Foreword

This book represents a timely initiative. In recent years, collaborations in research and development have gained enormous importance for innovation and technology diffusion, and have therefore gained the attention of managers, economists and policy makers. This new form of organization of research activity is a quite effective way to share knowledge, gain complementary assets and generate new technologies in most sectors where advancement is rapid. Therefore it has become the focus of European and national policies in support of innovation and technology diffusion.

The work by Yannis Caloghirou, Nicholas Vonortas and Stavros Ioannides and their co-authors addresses the relevant topic of collaborations in research and development at two complementary levels. First, it focuses on their determinants, performance and impact through a survey of more than 500 companies in seven European countries and through case studies on several research joint ventures. Second, it examines public policy in support of R&D cooperation in various European countries and by doing that it emphasizes similarities and differences.

Thus the book represents a very rich and insightful analysis of the characteristics of collaborations in research. It is very documentative and provides a useful evaluation for the researcher and the policy maker. In order to examine collaborations it not only combines successfully various complementary databases with survey and case studies. It also maintains a comparative perspective in looking at the ways firms collaborate and at the role of national innovation systems within Europe.

The conclusion that one can draw from this work is that research collaborations are now a pervasive and diffused way to get access to knowledge and generate innovation, but that firms differ widely in the motivations for collaborations and the benefits gained, and governments follow a wide variety of policies in this respect. All these differences have to be well known and understood by the researcher and the policy maker. No doubt this book greatly advances our understanding about the characteristics and policy aspects of collaborations in R&D. And this understanding becomes particularly relevant when the new Sixth Framework Programme moves Europe towards the creation of an integrated Research Area.

Franco Malerba
CESPRI – Bocconi University, Milan