



THE INNOVATION ALLIANCE

active alliances

stakeholders

development

1/2015 Innovation Alliance E-zine

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Why we undertook this project

The Innovation Alliance Project will strengthen the knowledge triangle, building sustainable collaborative relationships between universities, SMEs and innovation support organizations.

To do so, we will build synergistic relationships between key stakeholders in the field of higher education and small enterprise to create a new culture of collaboration in innovation support. We will consolidate this culture by achieving 2 specific goals: training SMEs in the skills needed to effectively engage with HEI research and supplying HEIs with case study guides to illuminate new methodologies for innovation transfer.

It responds to the problem of increasing fragmentation in the field of innovation promotion, especially the dislocation between those who generate knowledge that could

spur innovation (HEIs), and those who can translate that knowledge into marketable strategies and use it to produce economic growth (SMEs). Since the SME sector accounts for 99% of all businesses, provides two thirds of private sector jobs and contributes more than half of the total value-added created by businesses in the EU, the implementation of greater innovation in SMEs in an effective and cost-efficient way 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.

To achieve these goals, the project entails:

- Development of 4 Innovation Alliances in 5 countries (Ireland + UK, Germany, Spain, Romania)
- The development, piloting, publishing and promotion of open access, digital learning resource for European SMEs, training them in the specific skills needed for engaging in innovation transfer with HEIs and Horizon 2020 projects
- The development, piloting, publishing and promotion of a multimedia Comparative Study and Case Study Guide for Innovation Transfer presenting effective and cost effective solutions for transmitting HEI research to SME context

The project will consolidate cooperation as a key feature of the knowledge economy, reshaping

The Innovation Alliances will strengthen the collaborative capacity of HEIs and SMEs in participating countries and longer term, throughout Europe.

Development of the alliances

Innovation Alliances from Germany, Ireland, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom came together in Paris to map out their activities to drive innovation through establishing partnerships between SMEs and HEIs.

Following recent launches of Innovation Alliances in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Germany, over 25 key stakeholders from 7 countries have shared their recent experiences in bringing together SMEs and HEIs. This stakeholder meeting stimulated discussions on the 'why', 'what' and 'how' when it comes to establishing and maintaining Innovation Alliances. After the event, Joe English, (Project Manager and Louth LEO Director), stated "We were impressed by the commitment of the various stakeholders from the four European Innovation Alliances". Over the next two years, these Innovation Alliances will involve more than 80 stakeholders committed to contributing to a productive society.

The alliances have already drawn great interest from local, regional and national stakeholders. For example, with more than 20 SMEs and 3 large corporations involved, the Software Testing Alliance, launched by Dr. Tanja Vos (Universidad Politécnica de Valencia) has brought together some of the key stakeholders on software testing in Spain.

Over the following years, these alliances will be further developed to form an example for other European regions. To increase its impact and allow full exploitation of the project results, the project partners will develop a training course for SMEs in the skills needed to effectively engage with HEI research. This, complemented by case study guides and a SME Horizon2020 readiness database, will enable other European regions to establish similar initiatives in other regions and industries.

Cross-Border Innovation Alliance

The Cross-Border Innovation Alliance collaborations between higher education

institutions, small and medium sized enterprises and innovation support organisations on the island of Ireland is aimed at establishing how SMEs can access research and training from universities to benefit their bottom line.

The alliance builds upon over thirty years of close collaboration between economic development agencies in Ireland aimed at building up economies that had suffered through years of conflict in the Northern Ireland troubles.

Regional Alliance in the Halle (Saale) region

The Regional Alliance in the Halle (Saale) region combines all important stakeholder groups in connection with innovation and technology transfer including, amongst others, several cities, research institutes, higher education, chambers of commerce as well as regional politics and SMEs. Building upon a study on the impact of science on the regional industry, an action plan will be developed to implement the recommendations of this study. While all partners already work together on a bilateral level the consortium built to conduct the study and the alliance established to create the action plan help to coordinate efforts and projects and creates synergies in the region.



National Alliance in Spain

The aim of the Spanish Software Testing Innovation Alliance is to bring together stakeholders in Spain in the area of software testing to work together on improving the innovation and technology transfer from Universities to companies (especially SMEs). The objectives are setting up new projects and establish collaborations that will have practice, research, educational or business impact and can improve software quality!

Romanian Innovation Alliance

The aim of the Romanian Innovation Alliance is to foster green energy and sustainable products and services. The alliance focuses on improving the competitiveness of industrial sectors, the communication between consumers, producers (especially SMEs), universities, research centres and public authorities and to be part of a single voice to influence the policy for Romania, in order to become a better place for innovative SMEs.

Personal relationships drive innovation across Europe

In our constant endeavor to be the bridge between businesses and HEIs, the Innovation Alliance project has launched its first alliances. The launch events of these alliances indicated once more that personal relationships and interaction are key in the cooperation between HEIs and business.



Connect with us

Visit us at our website

www.innovationalliance.eu

or at one of our social media channels.



Four Innovation Alliances across Europe

Bringing together HEIs, SMEs, regional development agencies, associations, political organisations and further stakeholders, the Innovation Alliances will foster innovation and technology transfer.

Cross-border Innovation Alliance

Building upon 30 years of collaboration between economic development agencies, the alliance brings together stakeholders from Ireland and the UK.



Regional Innovation Alliance

The Innovation Alliance in the Halle (Saale) region connects HEIs, chambers of commerce, regional politics and SMEs across various cities.



Romanian Innovation Alliance

The Innovation Alliance focuses on fostering green energy and sustainable products and services, primarily in the City of Bucharest.



Spanish Software Testing Alliance

Lead by the Universitat Politècnica de Valencia, the alliance is dedicated to improving innovation and technology transfer in the software testing sector.



How to benefit from the project?

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

- 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 lead 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 Valencia, Spain
- Universitatea Politehnica din București, Romania
- Univations, Germany



On March 16, over 25 stakeholders met in Paris to sign an innovation cooperation agreement

With signatories including representatives from HEIs, SMEs, regional development agencies, governmental bodies and further organisations, the agreement shows the wide-ranging commitment to the Innovation Alliance project.





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