



THE  
INNOVATION  
ALLIANCE

active alliances

stakeholders

development

1/2016 Innovation Alliance E-Zine

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## Launch of Twelfth IQ Prize for Innovation in Central Germany

The IQ prize for Innovation in Central Germany will be granted to SME innovation projects coming from the Central German clusters Automotive, Life Sciences, Chemistry/Synthetic Material/Energy/Environment/Solar Industry and Information Technology. Applications can be submitted until the 14th of March. The prize has a long and successful history supporting high-level innovation of SMEs in Central Germany.

In 2016 it will be granted for the twelfth time. The stakeholders of the Regional Alliance within the Innovation Alliance Project take on an important role as they donate an additional regional innovation prize supporting scientific knowledge transfer of innovation in the Halle/Saale Region. In total, 70,000 Euro will be granted to innovation projects.

“The IQ prize provides an attractive platform to support innovative

products and services developed by central German SMEs. At the same time, the prize can be regarded as best practice for privately financed innovation support”, says Jörn-Heinrich Tobaben, CEO of the Metropolregion Mitteldeutschland Management GmbH.

As an established instrument for innovation support, the prize not only addresses members of the aforementioned clusters but also involves intermediaries such as business incubators, accelerator programmes as well co-working spaces and alike players being closely related to the start-up scene of Central Germany.

Examples of successful winners of the past years are:  
 2015: boraident GmbH  
 2014: BioSolutions Halle GmbH  
 2013: Ontochem GmbH  
 2012: Nanoptics Innovation GmbH  
 2011: boraident GmbH

More information on the prize can be received under the following link:  
[www.iq-mitteldeutschland.de](http://www.iq-mitteldeutschland.de)

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## Development of the Alliances

### Cross Border Innovation Alliance Update

The Cross Border Alliance between Ireland and the UK continues to develop with the addition of a further partner from the Republic of Ireland. County Meath is an area with a strong manufacturing base and the population has access to six 3rd level institutions within a close commuting distance with well-established links between HEI's and the business community.

The key action pursued as a result of the Cross Border TIAs deliberations has been to make a case to the Governments of the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland that there should be a mainstream innovation development programme for SMEs with innovation potential throughout the Northern Ireland/Republic of Ireland INTERREG region (and not just focused on Belfast and Dublin) and that it should harness the expertise and resources of the HEIs in the region, local development stakeholders and central government agencies working together in a collaborative delivery framework.

As a result of this initiative NMEA has represented a cross border partnership of local enterprise agencies in an alliance of support agencies and HEIs championed by the intergovernmental body, Intertrade Ireland (a member of the Cross Border TIA). That partnership has developed a large scale SME innovation support programme proposal for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Its ultimate objective is to initiate innovation in 1,100 SMEs and to generate 20 substantial Horizon 2020 projects by 2021. It is proposed that this initiative will be extended to include the west of Scotland. NMEA, Louth LEO and Meath LEO would all play a significant role in the delivery of this seminal intervention. The proposal is currently being appraised by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). Its decision is expected in June 2016.

### Regional Alliance in the Halle (Saale) region

On Thursday the 11th of February, Alliance stakeholders were able to have a first look at the results of so-called "Science Scorecard". This is a benchmark study on innovation and scientific activities in the Halle/Saale regions which accompanies the activities of the Innovation Alliance. The study is prepared by "Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft" - a nationwide expert association of scientists and high-rank business representatives - on behalf of the Innovation Alliance stakeholders. Its results serve the Innovation Alliance twofold.

First, it provides an independent evaluation on innovation and scientific (transfer) activities in the region by an external group of experts. Secondly, the study reveals existing deficits in the fields of innovation and knowledge transfer in the Halle/Saale region which will be used to strategically define future priorities of the innovation alliance. "We are anxiously waiting for the final results of the study. The value added for the work of our alliance is expected to be high", says Daniel Worch, CEO of Univations GmbH and head of the innovation alliance in the Halle/Saale Region. The main outcomes of the study will be presented in short. They will also provide the basis for a fruitful discourse involving all other alliances inside the innovation alliance project.

### Romanian Innovation Alliance Update

In May 2015 a major scientific event was organised by UPB with the aim of bringing together HEIs and SMEs representatives (Productica 2015). A special section within the event was organized by the Romanian Alliance: "Alliance between University and Industry". Following the success of the event, this year UPB will organize Productica 2016, also focused on providing a communication platform for universities, research institutes and companies, not only to present their latest research results, but also to share and discuss the perspectives of the next developments in the subject

fields. Over 100 participants are expected.

### Awards

UPB through Prof. Miron Zapciu, SHIP project staff member, won the gold medal at 43rd International Exhibition of Inventions Geneva 2015 with the request of patent A01013. Through the Romanian Alliance, the technological transfer of the patent idea to a local SME will be realised, in order to implement it in a market product.

### European Software Testing Innovation Alliance

The celebration of the 4th Meeting of the Spanish Software testing Innovation alliance took place on the 15th of December 2015 in the city of Donostia-San Sebastián (Basque Country, Spain).

The event attracted presentations from both industry and universities that had specific interest in the area of software testing. The audience was also composed from professionals and academics in the field of software engineering. The presentations covered a wide range of topics, including the ISO/IEC/IEEE standard for software testing, automated tools (TESTAR), agile development for software testing, database testing, industry experiences with software verification, quantifiable benefits obtained from testing improvement, software testing processes, user interaction, etc.

The workshop format (with short presentations) allowed a fruitful interaction between speakers and attendees.



## Promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in Europe

In our constant endeavour 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.



## EuroSTIA Kick-off Meeting Planned in Amsterdam

The European Software Testing Innovation Alliance (EuroSTIA) has initiated the preliminary organisation tasks of the kick-off event in Europe! One of the locations under consideration is Amsterdam, in co-operation with the newly created VERSEN association (<http://www.versen.nl>).

VERSEN is a new Dutch national association for Software Engineering, which officially launched on 21st January 2016. The mission of the VERSEN association is to bring together researchers, educators and practitioners in the field of software engineering in the Netherlands, who share the common goals of advancing the field of software engineering, raising public awareness of the challenges and opportunities of the field, acquiring funding for groundbreaking research, and transferring academic results to broader society.

This fits well with the objective of the EuroSTIA to bring together key actors on software testing in Europe, in order

to work together to improve innovation support and technology transfer from universities to companies in the area of software testing.

The idea of the kick-off event will be to bring together Dutch SMEs, large enterprises and public administrations together with European universities to discuss problems and solutions in the area of software testing. European universities on the one hand will pitch their expertise and concrete results from their research activities. Companies and public administrations will indicate what their needs are to improve the software testing process and the challenges they face. A speed-dating session will make sure that universities get to know the companies and vice-versa. After the event, we hope for the creation of new ideas for research directions in software testing and new opportunities for co-operation between universities and companies.



## Canice Consulting Collaborates with Universities to Develop Learning Tools for Lecturers and Tutors

Micro-enterprise Canice Consulting Ltd – based in Northern Ireland- is collaborating with partners including the Universitat Politecnica Valencia, University Szczecin and the European Universities Continuing Education Network to develop a Mobile and Digital e-learning toolkit – [www.modern.pm](http://www.modern.pm). This toolkit will focus on increasing the ability and motivation of trainers, tutors and lecturers to use digital learning resources as a means to more effective and relevant teaching.

The MODERN project promoter Canice Hamill from Lisburn based e-learning company Canice Consulting states: “We believe this project will make a real impact by providing educators with a convenient and highly usable set of innovative tools which they can use to engage with students and adult learners on mobile devices. The project will offer clear guidelines on which tool offers the best solutions to achieving pedagogical objectives and the toolkit and resources will be presented in a highly attractive and user friendly format.”

This project comprises of partnerships from representatives from training and enterprises Centres, Universities and Vocational Education so the research and resource development is being carried out by experts in this field with in-depth knowledge of the gaps in the e-learning industry. The aim is to benefit Trainers, Tutors and Lecturers by giving them the opportunity to:

- Learn intuitive powerful tools for engaging students and adult learners on their phones and tablets.
- Providing a platform for assessing the pedagogic potential of mobile learning
- Increasing individual digital literacy enormously

Overall this project is a demonstration of how global collaboration between industry and universities can lead to beneficial innovation on not only a national scale but local scale.

# 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 Bucuresti, Romania
- Univations GmbH, Germany





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