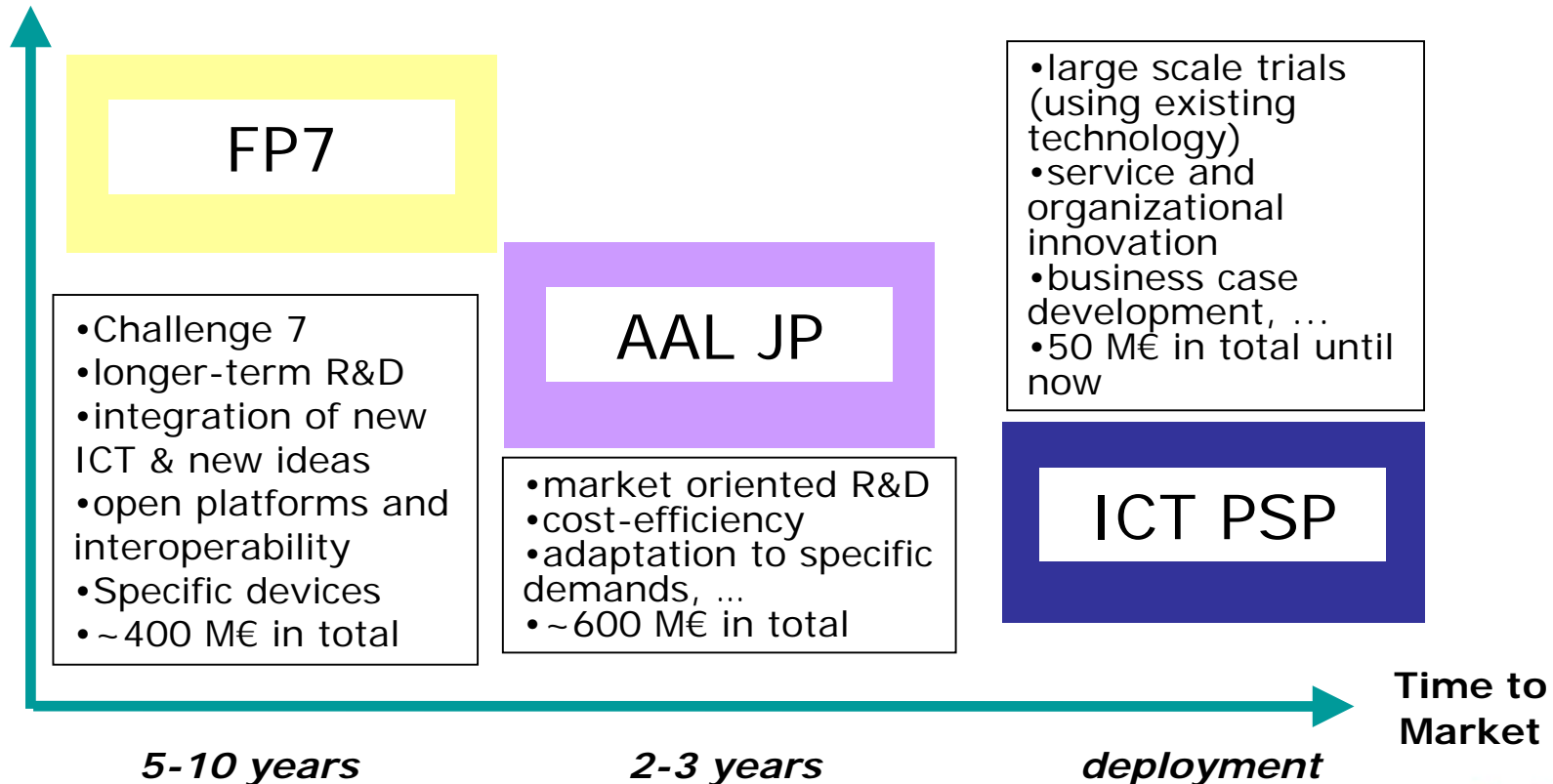
# General policy approach to AT: Overview of instruments





# Relevant EU programmes for AT (in relation to e-accessibility, and to ageing well)

Technology  
Risk



Time to  
Market

European Commission  
Information Society and Media



# Exploit the technological opportunities

- R&D: **provide your input**  
for future FP7 work-programme
- CIP: **define your needs**  
for future CIP work-programme
  - e.g. linkage with results of main European Technology Platforms ?
  - AT observatory?
- Standardisation: **interoperability** with mainstream technologies
- Awareness: **participate** in Vienna, **demonstrate** successful AT



# Conclusion: Getting our act together for the bright future of AT

- **Strengthen the evidence base:**
  - Your socio-economic assessment
  - Design-for-all success stories
  - Market barriers (EU AT market study, **follow-up study**)
- **Connect all the policy instruments**
- **Extend your cooperation !**

