



THE
INNOVATION
ALLIANCE

active alliances

stakeholders

development

2/2015 Innovation Alliance E-zine

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Horizon 2020 - an SME funding instrument

To support innovation in SMEs in Europe, the European Commission has included an SME funding instrument in the Horizon 2020 funding rounds. Over the past two years, 1099 SMEs from over 30 countries received funding to the extent of 50.000 EUR to finance feasibility studies for new innovative products.

Recently the first 350 SMEs received close to 2.500.000 in funding for further developing their innovative products or services. The SME funding instrument is, although very competitive, an excellent opportunity for SMEs to produce new innovative solutions for tomorrow's market.

This new instrument aims to fill gaps in funding for early-stage, high-risk research and innovation by SMEs as well as stimulating breakthrough innovation. The SME instrument has been designed to:

- Provide easy access with simple rules and procedures.
- Be used across all societal challenges and the enabling the development of industrial technologies.
- Encourage SMEs to put forward their most innovative ideas with an EU dimension.
- Target highly innovative SMEs showing a strong ambition to develop, grow and internationalise, regardless of whether they are high-tech and research-driven or non-research conducting, social or service companies.

The most recent calls have been published recently and can be found at: <http://goo.gl/ioRjki>

The deadline for the first submission rounds is 24 February 2016.

“Are you a highly innovative, ambitious and passionate small- or medium-sized business with global ambitions? Are you looking for excellent business resources and mentorship - and substantial funding wouldn't hurt either?”

Development of the alliances

Cross Border Innovation Alliance Update

The Cross Border Innovation Alliance was formally launched in April 2015 at an event jointly hosted by politicians from both jurisdictions. Minister for Business and Employment Ged Nash formally welcomed the delegates and joined with Northern Ireland Westminster MP's Conor Murphy and Margaret Ritchie in wishing the Alliance every success. The audience represented a broad spectrum of politics, civic leaders, members of the business community, educators and public sector organisations. A lively discussion moderated by the Alliance Project Manager from NMEA and LCC followed where the experience and input of the audience was sought to direct the activities of future activities of the alliance. As a result of the launch one of the key national stakeholders in business development on the island requested a follow up meeting with the Alliance managers to discuss a potential collaborative project. Discussions on delivering a significant Innovation Programme with this national stakeholder is now at an advanced stage.

As a result of his work with the Alliance Dr Conor Patterson from NMEA was invited to address a joint Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Committee of both houses of the Irish Parliament (Oireachtas) on the topic of cross border economic collaboration. Dr Patterson cited the work of the N.Ireland/ Republic of Ireland Cross Border Innovation Alliance as an example of best practice. He said that the collaborative model which the Innovation Alliance was pioneering had the potential to deliver greater efficiency, economy and effectiveness in the use of resources at the local level and that this approach which was readily transferable could in aggregate generate an impact of national and transnational significance.

Regional Alliance in the Halle (Saale) region

The regional alliance in Halle is based on a consortium of regional stakeholders representing local higher education institutions, chambers of commerce, regional development agencies, municipalities and businesses. In order to develop targeted

and sustainable actions, it has been decided to assign external scientists to benchmark the innovation infrastructure in the Halle region with comparable regions in Germany and to develop suitable actions according to the outcomes of the study. Therefore the consortium joined an ongoing study and assigned Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft e.V. (a joint initiative of German businesses and foundations working in the field of research and innovation) to develop a so called Science Scorecard. The concept behind the Science Scorecard is based on the Balance Scorecard Concept. It analyses and evaluates regional innovation strategies and involves a great number of actors, processes, goals and subgoals in the regions. The local action plan will be based on the outcomes of the study – which is in its final stage of development.

For a while now, Univations GmbH and Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg are involved in the creation of an entrepreneurial culture and a greater focus on the interaction between university and industry. As such they together have been actively involved in the organization of regional events supported by other external stakeholders. These events included:

The “Gründerwoche” / Start-Up-Week

During this week workshops, speeches and expert discussions thematically focused on entrepreneurship. The start-up week brings students, academic staff and founders together and actively contributes to the development of an entrepreneurial spirit in the region.

The “transHAL” meeting

At the transHAL meeting industry and academia of the Halle region got together to enhance knowledge exchange and transfer. The meeting has become a key event, especially for SMEs, for the realization of new product ideas and/or services. To stimulate these developments, co-operation between regional SMEs and HEIs is fostered within transHal not only by the “Transferpreis” (worth €2.500) but also by students who present best-practice examples of knowledge transfer.

Romanian Innovation Alliance Update

Since its creation on March 3rd, 2015, the Romanian Alliance had several activities aiming to strengthen the ties between HEIs and SMEs, in order to improve their collaboration in innovation transfer.

On 26th of March 2015, the members of the alliance have organised the “Alliance for Innovation” seminar aiming to disseminate the Innovation Alliance project. The attendees at this event were representatives of the Romanian academic sector. Presentations at this event included, the paper “Collaboration between HEIs and SMEs using a new Alliance” by Miron Zapciu, Constantin Ionescu and Ana-Maria Onu.

The purpose of the event was to bring all alliance members together and provide all with a specific scientific background on the role of the alliance in driving innovation.

Another important activity of the alliance was the participation at the annual conference PRODUCTICA 2015, held on 29th of May 2015 at University Politehnica of Bucharest. The topic of this year's conference, “Integration of Research and Innovation in Business Environment”, attracted attendees from many categories (e.g. HEIs, SMEs, policy representatives and entrepreneurs). The track on “Alliance between University and Industry”, was



Promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in Europe

In our constant endeavor to disseminate the project results and create awareness for the project activities the dissemination and promotion occurs through multiple channels, for example event organisation, participation, communicating results to local policymakers.



The Software Testing Innovation Alliance goes European

After its launch in June 2015, the Spanish Software Testing Innovation Alliance (STIA) has organized 4 successful events in 4 different Autonomous Provinces in Spain: Valencia, Seville, Aragon and Basque country. The events have successfully brought together Spanish academia and industry to brainstorm and discuss how cooperation can improve innovation in software testing in Spain.

Past October, the Spanish Software Testing Innovation Alliance and the MIDAS Community joined forces, as a result of looking for synergies at EU level in order to promote the adoption of software testing into SMEs. The result is the European Software Testing Innovation Alliance or EuroSTIA for short.

The objective of this European Alliance is the same as that of the Spanish Alliance but at a European level. We want to bring together key actors in Europe on software testing in order to work together to improve innovation support and technology transfer from HEIs to companies in the area of software testing. This way we want to solve software testing problems, tackle challenges, remove barriers and execute projects that induce small-step change that has impact in research, in practice, in business or in education. The final results being better software quality.

The alliance is open to:

SMEs: the core of the alliance and main benefit of the adoption of innovation testing methods and technologies in practice.

Large enterprises: in particular in domains such as telecom, nuclear, defense, transportation, Internet of Things, have enormous testing needs in order to develop and deploy dependable and secure critical software and may be users of different testing solutions of the community.

Academics: there are several EU innovative projects addressing testing topics relevant for the research community, so feedback concerning the project's approaches, the use, the improvement and the realization of

innovative and/or standards testing tools, will be crucial for its success. We want to validate EU research at international academic events.

Developers of testing methods and tools: developers and researchers will have access to different testing platforms and may share their knowledge and advancements in the community.

Public administrations: innovative testing solutions could lower the integration, testing and maintenance costs of systems such as ones for managing healthcare, social and environmental policies. In some specific domains, i.e. logistics / dangerous goods transportation, there are regulations at local, regional and national level. They may be involved to automatically generate tests that reduces bureaucracy.

Standardization bodies: to establish international standards in different topics.


Policymakers: With the spreading of the digital economy on the Internet of Services and Things that will involve all aspects of the citizens' everyday lives, the dependability and security of services will become a must. We will raise the awareness of the policy makers and evaluate the need or opportunity of specific regulations concerning testability and testing.

The alliance will cover:

- A virtual community where news, events and general information may be shared among its members
- A repository of software testing results from EU projects or academia which may be adopted by industry
- A set of use cases where testing solutions have been transferred into industry in practice
- A set of national contact points in order to promote face-to-face meetings in different countries

Innovation Alliance learning resource for European SME

Planned availability 2016



COURSE DESCRIPTION



Training Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) in the skills needed to effectively engage with Higher Education Institutions (HEI) research.


The implementation of greater innovation in SME is vital to fulfilling not only Europe's economic objectives, but also those of a more equal and productive society with higher social and economic integration.


CHARACTERISTICS


Open access


Self-paced learning


Breaking down barriers


SME engage innovation transfer with HEI


Horizon 2020 projects


Effective and cost-efficient for all SME

MODULES

- 1 Understanding Academia

2 Understanding and Presenting your Needs

3 Growing your Collaborative Competences

4 Understanding Horizon 2020 Funding
- 5 How to Initiate Contact with the HEI and Demonstrate Capacity

6 Complemented by case study guides and an SME Horizon 2020 readiness database

EXPECTED FROM PARTICIPANTS

P REPARED

Be prepared, focused and ready to learn something new in every module.

R ESPONSIBLE

Ensure all modules are completed according to the guidelines.

P ROACTIVE

Engagement and participation online is highly encouraged.

Don't be afraid to share your thoughts!

Doing exercises and further reading is also important to help SME course participants to benefit fully from the course.

LEARNING PORTAL


www.innovationalliance.eu


Available February 2016


Anytime: 24/7



LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

"There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning." - Jiddu Krishnamurti

How to benefit from the project?

The Innovation Alliance project provides a wide variety of benefits for all stakeholders involved, specifically:

- Innovation stakeholders from the higher education sector, the enterprise support sector and public bodies charged with innovation development, will experience attitudinal and behavioural change, enabling a much greater degree of information sharing and collaborative action than was present prior to the project. This will generate long term support for innovation partnerships.
- SME owner managers will benefit a) individually, given that they will increase their knowledge and transversal business skills and b) professionally, as their SME will be listed on the matchmaking HEI-SME database. In the long term, SMEs will be more innovative, will create greater added value, be more competitive and achieve higher growth.
- SME participants in the comparative methodology study will gain an expert guided transfer with high probability of success and in the long run, their contribution will establish best practice for HEIs wishing to embark on their own transfers of innovation research or technology.
- HEIs will gain the knowledge and confidence to engage in more partnerships with SMEs, both by accessing the matchmaking function, implementing best practice in transfer processes, also regaining their leadership role in regional innovation promotion through their role in the Innovation Alliances.

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Our project team

The Innovation Alliance is an Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliance project led by Louth County Council and integrates seven additional key partners from six countries. The consortium has been formed strategically to bring together all those competencies and experiences needed to exploit the full value of the Innovation Alliances across Europe.

A dynamic team of practitioners:

We strongly believe in partnerships and collaboration

Making a true impact is our core goal with all activities being designed to reach this goal

- Louth County Council, Ireland
- Newry and Mourne Cooperative, United Kingdom
- MindShare Consulting, France
- Canice Consulting, Ireland
- The University Industry Innovation Network, The Netherlands
- Universitat Politècnica de València, Spain
- Universitatea Politehnica din București, Romania
- Univations, Germany





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