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**HOW TO MANAGE INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION?  
CASE: EUROVISION SONG CONTEST**

Tampere University  
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## Abstract

The Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) is one of the longest running international TV shows in the world and has been organised by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) since 1956. ESC has been studied from political, sociological, national and cultural perspectives, but research about collaboration and management between organising actors is missing. The aim of this research is to fill that gap. The study uses qualitative methods to examine how the international collaboration in the Eurovision Song Contest is managed.

The thesis focuses on management processes and structures in the management of the ESC collaboration between main organising actors named by the EBU: The EBU, Executive Supervisor, Reference Group, Host Broadcaster, Heads of Delegation, and Participating Broadcasters. I examine the ESC cases which are selected based on the availability of data, language, location and personal interest: Helsinki 2007, so far the only one held in Finland, and more recent events relying on reports, research, and documents available. I interview representatives from the EBU and public broadcaster in Finland (YLE) involved in the ESC management. The thesis is based on the case study, drawing on relevant documents, ESC studies, articles and theories about collaboration management and interorganisational cooperation. I identify responsibilities and tools of managing the international collaboration and conclude that in the ESC management structures there are both hierarchy and networked organisations with highly coordinated and formalised processes. The results will provide insight about international collaboration management in media projects.

Keywords: Eurovision, ESC, collaboration, network, media management

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Because of the wide reach and unique nature of the Eurovision Song Contest, managing its international collaboration is an interesting and important topic. The ESC has been held annually among the member broadcasting organisations of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) since 1956. It is one of the longest running international TV contests in the world (Eurovision.tv, 2016), and is popular also outside European borders. In 2016, over the three finals, 2014 million people were reached (EBU, 2016). Australian audiences have been watching the contest for thirty years. The country joined ESC in 2015 as a special guest for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and remained as a participant also in 2016, indicating the ESC is not only popular among Europeans. Also, in 2016, ESC was broadcast for the first time in the United States. From a personal perspective, I have watched the ESC for over two decades and appreciate the entertainment it provides. I find it intriguing that the ESC concept has survived for over 60 years and is still popular. This begs the question as to why it has survived, and especially how that might be related to the management of the ESC?

Research has been done on ESC voting systems, bias and political relations (Ginsburgh & Noury, 2008; Spierdijk & Vellekoop, 2009; Yair, 1995), from a cultural point of view (Pajala, 2011), production (Akin, 2013) and the ESC's influence on national identity (Jordan, 2011). But research on the collaboration management perspective of the ESC has not been studied. To fill this gap, my research will examine the management structure and processes in the Eurovision Song Contest collaboration. The research contributes new information to ESC studies and how international collaboration is managed in the media industry.

This research answers to the following questions:

- how the international collaboration is managed in the Eurovision Song Contest top level organising?
- the management structures
- what are the management processes between the main organising parties in the ESC; European Broadcasting Union, the Executive Supervisor, the Reference Group, the Host Broadcaster, Participating Broadcaster, and Heads of Delegations (EBU, 2018)?

In this research, I also recognize

- what are the potential challenges and success factors in the management processes for this popular series of live broadcast events?

As these questions are qualitative in nature, I have conducted a case study relying on document analysis, reports, previous ESC research and interviews for this research. The focus is on ESC event in Helsinki, Finland in 2007, accompanied by documents, studies and interviews on more recent events between 2008–2018. I chose Helsinki because it is the only one to date that Finland has hosted and I live in Finland. It has made the data collection from YLE and interviews with YLE representative fluent, and documents examined for this research have been either in Finnish or English so there has been no need for translation. I conducted open-ended interviews with selected parties from YLE and the EBU.

However, as the event was organised over 10 years ago, I have examined more recent events as well to cover the most recent aspects of managing the international collaboration of the Eurovision Song Contest.

The interviews and document data were recorded and have been analysed manually by hand coding. The theoretical framework consists of articles, books, online material and previous research about the Eurovision Song Contest, literature on interorganizational collaboration and international cooperation, and collaboration management and governance. The research employs A case study research design and methods (Yin, 2003).

The Eurovision Song Contest is a solid concept, it is supervised by the EBU, it has a tight schedule and there are various temporary, international teams involved in organising the events. In this research, I recognize the management structures in the collaboration management and characteristics and factors enabling the sustainability and success of the ESC, and provide results to improve understanding in managing collaboration in international media projects.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

In this research I examine previous studies on Eurovision Song Contest and theories and definitions of collaboration, hierarchical and network forms of organisations, and collaboration management, to see if and how they apply in the management of the ESC collaboration between main organising parties.

I will introduce the ESC concept in the subchapter 2.1 and the organising parties of the ESC management in subchapter 2.2, then proceed with previous ESC research in subchapter 2.3 and proceed to collaboration and collaboration management theories in subchapter 2.4.

### **2.1 The Eurovision Song Contest: Six decades of TV entertainment**

The Eurovision Broadcasting Union was formed in 1950 to bring European public service broadcasters together. On their mission to develop joint-broadcast projects, an idea of a European wide song contest was introduced. The first contest was held in Switzerland in 1956, with seven nations competing. By the 10th anniversary of the ESC, there were 16 entrants and 150 million viewers, including new audiences from Eastern Europe (O'Connor, 2006).

In the 1990's turmoil in Europe resulted to many new nations, and the EBU allowed 25 participants in the contest since 1993. The contest remained as a one-day event until 2004, when the EBU introduced a two-day show, entailing a semi-final and final with the record of 36 participants. Since 2008, semi-final has been prolonged to two days, to be held on Tuesday and Thursday. The song contest final takes place on Saturday, which practically means the whole Eurovision Song Contest

has grown to be a week-long festival for the public. In 2016, the European Broadcaster Union had 73 member broadcasters and 48 countries took part in the Eurovision Song Contest.

The rules of the ESC have been changed during the years as the contest has developed, including limitations to perform songs in country's official language or amount of group members allowed on stage (O'Connor, 2005). Some features have remained for decades, for example the scoring system which is valid still today, was introduced in 1975. Voters give points from 1 to 8, 10 and 12 points goes to the favourite performance (Eurovision.tv, 2018). Before televoting was piloted in 1997, country's jury decided on the votes. Voting method has expanded since, and currently audience is allowed to vote by SMS. Countries are not allowed to vote for their own songs.

The winner of the ESC organises and hosts the next year's event, so the contest travels around Europe. The Host Broadcaster is also in charge of the live broadcast of the events.

## **2.2 Main organising actors of the ESC**

In this research I refer to main organising actors of the ESC; European Broadcasting Union, the Executive Supervisor, the Reference Group, the Host Broadcaster, the Participating Broadcaster, and the Heads of Delegations. These terms are explained briefly below. The roles and responsibilities of each organising actor are presented in the chapter 4. Actors are referred later in this research sometimes as abbreviations to avoid repetition.

**The European Broadcasting Union (EBU)** is the largest alliance of public service media in the world (EBU, 2018). EBU's mission is to support and strengthen the role of public service media. In the end of 2018, it had 71 members representing 117 organisations in 56 countries and additional 34



Associates in Asia, Africa and the Americas. EBU members operate over 2,000 television, radio and online channels and services, reaching together over one billion people around the world.

**The Executive Supervisor (ES)** is the EBU representative in the ESC management and oversees the ESC organising on behalf of the EBU (eurovision.tv, 2018). For example, the Executive Supervisor monitors the voting procedures in the live shows and makes sure that the result is valid and presented according to the ESC Rules. The role of the Executive Supervisor has existed since the very beginning of the ESC. Since 2011, the Executive Supervisor has been supported by an Event Supervisor.

**The Reference Group (RG)** is the executive committee to control and guide the Eurovision Song Contest. The Reference Group consists of eight members: The Chairman, three elected members of the Entertainment Expert Group of the EBU, Executive Producers from two previous host broadcasters, the current Executive Producer of the Host Broadcaster, and one Executive Supervisor from the EBU. The Reference Group was established by the European Broadcasting Union's Television Committee in 1998 (eurovision.tv, 2018).

**The Host Broadcaster (HB)** is the broadcaster organising the event. The Eurovision Song Contest is traditionally organised by the national public broadcaster of the country that won the contest year before. Although victory is aspired, becoming the Host Broadcaster may be unexpected and present challenges. The Host Broadcaster often cooperates closely with the Host City. The Host Broadcaster's operations are being managed by its Executive Producer (eurovision.tv, 2018).

**The Heads of Delegations (HoD)** are in charge of participating broadcasters' delegations. They are the main contacts for coordinating with the EBU.

**Participating Broadcasters (PB)** are the EBU member countries taking part in the European Song Contest. The number of participating broadcasters has been approximately 40 in recent years. Participating Broadcasters representatives in the ESC management are Heads of Delegations.

**Host City (HC)** is the city where the Eurovision Song Contest is held. It is chosen by the Host Broadcaster.

### **2.3 Eurovision Song Contest research**

The Eurovision Song Contest has intrigued researchers throughout the decades. Its long history, wide popularity, impact on many countries, and effect on national identities as well as political relations provide plenty of material to examine.

*The Eurovision Song Contest 50 years: the official history* (2006) by O'Connor describes annual contests until 2005 and significant changes made in the ESC over the decades, and it has provided facts for reviewing the history and development of the ESC also in this research.

Akin (2013) has researched ESC production in Turkey applying Pierre Bourdieu's field theory and explored how musicians and producers from Turkish Radio & Television Corporation (TRT) experienced their participation to the ESC, to discuss the differences between imagination of the Turkish media and reality in the ESC production from within.

Bias and political aspect of the voting system in the ESC have been popular research topics (Ginsburgh & Noury, 2008; Spierdijk & Vellekoop, 2009; Yair, 1995; Yair & Maman, 1996). Yair (1995) suggests that

*“the Eurovision may be interpreted as a symbol of European unity. Thus, the political and cultural boundaries imprinted on this symbol of unity serve as clues to the development of the structure of Europe.”* (Yair, 1995,p.160).

In the research, Yair recognized three-Bloc political structure in Europe analysing the ESC voting matrix: The Western Bloc, a coalition based on historical and political interests; the Northern Bloc, based on solidarity from common cultural and primordial lingual codes; and the Mediterranean Bloc, relying on cultural experiences associated with the sea.

Spierdijk and Vellekoop (2009) conducted a case study of the Eurovision Song Contest to examine if and how common characteristics of jury members or peer voters affect the voting systems outcome. They claimed there is strong evidence for voting bias in the ESC based on geographical, cultural, linguistic, religious, and ethnical factors. However, they did not recognize the regional block voting by specific countries. Ginsburg and Noury (2008) were looking at if the voting is cultural or political and came to conclusion there is no evidence for vote trading except linguistic or cultural proximities.

The cultural point of view and impact on national identity are also covered (Jordan, 2011; Pajala 2011; Sandvoss, 2008). Mari Pajala (2011) has researched the cultural memory of the ESC in the Finnish media during the years 1961–2005 by reviewing the ESC broadcasts, Finnish national finals and media coverage in Finland. She demonstrates how the ESC history has changed its meaning over time, yet always linking to nationality in its interpretations. She writes that the ESC research has mainly focused on political aspects and entries of individual countries, noting that even though the significant tradition the ESC has, historical research on the programme is scarce and covers mostly analyses of the individual countries’ entries in the contest, whereas more research focuses on the contemporary ESC (Pajala, 2011).

Paul Jordan (2014) has examined nation branding, national identity and the ESC in Estonia. In his research, Jordan discusses the meaning of the ESC as a platform for a post-Soviet country in a post-Cold War context, and also what the winning of the contest in 2001 and hosting the ESC 2002 meant for a small nation. He points out what challenges emerged in the organising. In addition to Estonia, Jordan explores the ESC cases in Ukraine, 2005, and Finland, 2007, to provide comparison.

In the case study, I have researched articles and documents of the ESC from the EBU, YLE and other Host Broadcasters. I applied Yin's book *Case study research: Design and Methods* (2003) in exploring the ESC cases and preparing the interview protocol for my research. I also used *Research Design* by Creswell (2014) as a guide.

## **2.4 Collaboration definitions and collaboration management**

Collaboration theories applied in media management are scarce, and my research contributes to this field of study as well. On collaboration and interorganisational cooperation I selected articles and books to define collaboration and networks (Alter & Hage, 1993; Fjeldstad, Snow, Miles, & Lettl, 2012; Mattessich & Monsey, 1992; Perrault, McClelland, Austin & Sieppert, 2011; Powell, 1990;) and how collaboration is managed (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Ollus et al, 2011; Ospina & Saz-Carranza, 2010) to identify ESC management structure and processes and see which management processes apply in the ESC.

Alter & Hage (1993) developed a synthesis of theories of interorganizational collaboration and presented four variables driving to develop collaboration; willingness to cooperate; need for expertise; need for financial resources and sharing of risks; and need for adaptive efficiency. They discuss cooperation as coordination and how it can be defined by its purpose. They describe

coordination as means to control and regulate work systems within and between organisations and argue that when an interorganisational coordination may affect to activities so that they are governed to achieve a common goal. I review if these variables and coordination can be recognized in the ESC collaboration.

Mattessich & Monsey (1992) state that collaboration has many meanings for various people, and they define the term as a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship in which two or more organisations are joined to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to: a definition of mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards.

Perrault, McClelland, Austin and Sippert (2011) describe collaboration as *“a durable relationship that brings previously separate organizations into a new structure with commitment to a commonly defined mission, structure, or planning effort”*.

Powell (1997) writes about networks as *“a distinctive form of coordinating economic activity”* and compares economic organisations based on forms of exchange. He states that certain forms of exchange are more social and rely more on relationships, mutual interests, and reputation, and less guided by a formal structure of authority. An expectation of network relationships is that one party is dependent on resources controlled by another, and that there are gains to be had by pooling of resources. The network parties agree to give up the right to pursue their own interests at the expense of others. This research discusses whether the structure of collaboration between ESC organisers is based on networks or hierarchy, and identifies similarities to Powell’s definitions.

Fjeldstad, Snow, Miles, & Lettl (2012) have researched the architecture of collaboration from strategic management and organization design viewpoints. They introduce the concept of the actor-oriented architectural scheme and show how it can be used to describe and explain organization

designs. They discuss hierarchical schemes and suggest that traditional organizational forms vary according to three main factors related to hierarchy: division of labour (number of different organizational units), number of levels, and number of superiors. The types of functions needed for activities defines the division of labour. The span of control determines the amount of hierarchical levels, and the number of superiors depends on the variety of functions, product groups, and regions/countries. According to Fjeldstad, Snow, Miles, & Lettl, the multi-firm network form has less hierarchy than other traditional forms, but some hierarchy still exists. Their work contributes to the understanding of the process of large-scale, multiparty collaboration, which is applicable at the ESC management structure and processes analysis.

Alliances and collaboration are familiar forms in construction and IT industry. Marrewijk (2005) has studied control and commitment in mega-projects, and how conventional hierarchical management and network types of organisation are combined in project-based alliances. Ollus et al (2011) present dimensions of collaborative project management in production and planning and note that collaborative project management can be interpreted in two ways. It can mean 1) management of collaborative projects, referring to the management of projects in networked and distributed environments, where the processes are distributed with participants and organizations in different locations, countries and cultures, and the management can be either central or collaborative, or 2) collaborative management of projects, with shared project management which may be non-hierarchical and participative with results-based assessment of progress.

Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh (2012) have done a wide literature review on collaborative governance and found out there is a lack of generalizability in the existing frameworks. They define collaborative governance as *“the processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people constructively across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private and civic spheres in order to carry out a public purpose that*

*could not otherwise be accomplished*". In this research, I analyse the ESC management following this broad definition, as the international collaboration and management include processes and practices of collaboration which are not applicable within more limited frames.

Ansell & Gash (2008) reviewed case studies from literature and represent collaborative process with a collaborative governance model of four broad variables: starting conditions, institutional design, leadership, and collaborative process. I examine whether Ansell and Gash's collaborative governance model can be identified in the ESC management, or parts of it.

Ansell & Gash (2008) also discuss the effectiveness of collaborative governance and claim that most studies in the collaborative governance literature focus on evaluating process outcomes. Measuring the performance and effectiveness of interorganisational collaboration has been researched among others by Kozuch and Sienkiewicz-Małyjurek (2012), who developed a framework for public management defining factors of effective collaboration. They name five groups which affect the collaboration; factors of external environments, factors related to organization characteristics, factors related to people characteristics, relational factors and instruments of inter-organizational collaboration. This framework could be useful for possible further examination of the ESC management, although in this research I am excluding the analysis of performance and focus on how the collaboration is managed.

As seen from the selection of definitions and theories above, there are many definitions for collaboration and often they are related to public management. Because the EBU is an alliance for public broadcasters I see no conflict in implementation of frameworks or theories previously used with public management, even though some of the organising parties may be private organisations.

As the ESC is a continuous, annual project and media event (Katz, 1980), articles and theories on media management and project management could have been added in the framework but they were

left out in the end, to keep the research concise.

Lundin and Norbäck (2016) suggest that media managers will need to become more “project fluent” in the future, both in knowing how to compile the projects and how to manage them as processes and professional practice. This research provides understanding in planning a process in large media events.



### 3 METHODOLOGY

Case studies are useful when researching questions “how” or “why”, or when the researcher has little control over the events to be explored (Yin, 2003). These points are valid in my study. This study relies on multiple sources of data, which is also typical for qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). The qualitative approach was also selected because the answers to the questions in my study can be defined by case studies, open-ended interview questions and document analysis, and because I explore concrete actions in an actual event and aim to define and explain the processes in international management between the organising parties of the ESC.

On philosophical worldviews Creswell (2014) writes that social constructivists believe that individuals seek understanding to the world, the goal of the research is to rely on participants’ view and constructivist researchers often address the processes of interaction among individuals. As I aim to understand the management processes, collaboration and structure in the ESC, my study is partially constructivist. However, because my research is real-world oriented, focussing on actions and consequences (Creswell, 2014), the study entails also typical features of pragmatic worldview. Therefore, my approach is constructivist-pragmatic.

Yin lists five components of a research design which are important for case studies: 1) a study’s question, 2) its propositions, 3) unit of analysis, 4) the logic linking the data to propositions, and 5) the criteria for interpreting the findings. The questions and propositions of this research concern the forms of collaboration and structure of the management. I also propose the management structure may be one reason for the sustainability of the ESC. As the unit of analysis is the European Song Contest event management in general, the material consists of multiple units of analysis, embedded single case design (Yin, 2003). Linking the data to propositions and criteria for interpreting the findings are done by hand coding and analysing the documents, materials and interviews by terms

and themes related to study questions. I identify frequent and established processes, roles and tools to manage collaboration.

I conducted interviews with people involved in the international ESC management from the YLE and EBU, i.e. host broadcaster representative and the EBU reference group member, and the EBU Executive Supervisor. As a data recording procedure, Creswell (2014) suggests the interview protocol to be planned in advance before entering the field, providing the list of necessary components included in the protocol. I used this pattern in my interview structure. Questions for the interviews were based on the topics emerging from document analysis and theoretical framework. The interviewees were selected based on the case study documents and organisations. However, I limited the number of interviews to two sessions to keep the amount of data reasonable for qualitative study and to focus on the research topic, and because the selected interviewees had experience from various organising parties roles.

I contacted YLE in 2016 and arranged an interview with Kjell Ekholm, who was a member of the EBU Reference Group during 2002–2009. He had also experience of being the Head of Delegation for Finland. Ekholm was involved closely in the Helsinki 2007 Eurovision Song Contest organizing and provided valuable information on the management structure and the ESC organizing concerning the Helsinki event and in general level as well. An open-ended interview was held in November 2016 at YLE premises. The final report of the Helsinki 2007 Eurovision Song Contest by YLE helped to understand the Host Broadcaster's role and organisation structure, as well as the annual schedule from the HB's point of view.

After reviewing the existing material, I had an interview with the EBU's Executive Supervisor, Jon Ola Sand, who has been in his position since 2011. The instrument designed of previous interview

with Mr. Ekholm needed to be adjusted and narrowed to find out more detailed and specific information in a 30-minute phone interview with Mr. Sand. The interview was re-scheduled from the end of 2018 to early 2019, but eventually the interview was held in January 10, 2019. The interview provided an overall picture to the whole year of organizing the ESC from the EBU's point of view and gave new information on regular processes and enlightened the way of working and nature of collaboration between the ESC organisers. The interview with Sand also supported previous deductions and observations I had found in my research.

I have developed a case description (Yin, 2003) and listed data related to management structure, roles and processes mentioned in the interviews and documents in categories based on what aspects of management they link to. The analysis was done by hand coding. The validation was done by comparison between different sources and for the interview data, the interviews were recorded. The first interview was done face to face, and the second one was done by phone.

As the data for this study was collected from public broadcasters, part of the general information about the Eurovision Song Contest management was easy to access. As Yin (2003) points out, when research questions aim to find out the organization's relationships with other organizations and how they collaborate, it is needed to collect information directly from the other organizations and not merely from the one I started with in order to draw conclusions about interorganizational partnership. In my study this means I had to include all main organisers when looking for material to build a picture of the ESC.

Personal documents like memos or detailed reports were difficult to access, as were some agreements due to confidentiality. In some parts I have had to rely on limited information. Part of these problems were solved through the interviews.

Based on the data analysis, I developed a case description. I define roles and responsibilities for each organising actor in the next chapter, move on to describe a year in the ESC organising, and identify regular processes in the ESC management. In chapter 7, I discuss the findings according to my research questions.

There were no ethical considerations regarding my thesis. I aimed to eliminate possible biases by having a clear and objective interview protocol and followed it in the interviews.

## 4 THE ROLES OF THE ORGANISING ACTORS

Yin (2003) notes that documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artefacts are the six important sources of evidence in conducting a case study. I have selected documents, earlier studies, reports, web sites and interviews to examine how the ESC collaboration is managed, what is the management structure like with the roles and responsibilities of each organizer, and what are the regular processes used to manage the collaboration. The criteria of how I have selected data is based on my research questions and I have focused on concrete information on what is expected of each actor, what are the structures between them, regularities in schedule of organising the event and tools used to manage the ESC international collaboration.

In order to understand the management structure and especially the responsibilities of each organiser, I found important information by studying the Eurovision Song Contest rules from various years by the EBU. The rules are very detailed, including the delivery schedule and definitions of what is expected from each party. The rules are updated annually for each event.

Besides the roles and responsibilities, I have examined articles, studies and reports, online and offline, and conducted interviews with Kjell Ekholm and Jon Ola Sand to clarify definitions of the roles of the main organizing parties and figuring out the way of communication, main processes for the ESC management and what kind of tools or instruments are used to manage the collaboration. Because my research aims to define one organization's relationships with other organizations (Yin, 2003), I tried to get material and interviews from different organising parties.

I define the roles and responsibilities of each organizer and then move on to describe the annual procedures of the ESC management.

#### **4.1 The roles and responsibilities of the EBU and the Executive Supervisor**

The EBU is world's largest alliance of public service media. The Eurovision Song Contest is organized under the supervision of the EBU. The EBU is in charge of the ESC policy and professional execution of each event (EBU, 2014; EBU 2015). All rights of the Eurovision Song Contest are owned by the EBU.

The executive supervisor and the Event Supervisor, who work in the EBU Media team (J.O. Sand, personal communication, January 2019), support the Host Broadcaster in the ESC planning and oversee the production throughout the year.

*“We are a small team here at the EBU, who is the owner of the ESC format on behalf of their members. We have very broad output here. My closest co-workers within the EBU are the legal department, the financial department, my team here which consists of an event supervisor who takes care of the ESC event related matters like the press, logistic, travels, accommodation, side events, opening, the red carpet and all of that is not programme related. I have my assistant who helps me to make the right priorities in my daily work. And we organize all the reference group meetings and make sure we have all the right topics at the agenda.”* (J.O. Sand, personal communication, January 2019)

The executive supervisor and his team are the main point of contact for participating broadcasters, and for the EBU's organisational partners for marketing, music distribution, PR and digital matters (Eurovision.tv, 2019). In case of the rules are violated, the ES reports the matter to the RG, the

governing body of the ESC on behalf of the participating broadcasters. The ES is also one of the eight members of the RG.

It is defined in the rules of the 60<sup>th</sup> Eurovision Song Contest (2014) that the EBU's responsibilities entail ensuring that participating broadcasters permit the agreed sponsorship and advertising exposure to the marketing partners and suppliers during the transmissions of the semi-finals and the ESC final in accordance with national laws. The EBU is also responsible together with the reference group for the marketing of all commercial exploitation rights, supervising the benefit of the participating broadcasters and the host broadcaster. Collecting market information on the ESC events to support future sponsorships is also EBU's responsibility.

The EBU is in charge of the ESC format and overall branding of the ESC, approved by the reference group. The branding of the annual events is chosen together with the Host Broadcaster and the EBU. The EBU is also in charge of the official ESC website.

Supervisors can be sent to any location oversee the ESC televoting or national juries voting processes by the EBU without a notice. The EBU is also responsible for supervising the voting in general and making decisions and giving instructions to the presenters regarding the voting during the live shows; the Executive Supervisor oversees the TV production and monitors the voting procedure, to make sure a valid result is being presented in accordance with the rules (Eurovision.tv, 2019).

The EBU will also make international highlights tape for commercial purposes and archive the ESC shows.

#### **4.2 The role and responsibilities of the Host Broadcaster**

The duties of the Host Broadcaster are listed in detail in the Host Broadcaster agreement between the Host Broadcaster and the EBU (EBU, 2014). These agreements are not open to public in full detail and the main responsibilities for this research are collected from the Eurovision Song Contest rules, online sources, and interviews.

The main responsibilities of the Host Broadcaster start by setting up, in cooperation with the EBU, a committee for organizing the ESC. All negotiations or cooperation projects with third parties regarding the ESC organizing need to have written permission from the EBU before the negotiations can start. *“The Host Broadcaster shall not delegate and/or assign to third parties the organization and/or the production of the ESC as a whole and shall remain liable at all stages for the organization and of the production (EBU, 2015)”*.

The ESC event production, including the two semi-finals and the final covering the “complete production of three live uninterrupted television programmes on the agreed dates and with the agreed timing” (EBU, 2014), is the Host Broadcaster’s responsibility. The Host Broadcaster shall ensure the live delivery of the signals of these three productions to the Eurovision network. As mentioned in the ESC Rules (EBU, 2014; EBU, 2015) the international signals to be delivered shall be a clean feed.

The Host Broadcaster proposes the production budget for the Reference Group to approve. The city and venue for the event should be suggested by the Host Broadcaster, and if the EBU and Reference Group approve the suggestion, the Host Broadcaster should book the venue (EBU 2014; EBU 2016; K. Ekholm, personal communication, November 2016).

The Host Broadcaster has to ensure sufficient and affordable accommodation of at least 1,000 hotel rooms, functioning logistic arrangements, and ensure safety and security of every contestant and delegation member during the event. The plan for safety and security made together with the local



authorities needs be presented to the EBU for approval (EBU, 2014). The Security of ESC 2007 was provided by a close cooperation of Host Broadcasters security department, Helsinki City Police, Helsinki City Rescue department and a private security company (YLE, 2007).

The Heads of Delegations meeting, which is usually held in March (EBU 2014; J.O. Sand, personal communication January 2019), is organized by the Host Broadcaster in cooperation with the Executive Supervisor and inform all Participating Broadcasters of all necessary preparations to participate the event. After the meetings, the Host Broadcaster provides participants a research schedule and published the running order of the songs, decided by a draw, trying to meet every request the Participating Broadcasters have for their performances and make sure the artist can perform their songs uninterrupted. The HB shall also ensure that the songs and performances do not conflict with the ESC Rules or the event concept. Information to Participating Broadcasters should follow the delivery schedule, which is defined in the ESC rules. Facilities for visiting broadcasters and participating broadcasters are provided by the HB.

In addition to the previous responsibilities, the Host Broadcaster needs to make sure there is social programme for audience and artists throughout the event week. The Government of the host country needs to guarantee freedom of expression for the ESC participants, journalists and fans.

In case of a dispute between the Participating Broadcasters and the Host Broadcaster, the EBU will make the final decision.

### **4.3 The role of the Reference Group**

The Reference Group, established by the European Broadcasting Union's Television Committee in 1998, is the executive expert committee representing all members of the EBU. It controls and

guides the ESC. The rules of the Eurovision Song Contest (EBU, 2014; EBU, 2015) summarise the main duties of the reference group as general policy, supervision and long-term planning.

The Reference Group is established by the Eurovision Television Committee (TVC) and its tasks, defined by the TVC on behalf of the EBU, contain approving the development and future format of the ESC and modernizing the brand and increase awareness of the ESC. The RG is also responsible for securing the financing of the ESC and supervising the event preparations of the host broadcaster. The Reference Group reports to the TVC (EBU, 2014; EBU 2015).

The Reference Group consists of the Chairman, who's appointed by the TVC, three elected Heads of Delegations, two Executive Producers from previous Host Broadcasters and the present Executive Producer, and the EBU's Executive Supervisor (EBU 2015; EBU 2019, K. Ekholm, personal communication, November 2016; J.O. Sand, personal communication, January 2019). In March 2019, the Reference Group had nine members. It is also mentioned in the Eurovision Song Contest web site that *"the reference group has a possibility to invite up to 2 extra professionals to join the group"* (EBU, 2019). In the Rules of the 60<sup>th</sup> Eurovision Song Contest it is defined that the members of the RG *"shall have specific portfolios to increase the efficiency of the Group, and aid collaboration with the EBU"*, and that those portfolios should include *"legal issues, the Internet and new media, format development, relations with other participating broadcasters, televoting and interactivity"* (EBU, 2014).

The Reference Group meets approximately five to six times per year (EBU, 2019). It supervises the general interests of all Participating Broadcasters. The Reference Group meetings are organized by the EBU, who is also the policy advisor for the RG (J.O. Sand, personal communication, January 2019; EBU, 2014).

The Reference Group needs approval from the television committee on the decisions regarding the changes in participants' fees, adjusting the rules of participating the ESC, changing the image or the rules of the ESC, making substantial marketing contracts or any developments which may endanger the continuity of the ESC (EBU, 2014). The Chairman may also turn to TVC in issues which are seen relevant for the TVC to comment.

Also, the EBU needs approval of the Reference Group in decisions regarding brand identity, programme concept development, changes in the ESC rules such as participation fees, design of the international website, sponsorship and marketing partners for the ESC, and other relevant changes in the contest format and production.

*“The Reference Group is a bit like the Olympic Committee. I was a member from 2002 until 2009. In 2005, I remember I visited Ukraine approximately 10 times due to the political situation, we had a Reference Group crisis meeting in December to discuss if the event location should be changed. Not all the years were so challenging.*

*We also decided to make changes in the rules in the Reference Group, even some big changes in the early 2000's. For example, we decided to take an external partner to manage sponsorships internationally and nationally. Prior to this decision, negotiating the sponsorship deals had been the Host Broadcaster's responsibility.” (K. Ekholm, personal communication, November 2016)*

All members of the Reference Group have one vote, and decisions are based on majority. Chairman will have a decisive vote in cases of a tie (EBU, 2014).

#### **4.4 The roles and responsibilities of the Heads of Delegations and Participating Broadcasters**

The EBU member broadcasters are allowed to participate the ESC. Each Participating Broadcaster must accept the current ESC rules and pay the participation fee to the EBU. The Participating Broadcaster must appoint a Head of Delegation, who is the main point of contact with the Host Broadcaster and the EBU, and the National Jury for the voting in the semi-finals and the final. They must also organize voting procedures according to the present ESC rules.

The Participating Broadcaster should promote the ESC in its national media and provide a national ESC website or webpage for its national selection. The live broadcast of the ESC Final must be shown in one of the Participating Broadcaster's main national channels. The semi-final where the Participating Broadcaster is competing should be broadcast as well, providing viewers an opportunity for televoting their favourite songs, excluding the country's own entry.

The Participating Broadcaster should be obliged to host the next ESC if it wins the contest. In case of winning the contest, the Participating Broadcaster must be available for the press conference after the ESC final.

The Head of Delegation, appointed by the PB, must attend the Heads of Delegations meeting in March and ensure delivering the information, song and related marketing material requested by the EBU on time. The HoDs must supervise that the ESC rules are respected. They are also in charge of their national delegations, consisting of maximum 25 accredited people, and ensure that their delegation arrives in time in the city where the ESC is held (EBU, 2015).

#### **4.5 Summary of the roles and responsibilities**

Based on the descriptions on previous chapters, it can be said that the EBU manages the administrative issues, deals with legal entities and funding matters, and makes sure all details in organising are taken into consideration when a new Host Broadcaster wins the contest. The EBU and Executive Supervisor help organisers and supervise the whole ESC concept.

The Host Broadcaster has an important role in producing the event and televising it according to the agreement. Besides the audience, there are many details to negotiate concerning the venue, budget, and hosting participating broadcasters and media. The main responsibilities are defined in the host broadcaster agreement and the ESC rules.

Participating Broadcasters need to provide their songs according to deadline along with necessary marketing materials and agreements. Participating Broadcasters should be prepared in case they win the contest and become the Host Broadcaster. The HoDs have important roles in keeping their delegations up-to date and making sure information is transferred from one party to another.

Duties of each organising party of the ESC management are presented in Table 1. In chapter 5, I describe the schedule and deadlines in the ESC organising.

<b>Roles and responsibilities of the ESC organisers</b>	
<b>Organising party</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<b>The European Broadcasting Union</b>	Supervises the ESC organising Controls the format Owns all the rights for the ESC,
<b>The Executive Supervisor</b>	Oversees the ESC organisation on behalf of the EBU Main point of contact to Participating Broadcasters and HoDs EBU's organisational partners for marketing, music distribution, PR, digital To secure participations in the contest Guide and advice Host Broadcaster in organising the contest
<b>The Reference Group</b>	Supervises participating broadcasters benefits Executive committee of the ESC Approves the development and future format of the contest Secures the financing and modernising the brand Increases awareness of the ESC Oversees the Host Broadcaster's preparations
<b>The Host Broadcaster</b>	Organise the ESC event Select the host city, venue, negotiate with government and local partners Main responsibility of televising the event Appoints and organisation to produce the event with the Executive Producer to manage the overall production together with the Reference Group and Executive Supervisor
<b>The Heads of Delegations</b>	In charge of the Participating Broadcaster delegation Provide all necessary information and material to the Host Broadcaster Main contact between the EBU, responsible for making sure their delegation acts in accordance with the rules.
<b>The Participating Broadcasters</b>	Apply to take part in the contest and pay attending fee Send delegations to the ESC Broadcast live the semi-final where they have contestants and the ESC final on one of its major TV channels

*Table 1: Roles and responsibilities of the ESC organisers. Source: The ESC rules 2014 & 2015, Eurovision-tv (2018), unpublished interviews with Ekholm (2016) and Sand (2019)*

## 5 A YEAR IN THE ESC ORGANISING

Organising an annual, pan-European event which will be broadcast live requires thorough planning, clear structure, and a tight schedule. For some countries who have plenty of experience in organising the event, such as Sweden, a country which has won and hosted the European Song Contest six times to date, a platform and production organisation already exists and the responsibilities of a Host Broadcaster are more fluent than for a participant who's winning the contest for a first time (K. Ekholm, personal communication, November 2016). To give an idea of the human resources required to organise the event only, the Eurovision Song Contest held in Stockholm in 2016 employed 577 people altogether, including make-up artist, pyrotechnicians, executive producers and commentator technicians (Melzig, 2016).

I aim to describe the events and deadlines of the ESC collaboration management in a chronological structure (Yin, 2003). The event is constantly in a process and recognising a certain point of beginning can be discussed from various angles: does the organizing the ESC start by preparing for the contest as a Participating Broadcaster? Should the annual schedule start from the beginning of the year? I start the year from the event itself, the night which is the essence of the whole tradition; when the audience in Europe sits on their sofas and cheer for their favourite songs; when the Host Broadcaster's efforts are rewarded and when the new one starts their hard work for the next event.

And, as the concept of highly defined and supervised, so is the time of the event. The Eurovision Song Contest is organised usually in the second week of May. The event consists of two semi-finals, held on Tuesday and Thursday, and the ESC final which takes place in the Saturday evening of the same week. The night of the final is when it all begins for the Host Broadcaster; the very moment the winner is announced, the organising of the next year's ESC begins. However, the Host

Broadcaster of the previous year still has work to do after the event. The final report of the event should be delivered to the EBU by the next Reference Group meeting in June.

Winning the Eurovision Song Contest is not always the aspiration for the Participating Broadcaster. Besides fame and glory, hosting the event means lot of work and major investments from the winner. EBU's Executive Supervisor for the Eurovision Song Contest, Jon Ola Sand, says the broadcasters often need help in organising the ESC.

*“Usually the broadcasters are not that well prepared. We (at the EBU) try to talk throughout the year what happens if they win.”* (J. O. Sand, personal communication, January 2019).

Kjell Ekholm from YLE was a Head of Delegation in 2006 and a member of the EBU Reference Group 2002–2009. He was present in the Athens ESC final in 2006, when Lordi, the heavy rock group dressed as monsters with their massive pyro show, won the Eurovision Song Contest. This was the first victory in the ESC history for Finland. Ekholm recalls that at the moment when the victory started to seem inevitable, *“Oh no!”* was his first thought.

*“I had been in the Reference Group since 2002 and I knew what organising the event meant for YLE and what it meant for Finland.”* (K. Ekholm, personal communication, November 2016).

YLE had some experience from the ESC production as they had, together with the Swedish broadcaster SVT, helped Estonia to organise the 2002 contest in Tallinn (K. Ekholm, personal communication, November 2016). Immediately after the Athens final was over, YLE started



negotiations to decide the Host City, the contest venue, partner hotels, and funding from the Finnish government. Web site for volunteer recruitment was opened shortly after the Athens final. For the Host City, there were Helsinki and Turku applying – they had the only arenas in Finland in 2006 big enough to meet the EBU requirements – and eventually Helsinki was selected. One month after the final, by the EBU Reference Group meeting at June 21, 2006, the governmental funding had been set, Host City Helsinki decided, and the venue, Helsinki Areena, were publicly announced (YLE, 2007).

In their Eurovision Song Contest Helsinki 2007 report for the EBU, YLE describes the first weeks after the victory in Athens as a period of hectic activity. Partners offering their services contacted YLE, and a committee to investigate the options for the ESC project and make the initial preparations was appointed. The Host City proposals were evaluated and negotiations on potential venues were started, based on the information mentioned in the ESC Host Broadcaster Agreement of the EBU and the ESC Rules. Simultaneously, website for volunteer registration was opened and discussions with the authorities on governmental support were started. The YLE made preliminary hotel bookings of 2500 rooms (YLE, 2007). On 21 June 2006, YLE held a press conference and announced that it was prepared to host the 52nd Eurovision Song Contest in Helsinki.

K. Ekholm (personal communication, November 2016) brings out the fact that as YLE had no commercial department, they needed an external partner to work with in commercial matters.

The RG meeting in June is not only a kick-off meeting for the ESC winner. It is a round-up meeting for the previous Host Broadcaster (J.O. Sand, personal communication, January 2019). The meeting agenda covers evaluation of the recent ESC organising, success of the events and what were the

learnings for the next Host Broadcaster.

The time between June and August is described as low-season for the EBU in organising the ESC (J.O. Sand, personal communication, January 2019). During that time, Host Broadcaster is actively making preparations for the next year's event.

The next meeting with the Reference Group is in September, and by that time the Host Broadcaster should already provide confirmation of the Host City, venue, and budget of the upcoming ESC (J.O. Sand, personal communication, January 2019). Deadline for Participating Broadcasters' applications is also in September. The Reference Group meets four to five times a year, usually in the country where the next ESC will be held. During the event week, the group meets when needed to discuss last-minute details (K. Ekholm, personal communication, November 2016).

September is a traditional time for a workshop to develop the Eurovision Song Contest format and share best practises (J.O. Sand, personal communication, January 2019). Discussions of how to improve, how to find good artists, what has proven to be a good method and next year's event topics are discussed with Heads of Delegations in Berlin, with topical keynote speakers giving food for thought.

Starting from January, the schedule is tighter and hectic not only for the Executive Supervisor but HoDs and HBs as well. Each country has to select their song for the contest – some may have done so already earlier – and the event production team is busy trying to have everything up and running in May.

The annual Heads of Delegations meeting is held in March in the Host City. According to the Executive Supervisor J.O. Sand (2019), that meeting is one of the most important meetings of the year. The Heads of Delegations will meet all the core people from the Host Broadcaster organisation and have the crucial information of how to prepare to the upcoming event and what is expected from the Participating Broadcasters. The Reference Group also meets in March, and that is when the group members are elected.

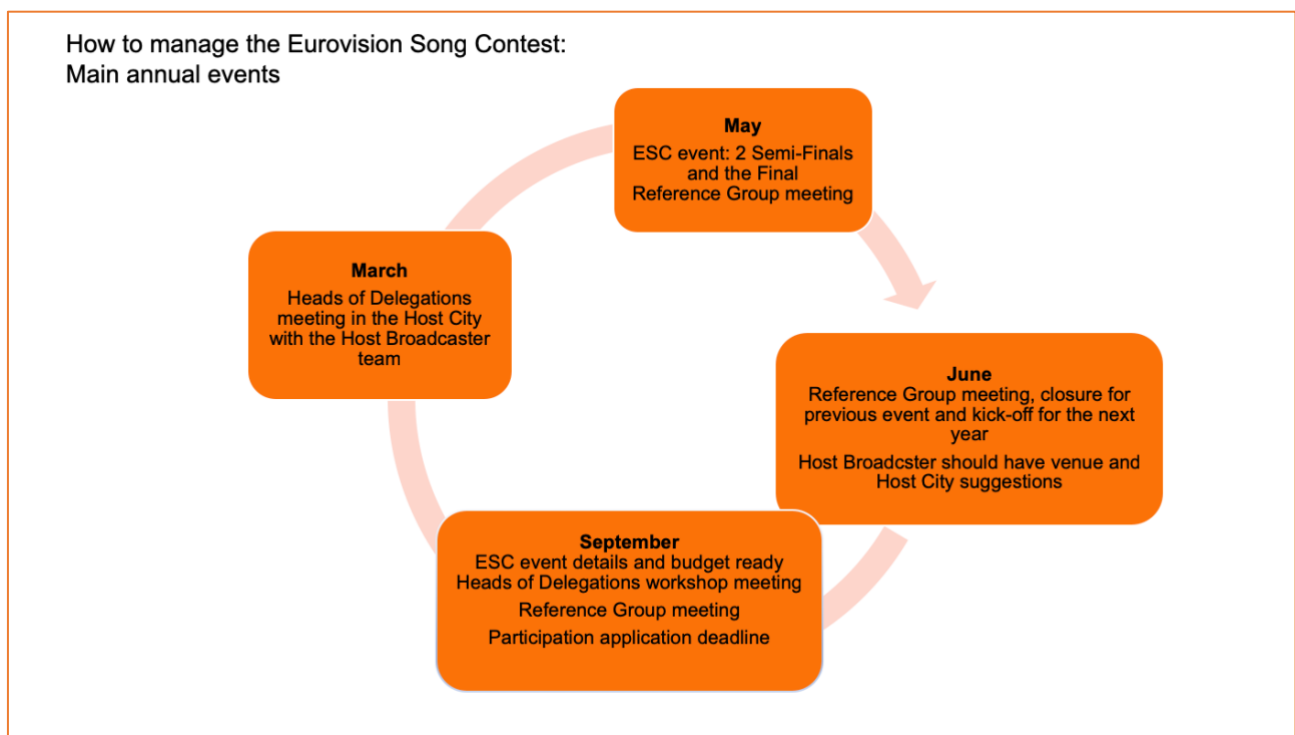
As the date of the event approaches, the communication between organisers becomes more intense.

*“Participating broadcasters receive newsletters from the EBU with organizational issues, editorial issues and other issues which may be of their interest. We use newsletters, email, phone. Every head of delegation knows they can call to one of us whenever and we help. We (at the Executive Supervisor’s team) are very accessible and they know it. The emails and newsletters can be sent once a month, or three-four letters a day in high season.”* (J.O. Sand, personal communication, January 2019)

After the ESC event week is over, the host broadcaster has to report the outcome to the EBU and details about the production, total amount of ticket sales, amount of people attending, how much energy was used etc. need to be transferred to the next HB. Reports are also delivered by participating broadcasters and partners with detailed viewing figures, media visibility and other detailed facts. To share information, the EBU has also an online knowledge database for the host broadcasters to fill up (J.O. Sand, personal communication, January 2019).

According to final report of the Helsinki ESC (YLE, 2007), regular meetings with the security providers and other authorities were started early in autumn 2006 and they lasted until the Final day. Meetings were daily during the event week.

To describe what is required in the ESC organizing, when and from whom, I have identified key actions to organize the ESC event and placed them in an annual clock (Picture 1), starting from what happens when the Participating Broadcaster wins the ESC until the end of the next event, when the new host has been selected, and reviewing the past show with the Reference Group in June.



**Picture 1.** How to manage the Eurovision Song Contest: Main annual events

## 6 TOOLS AND PROCESSES TO MANAGE THE INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IN THE ESC ORGANISING

The key roles and responsibilities of each organising party were reviewed in previous chapters. Main actions throughout the year in the ESC organising were identified, and in this chapter, I present the regular processes and tools used in the management of the international collaboration, based on the documents, interviews, previous research and reports I have examined for this study.

The format and legacy of the ESC is an important factor in managing the collaboration. The ESC rules set a frame for the whole concept and individual event, defining the schedule and roles and responsibilities of each organising party. The rules maintain the continuity and quality of the event. Defined roles and responsibilities mean there is jointly developed structure, shared responsibilities, mutual authority and accountability for success (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992). The ESC event itself has a recipe of its own and live broadcasts over the decades have made the event popular and well-known among European audience. Therefore I think the event broadcasts can be included as ways to manage the collaboration.

Another important document to manage the collaboration is the Host Broadcaster agreement, which defines clear responsibilities and limits for the HB organisation and the ESC event production, including televising the event and ensuring Europeans whose countries are participating the event can watch the show live and high-quality broadcast year after year.

Defined roles and responsibilities extend to defined groups; The Reference Group is a tool to supervise the ESC format, to supervise the owner of the concept, the EBU, and ensure the event is maintained according to the EBU member organisations' and Participating Broadcasters' best

interests. The HB's organisation to produce the ESC is also defined and is a prerequisite for organising the event. The purpose of these groups remains the same event though the members of the groups vary every year.

Regular meetings of the RG and the HoDs set a timeline for certain decisions and help the EBU to supervise the organising of the event. Meetings are also helpful for the Host Broadcaster and Participating Broadcasters to receive and share information and meet each other in person (K. Ekholm, personal communication, November 2016). There are also more ad-hoc type of meetings and unofficial meetings throughout the year between the Executive Supervisor, the Host Broadcaster and the Participating Broadcasters to increase awareness and inform the EBU member organisations on the ESC organising and prepare participants for potential victory and responsibilities of the Host Broadcaster (J.O. Sand, personal communication, January 2019).

Newsletters from the EBU to the PBs and HoDs are sent the year around on various topics. The frequency increases as the event draws near, and over the high season in the spring multiple newsletters per day can be sent (J.O. Sand, personal communication, January 2019). Emails and phone calls are frequent as well.

An online database maintained by the EBU is a tool for host broadcasters. Previous HBs fill in the specific information for the new HBs and the EBU to learn from (J.O. Sand, personal communication, January 2019).

The Host Broadcaster reports the event figures and results to the EBU when the event is over, and the Participating Broadcasters provide reports of media visibility and viewer numbers. Reporting is

a way to monitor the event success and efficiency and share best practices and learnings between the ESC organizing parties.

In Table 2, I have summarised the tools and processes which are used to manage the international collaboration in the ESC between the key organising actors and which have emerged from the ESC rules, interviews, reports and previous ESC research I have examined for this research.

Findings of the management processes, tools, and the ESC collaboration management structures are discussed in the chapter 7.

<b>Tools to manage the ESC international collaboration</b>	
<b>Tool/ Process</b>	<b>Actor/ Organiser</b>
The ESC rules, updated annually	The EBU
The host broadcaster agreement	The EBU
The general contest format	The EBU
The individual ESC event format	The EBU, The Host Broadcaster
Defined roles and responsibilities of each organizing party	The EBU, The Host Broadcaster, The Reference Group, the Participating Broadcasters
The ESC broadcasts	The Host Broadcaster
Annual meetings	Reference Group meetings Heads of Delegations meetings
Face-to-face meetings, phone calls, emails	Executive Supervisor, Executive Producer, Heads of Delegations
Reports	The Host Broadcaster, The Participating Broadcasters
Newsletters for participating broadcasters	The EBU
Annual workshops	The EBU, The Heads of Delegations
Internal digital database to share information, best practices and learnings from previous events	Host Broadcaster, the EBU, Reference Group

Table 2: Tools to manage the international collaboration of the ESC organising. *Source: The ESC rules 2014 & 2015, Eurovision.tv (2018), Interviews with Ekholm (2016) and Sand (2019)*



## 7 DISCUSSION

In this research, my aim was to examine the ESC collaboration management between key organising parties and identify the management structures. In this chapter I will analyse the findings based on the roles, responsibilities, regular events and processes described in the chapters 4, 5 and 6.

### 7.1. The ESC collaboration management structures

According to the ESC Rules (2014), *”the Eurovision Song Contest is an international coproduction by EBU Members which is carried out under the auspices of the European Broadcasting Union (the "EBU") as part of the television programme exchange known as Eurovision.”* The EBU is the owner of the format on behalf of the EBU members (J.O. Sand, personal communication, January 2019). When organizing the ESC, the EBU members are dependent on resources (Powell, 1990) controlled by the EBU such as the ESC format, legal entities, shared experience and know-how on previous events and expertise in organizing, contracts with marketing and televoting partners, broadcasting technology and consultation in various details of either participating or organizing the event.

The EBU supervises the ESC concept and annual event organizing and supports the Host Broadcaster in the project. Therefore, the EBU can be seen as an umbrella for the whole ESC organizing.

The roles and responsibilities of organising parties vary; a certain freedom in planning the ESC production and selecting partners is given to the Host Broadcaster by the EBU. The concept, event

format, schedule, international partners and rules of the contest need to be executed according to the EBU definitions and rules, and reporting is required. These elements indicate the collaboration between the EBU and Host Broadcaster is hierarchical. Akin (2013) writes the EBU's role can raise complex perceptions, seen

*“as the obvious sole authority of the field and as an institution to be respected and obeyed, if one wants to be a member of the field and part of the ESC program. Behind this respectful view of the EBU, however, is a more institutional and more abstract perception that views the EBU as more than an organization of agents, but also as an institution with a greater meaning. This broader perception of the EBU applies to the overall understanding of the ESC as well.”*(Akin, 2013, p.2313)

In hierarchical forms of organization, higher-level units typically control and coordinate lower-level units (Fjeldstad et al., 2012). Planning as well as standardization of skills and values (Fjeldstad et al., 2012) are features of hierarchical organization, which apply on the ESC collaboration; the ESC is a defined concept with given rules of the event and detailed Host Broadcaster agreements, including regular supervision from the EBU. Powell (1990) claims that hierarchical organizational form including departmental boundaries, clean lines of authority, detailed reporting mechanisms, and formal decision-making procedures suits well for mass production and distribution, where the constant supervision from management team brings reliability. Yet, in case of sudden changes, hierarchical organisation may not be strong. In the ESC organising, departmental boundaries exists, and clean lines of authority can be recognised in the EBU and the reference group roles. Detailed reporting mechanism has been created in the ESC management – final reports, online database for information sharing – and decision-making is clarified in roles and responsibilities of the organising actors. However, Powell's definition of hierarchy does not completely apply to the EBU. Management responsibilities are shared between the EBU, the RG and the HB.

The team of organisers is partly changing every year and the organiser network is established for a short term, with changing dynamics every year (Van de Ven & Walter, 1984). As Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh (2012) described, collaborative governance consists of structures and processes of public policy decision making bringing people together across the boundaries of public agencies or levels to carry out a purpose which could not be otherwise accomplished, I see managing the international collaboration of the ESC meeting this definition, adding that along public agencies, there can be private actors involved.

Powell (1990) describes the organisational key features and states that in hierarchies, employment contract is the context for communications and, even though relationships are important, the patterns and context of cooperation are depending on the person's hierarchical position and authority. I suggest the definition applies in the EBU's Executive Supervisor's role as well as Executive Producer's role within the Host Broadcaster organization, and in many cases in Heads of Delegations' roles since they are often employed by the Participating Broadcaster.

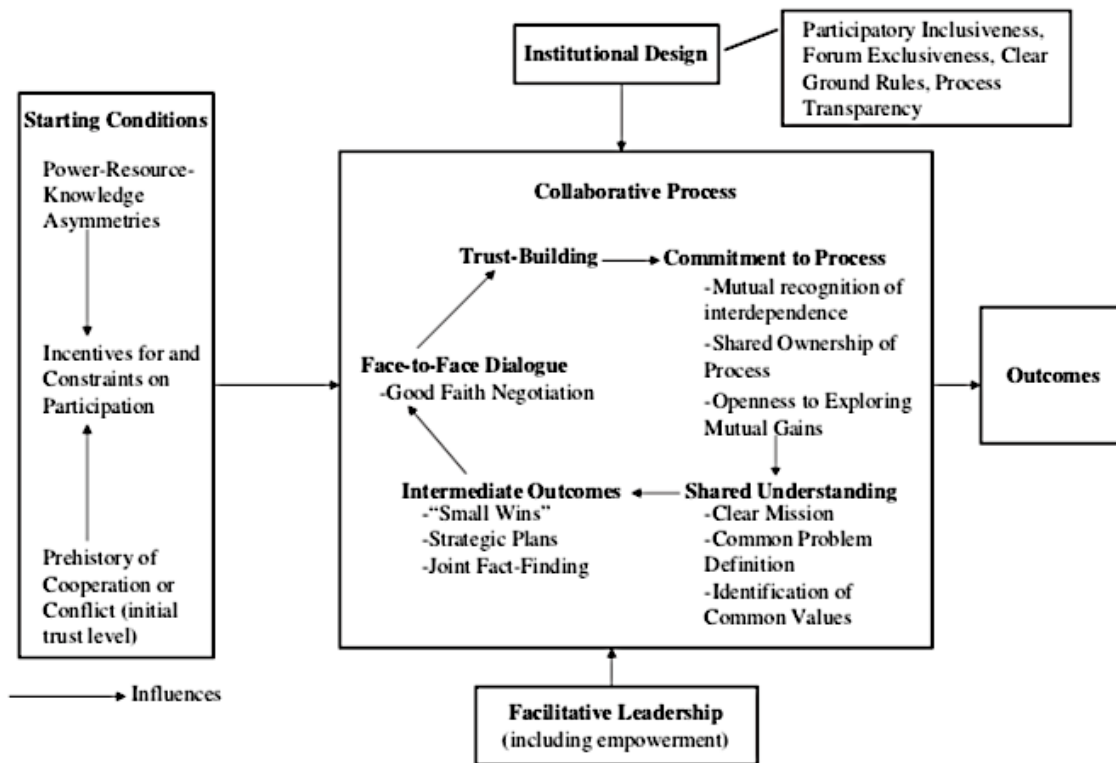
The EBU needs the support from its member organisations to ensure continuance of the ESC; the production of the ESC event is the major effort for the Host Broadcaster, but the event would not have content without Participating Broadcaster's shows, not to be ignored there are admission fees for participants, partially contributing to the funding of the event. The support from the Reference Group, involving members from various broadcasters, has a big role in the collaboration in case of solving problematic issues, in decision-making, and approving the guidelines for each show. Based on the findings of my research, I see the RG especially valuable in sharing information on the top-level ESC organising and maintain the ESC tradition. By changing the ensemble of the RG on regular bases, the EBU makes sure the information of the ESC organizing spreads and network for European-wide collaboration stays strong.

Akin (2013) came to a conclusion that in the relationship between agents from two participating broadcasters, both sides' positions are on the same level and therefore there is no hierarchical difference between them.

In network forms of resource allocation, individual units exist not by themselves, but in relation to other units. These relationships take considerable effort to establish and sustain, thus they constrain both partners ability to adapt to changing circumstances (Powell, 1990).

Ansell & Gash (2007) describe collaborative process beginning from face-to-face dialogue, trust building, commitment to process, shared understanding, intermediate outcomes and back to face-to-face dialogue (Picture 2). In the ESC collaboration management, the dialogue between the EBU and Participating Broadcasts is constant but when set in the frame of one year in production, the ESC final would mark the first face-to-face dialogue, the continuing to trust building between the new HB, the EBU and PBs, committing to the process and sharing the understanding of the next event, leading to the ESC event as intermediate outcome and continuing to round-up meeting and kick-off with the new Host Broadcaster.

## A Model of Collaborative Governance



Picture 2: A model of collaborative governance by Ansell & Gash (2007)

Analysing the facts of the hierarchical approach and models of collaborative governance it can be concluded that the ESC management structure is a combination of hierarchy and collaborative networks, and the EBU and the Reference Group are on the top-level of the hierarchy. I suggest the roles of the EBU and the reference group can be called facilitative leadership (Ansell & Gash, 2007), empowering, involving and encouraging stakeholders as well as representing weaker stakeholders, who I suggest in the ESC case are the participating broadcasters with limited resources. The supervising and leading role of the EBU implicates there are many hierarchical processes, such as the supervision of the ESC format and owning all the rights to the concept. Yet in the overall structure the efforts to organize the event demand input from various organizations, of which some may be specifically project-based, like the HB's ESC production organization, or contemporary for a fixed-term, such as the reference group. Coordinating and managing the

organizations efforts toward a common goal (Alter & Hage, 1993) require collaborative governance.

## **7.2 Management tools and processes**

In the beginning of this research I aimed to find answer to how the international collaboration is managed in the ESC. Analysing the material and looking for the answer to the question how the collaboration is managed, I identified tools, instruments and repetitive processes which I described in chapter 6.

The ESC concept and format are traditional and well-known across Europe. The ESC rules define delivery schedule, roles, responsibilities, rights and other details which create a foundation of how the ESC should be produced. As some freedom is given to the Host Broadcaster with the individual ESC theme and venue, the concept is defined and gives guidance of how to manage the collaboration. Everybody knows what the ESC event should include and how it looks like.

Specifically defined roles and responsibilities of the organisers listed in the rules give a frame for the organising parties; what are their areas of duty, what they commit themselves to by participating the contest. Experience shared through the EBU and the reference group prevent new host broadcasters from making costly or time-consuming mistakes.

In addition to the rules, the Host Broadcaster agreement clarifies the roles and duties of the HB and is more specific than the rules. The agreement is adjusted annually with the HB and the EBU.

However, to manage international collaboration with documents, rules and agreements does seem

like a challenge. As explained in the previous chapters, the annual processes include several regular meetings between organising parties. I suggest these meetings are important in managing the collaboration in organising the ESC, as durable, committed relationship which benefits all participants (Perrault et al., 2011; Mattessich & Monsey, 1992) is key factor in organisational collaboration and because face-to-face dialogue is where collaborative processes begin (Ansell & Gash, 2007).

Alter & Hage (1993) discuss cooperation as coordination and how it can be defined by its purpose. They describe coordination as means to control and regulate work systems within and between organisations and argue that when an interorganisational coordination may affect to activities so that they are governed to achieve a common goal. I claim that as coordination of the ESC by the main organising actors results to the ESC event, the common goal as an effort of participating organisations, therefore coordination is in key role in managing the international collaboration.

### **7.3 Success factors and challenges**

In this research, I have examined how the international collaboration in the ESC is managed and what are the management structure. In addition, the thesis aimed to identify the potential challenges and success factors in the management processes for the ESC tradition.

Key characteristics of the ESC is that it is held in different countries every year. That makes the event unique every year, and divides expenses between EBU's member organisations. However, the fact that the event travels makes it difficult to predict and creates new challenges every year (J.O. Sand, personal communication, January 2019). The host broadcasters can introduce themselves to the rest of the Europe, promote themselves, put their countries on the map and feel unified with the

rest of the Europe (Jordan, 2014; Sandvoss, 2008) . Traveling contest with different host each year means the expenses of the ESC are divided between organisers and financial pressure is not on one and the same organising party every year. This creates flexibility in long-term funding.

The tradition of traveling contest and changing countries means changing political atmospheres. Tensions between countries or in a country can make the contest vulnerable and affect security and safety of the participants and fans.

The ESC is a strong and solid format, with highly coordinated and defined guidelines. Annual processes and documents define the framework for organising the event. There is an established network of member broadcasters participating the event. According to J.O Sand (2019, the event has been around so long that almost everyone grew up with it. The tradition, the legacy of the event, is important and ensures there are no sudden changes or risks in the organising. Yet again, as it is complicated to make changes to the format, it is a long process and many parties have opinions on what the changes should be like. Therefore the contest format is not easy to renew or update, as decisions require approval from various groups.

Other challenges for the EBU have been the cases when the winning country has lacked the financial or technical resources to organise the Eurovision Song Contest. For example in 1972, Monaco had inadequate technical capabilities to organise the contest and they asked the BBC to help. The contest was taken to Edinburgh instead. Ireland had some difficulties in the 1990's when they won the contest three times in a row and four times in a decade. The RTE was struggling to manage the third consequence show in 1994 but decided to do so with the option granted from the EBU that should Ireland win again in 1995, RTE would not have to host the show the following year. It turned out Ireland did not win in 1995, but again in Oslo in 1996. Public was not pleased,



and the EBU needed to change the rules. As a result, tele-voting was introduced in 1997 (O'Connor, 2005).

As a challenge, monitoring and making sure the HB knows what is expected and what is the schedule may bring challenges. All in all, the schedule is very tight, and delays demand quick problem-solving (K. Ekholm, personal communication, November 2016). Also, external factors such as political tensions in Europe may create sudden threats or force changes to the ESC organising.

From the management perspective, it can be interpreted that the existence of the Reference Group ensures that information is shared on the top level in the organising. By having two previous Host Broadcasters in the group with the Executive Supervisor and the current HB Executive Producer, combined with other five experts for a longer period than just a year and share their experiences and discuss the current event can provide for the long-term understanding of what the ESC management includes and what type of challenges may arise over the year.

## 8 CONCLUSIONS

The Eurovision Song Contest is a strictly supervised and clearly defined format. Organising the pan-European media event for 200 million viewers to enjoy requires a complex network of professionals of various fields, which rarely can be found within one specific organisation.

Therefore, it is understandable the organising involves several organisations and networks. Part of them are established, long-term organisations, such as the EBU, and part long-term project-based organisations, including the Host Broadcaster's production organisation and the Reference Group.

Answering the questions of how the international collaboration of the ESC is managed between key organising actors has unveiled that there are hierarchical structures as well as networks. All organising parties of the ESC operate directly or indirectly under the EBU supervision and respect the EBU's rules of the ESC. The EBU is monitored by the Reference Group, which is supervising the benefits of all EBU member broadcasters. These two actors can change the ESC format, rules, and make top-level decisions. The Host Broadcaster can decide the event theme, budget and venue, although these decisions need to be approved and confirmed by the Reference Group. Participating Broadcasters can select their own performances for the ESC as long as the ESC rules are followed. However, the Reference Group consists of EBU members and is a network as such.

This research argues that sharing information and active dialogue between organising actors are in key role for sustaining the ESC tradition. Formal rules and agreements create a frame for managing as well organising the ESC collaboration and supervising the format.

The roles of the Heads of Delegations and Participating Broadcasters remained in the background in this research, as the three actors conquered the stage. Their role in the ESC collaboration management could be examined in more detail.

This study has merely scratched the surface of the collaboration management in the media industry and in the context of the Eurovision Song Contest. The research about the ESC management is scarce, and processes of each organising actor could be examined in more detail. The EBU's complex role as a facilitate leader and a hierarchical authority is fascinating and should be examined further.

To better understand the dynamics of collaboration in the ESC, research on structure of each organising party and how the groups are organised could be pursued; internal decision-making processes of the organisers would provide valuable information for media management; Funding can be further researched; TV production and how it is organised is a research topic of its own.

I trust that the glittery, glamorous and complex world of the Eurovision Song Contest keeps attracting researchers in the future from social, political, and cultural aspects and I hope to raise further discussion from the managerial points of view as well.

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