



Welcome

 **SMART
EUROPE**

ISSUE N.4
(July-December 2013)

Editorial

Dear readers,

I have the pleasure to introduce the fourth SMART EUROPE newsletter. In the course of one year we have organized 11 peer reviews, which was an enormous logistical operation! The project partners have done this job with a lot of commitment and they have involved many good experts to advise our regions on the creation of innovation based jobs. You can read more about the peer reviews in Veneto, Manchester and Tampere in this newsletter. For some regions, the peer review recommendations were an eye opener. For others they rather confirmed their own ideas, but for all partners it was a valuable experience.

This time the thematic focus is cooperation between universities and businesses, which can lead to win-win partnerships, though sometimes it can be a challenge to find a common language between the two parties. DEMOLA from Finland is a successful example, as is the cooperation between the IT sector and the University in Debrecen.

We hope that you continue to follow our project and I would be happy to receive any comments from your side.

Best regards,

Jan Nico Appelman

Deputy King's Commissioner Province of Flevoland

Chair of the SMART EUROPE Monitoring Board



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Partnership

Province of Flevoland

Lead Partner

www.flevoland.nl

Assembly of European Regions

www.aer.eu

Manchester Metropolitan University

www.mmucfe.co.uk

Veneto Region

www.regione.veneto.it

Veneto Innovazione

www.venetoinnovazione.it

Province of Bologna

www.provincia.bologna.it

Észak Alföld Regional Development Agency

www.eszakalfold.hu

Maramures County Council

www.cjmaramures.ro

Almi Foretagspartner Mitt AB

www.almi.se/mitt

Patras Science Park S.A.

www.psp.org.gr

The Baltic Institute of Finland

www.baltic.org

Avila County Council

www.diputacionavila.es

Sor – Trondelag County Authority

www.stfk.no



Thematic focus. Universities-Business cooperation: a win-win partnership that fosters job creation

Joint training, design thinking methodologies and cooperative projects are effective examples of how to bridge these two different worlds

The rising need for business to be ever more at the cutting edge level to successfully compete at International level push companies to innovate and invest in research and in immaterial know how.

Skilled human resources, sophisticated knowledge management and problem solving models, multidisciplinary approaches are elements that make strategic building partnership with Universities and research centres.



On the university side, moreover, students want to put their efforts into problems that matter. Real-world problems, constraints and commitments accelerate learning more than hypothetical classroom exercises. Partnering with the business sector is a win win situation that give students a better understanding of real and concrete challenges and to companies to accelerate their own innovation process.

In the USA a good example of such a constructive mash-up of industry and academia is represented by the *d.schools*, an experience born in Stanford and then spread out even in Europe, and based on what is called “design thinking”. Students are driven throughout a methodology that combines creative and analytical approaches, and requires collaboration across disciplines and consistent partnership with corporate, non-profit and government-sector

organizations.

In the frame of SMART EUROPE the partnership among business and universities is one of the main topic explored also by our peer reviewers during their in-site visits since it is definitely a worth path for the creation of innovative jobs in our territories.

In this fourth issue of the SMART EUROPE newsletter, we try to deepen this topic presenting two different good practices that go right to this direction:

- an experience of cooperation among multinational companies and university in the IT sector in **Hungary** (Észak-Alföld region), where ad hoc courses are organised both to train students and employees.

- an “innovative factory” in **Finland** (Tampere) which brings together students of different disciplines and businesses to develop products and services and to solve real-life problems.



Good practices from...

Észak-Alföld: “Job-creating cooperation between triple helix actors: multinational company and university, IT sector”

ITSH, the Hungarian subsidiary of T-Systems - a global company that operates in the areas of systems integration and operations - and the University of Debrecen (UD) have established a quite fruitful research and educational cooperation in the field of Information Technology since 2007. The cooperation covers different fields and brings mutual advantages such as special training programs for the ITSH employees, special technical courses for UD students, joint research infrastructures and moreover a great opportunity for ITSH to recruit well educated staff and for the UD an easier job placement for its students.



trainings after the successful finish.

Could you explain more in-depth the cooperation programme?

The main idea is to create a second chance for those who were not yet involved in IT. We could train people who are motivated to learn and have good language skills. The second program is to create specific curricula for those involved in IT, but having not yet seen a multinational company in daily operation.



Which is the background of the practice? How did the cooperation among ITSH and UD started?

We discovered quite early that we need a stable output of well-trained candidates for our growth in Debrecen. It was the best choice to turn to the University of Debrecen as one of the biggest institutes of Hungary. So we started in 2007 as a first attempt a summer course called “Try IT” to check the capabilities of lecturers and the feedback from participants. Of course we continued immediately the

Which results and outputs has the practice achieved? Do you have any quantitative data in particular on the “job creation” side or on the improvement of innovation (e.g. patents)?

We trained with those joint programs about 100 students in 2013. I think this is a great achievement.

Which are, in your opinion, the critical factors or the barriers that could hinder the cooperation between universities and companies?

We need up-to-date knowledge in IT business, which changes almost every day. The University needs to keep with the pace of the world. Teaching systems which are used in multinational environment is not easy for a university and for that our inhouse Department of ITSH is perfect for understanding these specialties.

Could you give us some “lessons” on how to create a long term partnership among business and universities?

Be flexible, but know which the foreseen output is. Be patient, as University is thinking differently than a company in day to day challenges. Create a practice oriented culture as a common goal, which helps University teachers, students and of course our recruitment as well.



András Harman

My Studies are varying from Budapest College of Economics to University of Pécs specializing on IT economics.

I started my IT career with Accenture (Andersen Consulting that time...) in 2000. From that time I worked in IT support from field support to internal IT Helpdesk, then started as Teamleader later Operations manager when I got the offer to start the build up of a new site in Debrecen for T-systems (IT Services Hungary)

This was the possibility of my life so I started with full empowerment to create new standards and a new company image to be accepted in a city with a lot of potentials.

Based on the international experience and help from other countries we managed to create good recruitment channel with the university, training programs for various type of people.

Now I am responsible for the University of Debrecen External Department of IT services as well.

Next to Site management I was leading the department responsible for various collaboration tools and later on responsible also for international projects, but now leading the Infrastructure Management of IT Services.





Good practices from...

Tampere: “Demola New Factory”

New Factory is based on a concept of open, diversified, and communal modes of operation. Practical innovations and pilots generate not only wellbeing and vitality in the present, but business and jobs for the future. Demola is one of the four engine rooms of the New Factory community. It brings together students of different disciplines and businesses to develop products and services and to solve real-life problems.

Which is the background of the practice? How did Demola start?

The cooperation started as an open innovation platform between Hermia Science Park (local innovation company) and three local universities where the students were able to implement multidisciplinary innovation projects. First the focus was on software and digital services and the idea of the first project was to strengthen the position of Tampere as an attractive location for companies. New Factory has quickly stabilised its position as an innovation actor in the region, and had significantly widened its project themes. Especially Demola has been copied as a practise in Finland and other European countries as well and it has now grown into a network with 7 Demola centers.

Could you explain more in-depth the initiative?

The New Factory project platform comprises operations that enhance innovation activities and, moreover, the acceleration of the business those activities create. The objective is to develop real-life products and services

through cost-effective means, to improve outdated processes, and to respond agilely to developments in different industry branches through an open and social approach to innovation.

The objective of Demola is to boost multidisciplinary agile innovation culture and encourage entrepreneurship in Tampere Region. University students from three regional universities can develop product and service demo concepts together with companies and create new solutions to real-life problems. The teams are multidisciplinary and are combined from students from all universities involved. Over one third of the students involved are foreign.

Which results and outputs has the practice achieved? Do you have any quantitative data in particular on the “job creation” side or on the improvement of innovation (e.g. patents)?

Demola has been presented several awards, e.g. Innovation Award 2010 by the Assembly of European Regions (AER) and BSR Innovation Reward 2012, and it has been selected the Best Summer Employer Award of 2011 in Finland.

The achievements of the whole New Factory can be summarised as:

- Over 400 projects;
- About 3000 people have actively taken part in activities;
- About 35% of students involved are foreign students;



Presentation in Demola

- About 60 new companies have been formed;
- About 400 new jobs have been created;
- Cooperation with over 100 businesses; and
- Start-up companies receiving about 10 m € of funding altogether.

How do you deal with the intellectual property management?

The student team developing an innovation will retain intellectual property rights to their work, and companies can acquire a licence to use it. Business partners have licensed up to 96 per cent of project deliverables for their use.

Could you give us some “lessons” on how to start a similar programme in another country? Which are the basic ingredients?

The most valuable lesson learnt is the fact that you can start creating innovative ways of working and cooperating with very different partners with very little money having a good focus in “doing” and the activities itself. The cooperating partners need to contribute their time and effort more than money, to create new project ideas and cooperative platforms.

You also need to find the right people to work together.



It is more important to have the connections and interaction between the right individuals than having old fixed connections at organisational level. When you start cooperating and working together, it is easier to get more people interested and involved. It is easier to start from students, progress to getting professors involved, moving on to engagement at the organisational level.

It is important to let the students work together with real companies, dealing with real everyday issues. The right balance between business and benefit to the students, between business and academic world, stills needs to be kept in mind.

Ville Kairamo

Head of Demola Network





Resources

UK / Manchester

GOLDMAN SACHS 10,000 SMALL BUSINESSES is designed to unlock the economic and job creation potential of small businesses and social enterprises operating in the UK. The programme is based on the broadly held view of leading experts that greater access to a combination of education and business support services best address barriers to growth. 10,000 Small Businesses is targeted at small businesses and social enterprises with clear ambitions to expand and to equip participants with tools to help them overcome a range of obstacles and lay the foundation for long-term sustainable growth and job creation in their communities

www.10ksbnw.co.uk/

KNOWLEDGE ACTION NETWORK. Industry and Academic experts help you unlock your business challenges and connect you with a 200 strong network of North West business owners. The programme begins with an in depth diagnostic of your company; where you are coming from, where you want to go, and what's stopping you getting there. You will then be supported by individual specialist coaching for your business as well as membership of a Knowledge Action Group with like minded business owners, where experts/speakers will support group members to address their challenges. The Knowledge Action Network programme is also run by two other universities (Cumbria and Chester) in the region and therefore you will also join the membership of over two-hundred extended Knowledge Action Network business managers, who have either completed or are currently on the programme. The entire programme is also tied together by an online forum, where you can share and exchange issues and knowledge.

<http://www.knowledge-action.co.uk/>

MANAGERS2LEADERS For truly great small businesses have inspiring leaders at all levels within the business. This doesn't happen by accident. It has to be planned, supported and developed. In the past the sort of dynamic and action focused leadership development courses designed to achieve these outcomes have only been available to Owner/Managers and MDs. This course creates an opportunity for all small business managers to access the same powerful experiences. MMU Centre for Enterprise has supported almost 1,000 small firms in the North West to grow their staff and their organisations.

www.mmucfe.co.uk/what-we-do/m2l

FAST FORWARD FUNDING The purpose of the three-day intensive Fast Forward Funding programme is to provide you with the knowledge and tools required to ensure that you and your business has the best chance of success, when seeking finance and funding solutions. The Fast Forward Funding programme is delivered from the Centre for Enterprise at MMU, by industry professionals, enterprise academics and successful entrepreneurs. Whether you are an established business seeking to grow, a social enterprise, or simply have a business idea, this programme will give you the skills and knowledge to prepare your business for the journey. The programme has been carefully designed by a collaboration of business professionals and funders from the private sector working with business academics to ensure that you and your business are investment ready.

www.fastforwardfunding.co.uk/

The Netherlands / Flevoland

ACRRES is a cooperation between the Lelystad knowledge institutes Applied Plant Research and the Animal Sciences Group, both part of Wageningen UR. Both the Province of Flevoland and the city of Lelystad support the initiative.

For companies and institutions interested in clean tech technology, bio-based economy, sustainable energy and green raw materials, ACRRES is interesting as a source of inspiration and a meeting centre. ACRRES is open to cooperation and new ideas to improve the sustainability of alternative ways of energy and through this realising environmental innovations.

www.acrres.nl/en/

Italy / Veneto

INNOVAREA A new way to foster the economic growth in the Region starts from the industrial champions and the University. Even if the crisis is still affecting our region, we need to focalise on the coming growth and set the scene for the future. This is the starting point of INNOVAREA, a new link between knowledge and industry aiming to identify and promote a set of winners in the economic environment. Young students, coming from the Ca' Foscari University will analyse successful companies in order to identify their strategies and business models to be afterwards spread within the regional industrial ecosystem. Intercepting technological and social trends and sharing them with other players will favour the creation of growth opportunities for many SMEs.

www.innovarea.eu/



Peer Reviews second round

Tampere

Change management

The peer review focus in Tampere was on the implementation of a proactive strategy of change management, in particular related to the ICT sector, being Tampere part of the Nokia success story and the recent lay-offs.

This big picture has been defined “Tampere New Deal” intended not only a newly developed partnership concept to identify proactive operational models through some stakeholders representing different political and economic levels, but even a roadmap, a visionary picture.



It has been used as an umbrella over all the stakeholders and orchestrates regional key players to fight against structural change in ICT sector.

The main problem in the region is the underdeveloped capacity to create dynamic SMEs which are willing to grow. There is a lot of potential like knowledge and skilled people, but the region is not able to utilise the potential to make new enterprises out of it. The region has a great industrial history, but how to renew the industrial basis to be able to manage in fast changes of the global business environment is the issue today.

The peer review week was organised mostly around the

public stakeholders involved in creating and acting in the Tampere New Deal concept after the substantial Nokia lay-offs. There were also some examples of how these lay-offs have renewed their career as entrepreneurs and the systems supporting this change.

There was also a trip outside the city to see how innovative ideas are put in place in the more remote areas and to see how the new concept can be extended further from the city region.

The most interesting and useful recommendations were the suggestion of an international advisory board to evaluate things and the suggestion of opening the communications about the concept more for wider audience to reduce the “elitist” approach.





Peer Reviews. Second round

Veneto

Boost the creation of new innovative companies in the region

The Veneto region is characterised by a vivid entrepreneurial spirit and a strong industrial and manufacturing sector. However SMEs are rather low-tech and, often, subcontractors of big companies. The regional government had already set up a comprehensive package of tools and schemes aiming to support innovation and research activities in existing companies and is renovating the approach to aggregations and networks of companies. The decision then to discuss about the creation of new innovative companies builds on the observation that this is the lacking part of the public interventions in this field. The peer review was then focused on how to boost the creation of new innovative companies in the region.

In order to prepare the Peer review some specific problems were identified by Regione del Veneto and Veneto Innovazione and proposed to the Peers.

Among them there were:

- 1) How to boost the emergence of ideas scattered in the region and how collect the most promising entrepreneurial ones?
- 2) How to assess the feasibility of such innovative ideas (and the readiness of the wannabe entrepreneurs)?
- 3) Which process is needed to better coordinate and synchronize the supporting actors (private and public)?
- 4) How to better sustain start-ups in the “early stage” and help them to build networks?
- 5) Which is the role of the public authority in this framework?

To give the Peer Team an exhaustive overview of the current situation in Veneto, after having prepared a comprehensive set of supporting documents, a full programme of visits and interviews to the main regional players was arranged.

Therefore field-visits to five incubators have been organised, with also the possibility to interview start-ups in the different contexts. In fact, in some cases the initiative was promoted from the research side, in other by business associations or by private funders and the difference have an important impact on the selection process and support services offered to the incubator tenants.

The SMART CUBE incubator is an initiative promoted by the University of Padova, M31 started as a University initiative but then evolved in a more venture oriented model. VEGAINCUBE is the space offered to innovative companies by the Venice Science Park, creating connections among the public and private laboratories located in the Park and the territory.



La Fornace has been set up in Asolo by a concerted process of local Entrepreneurial Associations and Public Administration with an external support of the university. H-FARM is a venture incubator aiming to accelerate the development of Internet startups via a combination of seed investment and incubation services.

During the visits, ten young innovative companies were interviewed, offering the peers the possibilities to compare also their view in relation to the environment where they were developing their activities.

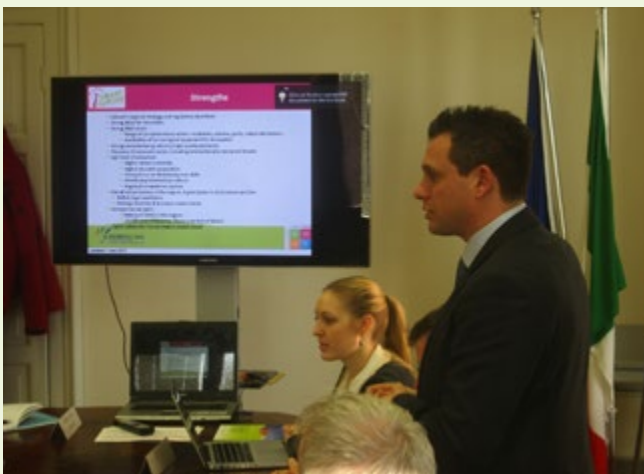


Peer Reviews. Second round

Other players, such as Business Angels Networks and Clusters promoters, have had the opportunity to exchange their views with the peers.

Moreover, in order to offer also the view of all the regional Directorates involved in the policy measures designed for entrepreneurship, the Department of Industry and Craft, the Department of Labour, the one of Social Services and the regional Unit for Research and Innovation have been involved to share information and opinions with the peer team.

In total, during the five days, more than 30 people were actively involved and were interviewed by the peers. The first results were then presented to the regional



representatives while the complete report will be shared with all the organisation involved to discuss with them the possible Action Plan to be built on the basis of the input received.

Among the various point highlighted by the peers, these were the main ones:

- The Veneto region has a high innovation potential with top manufacturing industry, strong R&D, numerous academic start-ups and spin-offs, remarkable entrepreneurial spirit and an educated workforce.
- Nonetheless there is a lack in the coordination of the different tactical initiatives to increase the visibility and accessibility of the different support schemes, starting, as a first step, to map all different initiatives and therefore setting up a one-stop-shop, as a main entrance to the business innovation environment.
- Communication has also been identified as a

key asset that the Veneto region should improve. Peers suggest the Region to communicate on the initiatives that are available to entrepreneurs and wannabe entrepreneurs and externally they suggest the Region to use a branding strategy that builds on its regional strengths to attract innovation to its territory.

- Finally, instead of mainly focusing on the feasibility of innovative ideas, there should be an overall paradigm shift towards making winners. This could be especially stimulated by strengthening the link between education and enterprises, and building-up management skills from an early stage.



Peer Reviews second round

Manchester

Role and effectiveness of the partnerships

The focus of the peer review in Manchester was to examine the role and effectiveness of the partnerships which are currently playing across Greater Manchester. There is a vast amount of activity relating to innovation being undertaken in Manchester, across its 10 municipality districts and with 4 universities in Greater Manchester alone.

However, with recent changes to the structure of the region, in terms of the removal of the regional Development Agencies, and the significant downsizing of the public sector, this focus was selected as the main area of potential for boosting innovation based jobs in the sub region.

The peer review indicated a wide range of activity taking place in Greater Manchester in relation to innovation, however it was clear that partnerships and the communication to all stakeholders of the opportunities available could improve.

Significant recent changes in the roles played in this process by Local Authorities for example, and the total eradication of formal regional structures has led to the removal of a significant number of key players in the field, in terms of organisations, formal partnerships and key individuals, creating to some extent a vacuum, at least in terms of awareness, if not actual activity, in this area, that has caused confusion amongst the wider group of stakeholders across the sub region.

A total of 11 peers took part in the Manchester Peer review from Norway, Hungary, Italy, Greece and Finland, with the support also of the Assembly of European regions.

Over 4.5 days and operating from the new MMU Business School, peers visited or were visited by a wide range of different stakeholders from both the public and private sector as well as NGOs

in Greater Manchester including Manchester Metropolitan University (Centre for Enterprise, Creative Manchester and Knowledge Exchange), Manchester Science Parks (MSPs Innovation Manager and 2 companies, Trustech and Protein Technologies), Enterprise Europe Network, Manchester Combined Authority, Manchester City Council, Manchester Digital Development Agency, Corridor Manchester Partnership, Manchester's Economic Development Agency - New Economy, Tameside Enterprise Partnership, Tameside College, Mono Pumps, Winning Pitch, Future Everything, Business Growth Hub, Access to Finance, Enworks, and Salford Media City.





Manchester: looking forward to welcome SMART EUROPE partners next March

In combination with the next project steering group and Monitoring Board, the next SMART EUROPE conference and workshops will take place in Manchester in March 19th -20th 2014.

Building on the work undertaken to date by the peer review teams, the focus will be on how to ensure all partners and their stakeholders are able to explore and **fully exploit the recommendations** made for their regions through the peer review process.

Using techniques utilised by the Centre for Enterprise at Manchester Metropolitan University's Business School to engage entrepreneurs in Manchester to develop their own leadership and decision making skills, MMU will bring all 13 Smart Europe partners together over a period of 2 days to apply **action learning techniques** to assist in the practical application of the next phase of the project which is to implement the peer review recommendations.

We look forward to a lively and fun opportunity to identify through this process the practical steps that need to be

taken to remove some of the barriers that stakeholders might face in the implementation of the recommendations and to maximise the impact we can make across Europe through their effective implementation.





Spotlight

Photo contest Innovens: deadline extended



INNOVENS, the photo contest promoted by SMART EUROPE has been extended till the end of the year (December 31st 2013). Discover how easy is participating!





Coming soon...

Peer reviews (Third round)

Mid Sweden/Norway/Maramures/Patras/Avila

International conference

Manchester, March 19th-20th
2013

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- Support tools for innovative start-ups
- Good practices from SMART EUROPE
- Flash information from the third round of Peer Reviews
- Outcomes of the Manchester conference

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SMART EUROPE is a project
co-financed by the ERDF
Made possible by the
INTERREG IVC