

Welcome to the InnoSME Newsletter!

Issue 1, 2007



Whats new

InnoSME stakeholders Networks is setting-up

The first networks have been created and have started their work. Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Poland and Czech Republic are the first countries deploying the project. The current members are:

High-Technology Business Incubator, Varna, Bulgaria

The Association is composed by some organisations, three related to SMEs: Varna Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Varna Industry and Business Association, Business Agency Varna. In addition Varba Universities and the Municipality are also in the Board. Varna has regular contct with more than 1000 SMEs concerning different events. The main activities are grounded objectives for regional development, support of innovations and setting the regional innovation policy. HTBI - Varna is a coordinator of grate scale project - the development of the Regional Innovation Strategy of the North-East Planning Region.

For more information:

Dr. Dimitar Radev

Executive Director

High-Technology Business Incubator - Varna

P.O.Box 87

9003 Varna

Bulgaria

Phone: +359 52 383 700

Fax: +359 52 383 701

e-mail: director@htbi-varna.org

www.htbi-varna.org

www.neb-ris.net

Regional Centre for Information Society, Sofia, Bulgaria

The Regional Centre for Information Society Development (RCISD) is a non-governmental organization established to create synergy, virtual networking and support the cooperation between the ICT business organizations and SMEs, academia and scientific and research organizations, the public and local administration institutions and the non-governmental organizations in all areas related to the development, introduction and wide use of information and communication technologies (ICT).

The RCISD offers information, consultancy and support by promoting the global society development using the new technologies. It is acting as a mediator in the establishment of national and international partnership networks.

For more information:

Marieta Popova, Executive Director

Regional Center for Information Society Development

15, Dimiter Hadjikitcev Str.

Sofia 1421

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Bulgaria
Tel: +359 886 847414
Tel/Fax: +359 2 865 8461
e-mail: rcisd@abv.bg
www.rcisd.bg

Chamber of Commerce of Romania, Bucharest, Romania

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania (CCIR) is the strongest business environment association in Romania, bringing together the whole network of 42 territorial chambers of commerce and industry, as well as others bilateral chambers of commerce, some branch professional associations and companies.

The CCIR is a non-governmental self-sustaining organization which supports the business community's interests and mostly of its members in the dialogue with the national authorities and international organizations. The CCIR acts to create a steady coherent business environment favorable to the development of the private sector in Romania, as well as to create a real market economy open towards the foreign markets and companies.

CCIR is supporting the business community also by providing business services such as: organizing economic missions, training programs, seminars or debates, providing valuable information from its databases and detecting business opportunities.

In the context of the Romania's integration in the European structures, the National Chamber has begun a campaign of preparing the business environment for adopting the EU norms.

For more information:

Anemari Marcusanu
Project Manager
Business Development Division - Innovation and eBusiness
The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania
2, Octavian Goga Blvd, sector 3, Bucharest, Romania
Phone: +4021 319 00 80
Fax: +4021 319 01 59
Skype: anemarim
e-mail: anemari.marcusanu@ccir.ro
www.ccir.ro

INIMM

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES (I.N.I.M.M.) founded in 1998 as result of the National Council of Small and Medium Sized Private Enterprises in Romania and CES' members initiative, is a "Romanian juridical person, non-governmental, apolitical and non-profit" whose mission consist in "the creation and stimulation of a favorable environment for Romanian entrepreneurs, the development of the entrepreneurial spirit".

For more information:

Ana Maria Onu
Sos. Oltenitei nr. 103, sect.4,
Bucuresti
Tel/Fax: +4021.332.18.06
e-mail: Ana@inimm.ro
www.sme.ro/en/inimm

INNOVA North Great Plain Regional Innovation Agency, Debrecen, Hungary

Az Innocsekk programot eredetileg folyamatos beadással és 2007. szeptember 28-i határidővel hirdettük meg. Az utóbbi hónapokban öröndetes módon megnőtt az érdeklődés az Innocsekk támogatás iránt, ennek következtében a benyújtott pályaművek támogatásigénye hamarosan kimeríti az Innocsekk programra elirányított 5 milliárd forintot keretben.

A Kutatás-fejlesztési Pályázati és Kutatáshasznosítási Iroda összhangban a pályázati felhívással.

For more information:

Marta Volginye Nadaban
Head of Agency
H-4028 Debrecen
Simonyi u. 14.
Tel.: +36 52 524 760
Mobile: +36 30 387 0421

Fax: +36 52 524 770
e-mail: mnadaban@eszakalfold.hu
www.innova.eszakalfold.hu

OKISZ - Hungarian Industrial Association, Budapest, Hungary

The Hungarian Industrial Association is a national social organization of employers voluntarily formed by its member associations in order to represent and protect social and economic interests of its members.

OKISZ consists of 22 territorial and professional member organizations and 2 associated professional business federations.

Our Association has the aim to become an organization representing employer's interests of owners of small and medium size enterprises, which is independent of political parties, undertakes significant role in the future economic and social activity of Hungary and has high respect, European level, rich traditions and values.

Our work in representation and exploration of interests bases on the established structure of institutions of territorial and professional unions and on the immediate information given by the territorial organizations. There are professional divisions and expert's working groups working in the Hungarian Industrial Association (OKISZ), which group representatives of member organizations in accordance with the main fields of representation of professional, economic or employer's interests

For more information:

Andras Kemer

Phone: +361 343 6214

Fax: +361 343 5182

e-mail: kemer.andras@okisz.hu

www.okisz.hu

MGYOSZ - Confederation of Hungarian Employers and Industrialists, Hungary

The Confederation is based on the principles of voluntary decisions and the freedom of association and it operates independently from the government. The relationship between the members and the Confederation is based on a co-ordinated co-operation. The Confederation counts among his members 40 sectoral professional associations and 16 regional employers' associations. Beside these members many large corporations have joined the Confederation directly.

Through its functions of mediating and representing the member interests, the Confederation influences economic and labour policy-making. It represents the interests on a macro level and passes on the proposals worked out by its members. It maintains contacts with the Parliament, the government and state administration and makes every effort to represent the entrepreneurs' interests. It also prepares analyses, expresses opinions and prepares proposals on corporate and the current economic policy concepts.

For more information:

Anett Ruszanov

Adviser

Brussels Representation Office

Phone/Fax: +322 648 0938

e-mail : arusanov@mgyosz.be

www.mgyosz.hu

Science and Technology Park of Szczecin, Szczecin, Poland

Science and Technology Park of Szczecin was established in 2000 year. SPNT is a limited company, whose owner is the Szczecin Commune. We employ 12 people and we collaborate with 80 specialist and scientist from all kind of specialization and resources. We have a public financing accelerated with European Union funds.

We provide knowledge about new technologies. We make advanced technic infrastructure accesible (prototypes, laboratories, incubators). We organize knowledge movment and companies cooperations network. We supply companies competences in human relations resources, especially with e-learning courses.

Enterprise Incubator surface is 700 m², where 16 companies are runing their businesses. Informatic infrastructure with inteligent cooperation portal conducts locally diffuse businesses. Educational infrastructure consist of mobile computer room and hightech aboratory.

For more information:

Magda Niedba^{3a}

specjalista ds. marketingu i PR

ul. Kolumba 86-89, 70-035 Szczecin

Tel.: +48(91)4892050 w.22

Tel: +48 608 40 56 40
fax: +48(91)4336053
e-mail: mniedbala@spnt.pl
www.spnt.pl

Agency of Regional Development of Liberec Region, Czech Republic

The Agentura regionálního rozvoje, spol. s r.o. (Regional Development Agency) was founded in the year 1996 based on a ruling of the Euroregion Nisa, a civic association of the towns, municipalities, and districts of Liberec, Jablonec nad Nisou, Semily, eská Lípa, and Dín (the Šluknovský projection). This civic association was its 100 % promoter and owner until the beginning of 2003. However, the Liberec Region has been the owner of a 51 % share in the company since April 2003.

In its current form, the Agentura regionálního rozvoje, spol. s r.o., (ARR – hereinafter referred to as the “Agency”) has been a company with a focus on consultancy, advisory, and mediation activity in a number of different areas of interest. As a business entity (a limited liability company) owned by the bodies of local government, the Agency principally concentrates on the provision of services to administrative institutions, towns, and municipalities in the realisation of the objectives of strategy aimed at regional, economic, social, and cultural development. In this way the agency implicitly acts as one of the instruments of regional development policy in the Liberec Region. The Agency’s aim of business operation is to provide regional public administration, towns, and municipalities with professional assistance on a long-term basis with regard to the generation of regional programmes, conceptual plans, and strategies in the individual areas of public and economic life. It also intends to offer assistance in the formulation of objectives, the definition of measures to accomplish such objectives, communication with both the professional and general public, and last but not least, to provide professional services in the implementation of individual investment and non-investment projects.

For more information:

Martina Prokopova
Tøída 1.májè 97/25
460 01 Liberec III
Tel.: +420 488 577 070, provolba 24
Fax: +420 488 577 071
m.prokopova@arr-nisa.cz
www.arr-nisa.cz

Association INFOBALT, Lithuania

“Lietuvos informacijos technologij , telekomunikacij ir raštín s rangos moni asociacija INFOBALT ” (“Association INFOBALT of Information Technologies, Telecommunications and Office Equipment of Lithuania”, <http://www.info-balt.lt>). It is a non-governmental, non-profit association, registered under the Lithuanian law in Vilnius, Lithuania, in 1994. INFOBALT headquarter is located in Vilnius, Lithuania. Association INFOBALT advocating and coordinating Lithuanian companies and scientific and educational institutions that deal with information and communication technologies. It promotes and supports the programs of modern Lithuanian information society development. At present, the membership of the Association INFOBALT comprises over 120 companies and educational institutions.

Over time, the Association INFOBALT has been acknowledged both by local and international organisations where it has been invited to represent Lithuanian information technologies and communication equipment market. INFOBALT is a member of EICTA (the European Information and Communication Technology Industry Association, www.eicta.org), WITSA (World-wide Information Technology and Services Association, www.witsa.org) and SIIA (Software and Information Industry Association, www.sii.com).

The first steps of cooperation have been made towards legislation and lobbying which may ease the expansion processes of the Information Society technologies and e-business etiquette, it may also eradicate impediments to business and emphasise the importance of political rule in the process of the Information Society development. Since 2000 INFOBALT has implemented projects in collaboration with the EC and PHARE. Since 1994 INFOBALT organize in Vilnius, Lithuania the annual international trade fair on information society technologies and since 1999 the annual international conference INFORMATION SOCIETY.

The mission of the Association INFOBALT is to define and protect interests of the information society technologies (IST) in Lithuania. Behind this mission lies the key objective of INFOBALT which is to create the best possible environment for the growths of IST industry which would benefit the public and private sectors, as well as to seek a better quality of life.

The objectives of the Association INFOBALT for the immediate future are the following – professional information and business mediation services to its members; enhancement of influence to decisions adopted by the public ad-

ministration; international reputation and assistance to Lithuanian ITT companies in getting a stronger position on new markets; involvement of the Lithuanian ITT potential in international consortia and programmes; assistance of EU structural funds; promotion of R&D projects; ITT market monitoring of Lithuania and Baltic countries.

For more information:

Edmundas Zvirblis
Executive Director
Akademijos g.2 - 519
LT-08412, Vilnius
Tel.: +370 5 2622623
Fax: +370 5 2622624
GSM: +370 686 55422
zvirblis@infobalt.lt
<http://www.infobalt.lt>

In the next weeks the first working meetings will take place and the communication with the SMEs will be planned.

InnoSME and Ideal-ist agree a strong collaboration between both projects

InnoSME and Ideal-ist projects have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to agree the collaboration between both projects to support the participation of SMEs in the New Member States in the ICT programme of the 7FP. Ideal-ist will reference InnoSME project on the Ideal-ist web portal. InnoSME will have a dedicated web space with a description, logo and a link to your web site. In addition, Ideal-ist will promote our services on a country-based

Service Map available on the Ideal-ist web portal.

The Service Map provides information on the services offered by umbrella members collaborating with Ideal-ist and their country coverage so that Service Map visitors can contact their closest service provider directly.

InnoSME tool available

The Innovation self-diagnosis is ready to be available in the Web. The SMEs will use it in a very short time.

InnoSME Project

InnoSME intends to identify potentially innovative SMEs from the different ICT subsectors located in the new Member States and Acceding countries (NMS & AC), assess their capabilities, and improve their conditions in order to make them fitter for participation in RTD and Innovation projects of the FP7 and the CIP.

To reach this objective, the first step is to set-up National and Regional Networks, in all of these targeted countries, in order to facilitate the access to the existing SMEs, allowing their identification and participation in the activities of the project.

InnoSME project will make available for all these stakeholders a set of web services addressed to the SMEs, in their national language, integrated by:

- Self-diagnostic tools for SMEs at three levels: innovation management diagnosis at strategic level, internal and external innovation adoption diagnosis at operational level, and assessment of the risks and benefits associated to the involvement in RTD projects
- Training materials, personalised following the results of the different diagnostic processes, and
- Advice based on the results of the assessment done, in order to improve their weak points and to reinforce their strong ones

The result will be to provide each SME with a personalised improvement work plan, generated from the application of the previous services.

The set of tools could be available for SMEs in the InnoSME Web

The project will organise two workshops in every country (one in 2007 and another in 2008) related to the participation of SMEs in FP7 and CIP.

The involvement in the InnoSME project will provide to the SMEs with some clear advantages:

- To know their innovation positioning and capabilities through self diagnosis tools
- To improve their innovation skills through personalised assessment and training
- To benchmark results and share best practices and experiences
- To participate in FP7 & CIP Calls for proposals through advice and matching

The project is a chance for the stakeholders Organisations to team up with experts on EU programmes and projects and address SME members with high research and innovation potential with valuable funding information.

SME environment matching day

Budapest, March 12

SME Environment, an EU-funded project, is organising an FP7 partner search and project idea matching forum to take place in Budapest, Hungary, on 12 March 2007

The aim of the event is to introduce FP7, identify the pros and cons of participation for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), train the participants on how to develop a successful proposal and to strengthen the networking.
http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=FP7_EVENTS&ACTION=D&DOC=21&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=1170962592735&RCN=27071

FP7: Opportunities For Smes, Bics and Business Support Organizations

EBN Detect-It 2 Spring Conference

Brussels, March 21

This conference is an essential introduction for any SME or SME support organisation to the role of SMEs in FP7 and the support measures in place to increase their participation. High level speakers will address some of the following issues: supporting SMEs in preparing successful proposals, detecting the right SMEs for FP7, tools and support services in FP7

The Conference objectives are: clarify the EC policy objectives regarding SMEs, provide specific examples of how these policy objectives have been translated into specific support measures for SMEs in the themes of ICT, Health, Energy, Biotechnology, Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, present methodologies and tools to support SMEs in preparing successful FP7 proposals

For SME support organisations, specific advice is providing on identifying SMEs who would most benefit from EC research projects

<http://www.ebn.be/content/main.asp?PagelD=206>

InnoSME working meetings

The first series of the InnoSME working meeting will take place in the next weeks, with the objective to define the communication plan and the activities to be done with the SMEs.

The scheduled meetings are

- Bucharest Working meeting, February 22
- Varna Working meeting, February 28
- Sofia Working meeting, March 1&2
- Debrecen Working meeting, March 7
- Budapest Working meeting. March 8&9

Increasing innovation capacities of companies

IRE Workshop

Riga, March 29&30

Description: While most European regions are home to a limited number of companies with great innovation potential, they tend to be dominated by small, often traditional, enterprises. These firms are often uninterested, unwilling or unable to innovate, not realising that this might be undermining their competitiveness and even endanger their survival on the long term. Reaching these companies and enabling them to realise that innovation is interesting, useful and possible for them is a great challenge for many regional actors.

The aim of this workshop is to present successful examples from IRE (Innovative Regions of Europe) member regions of initiatives that encourage traditionally non-innovative companies to start to innovate. Concrete schemes will illustrate ways of raising these companies' interest in innovation, facilitating their start of innovation activities, and creating in-house innovation capacities. In addition, group discussions will allow participants to exchange experiences with each other.

http://www.innovating-regions.org/ireservices/pub_library/index.cfm?level=5&name1=AABVB&cat_id=567&navbar=true

Bulgaria

January 31 – February 1, 2007 – Launching Conference for FP7. The Ministry of Education and Science organized a two-days national conference dedicated to FP7. It attracted more than 800 participants from public organizations, research institutions, academia, private sector. The most successful projects and participants in FP6 were awarded with special prizes by the Minister of Education and Science.

February 12, 2007 – Innovation Centre within the State Agency for Information Technologies and Communications is opened. Its aim is to improve the interoperability and information security. The Innovation Centre is established with the financial support of Microsoft.

February 12, 2007 – The Chairman of the State Agency for Information Technologies and Communications presented the Draft Programme for speeded development of Information Society during the forum “Innovations and IT – policies and practices”.

February 13, 2007 – Discussion on the challenges of the Bulgarian ICT sector as a part of the European market is organized by the ICT Cluster. The main issues to be discussed are the competitive advantages and the strategic development of the Bulgarian ICT companies in the European Union. The event will be organized every second Tuesday on a monthly basis.

February 16, 2007 – The State Agency for ICT organizes a FP7 Information day on ICT. The Work program 2007 – 2008, the challenges and objectives of the first call will be presented. Mr. Oluf Nielsen, scientific expert in DG “Information Society and Media” at the EC is the key lecturer.

March 1, 2007 – FameLab - The first round of the competition Fame Lab is organized by the British Council and the Ministry of Education and Science. The aim of this competition is to stimulate the young scientists to develop new ideas and capacities.

April 26 – 27, 2007 – ICT Conference – Specialized ICT Conference focused on FP7 in the areas of ICT and security will be organized in Sofia. Representatives from DG “Information Society and Media” will participate in the event.

ICT in FP7

The FP7 ICT Work Programme 2007 defines the priorities for the calls for proposals to be launched in 2007. The priorities are faithful to the FP7 Framework Programme and Specific Programme decisions and in line with the main ICT policy priorities as defined in the i2010 initiative. They reflect the input received from the Programme Committee and Advisory Group, the European Technology Platforms and a series of detailed consultations with the main stakeholders.

The ICT Work Programme under FP7 is divided into seven ‘Challenges’ of strategic interest to European society, plus research into ‘Future and emerging technologies’ and support for horizontal actions, such as international cooperation:

- Challenge 1 - Pervasive and trusted network and service infrastructures
- Challenge 2 - Cognitive systems, interaction and robotics
- Challenge 3 - Components, systems and engineering
- Challenge 4 - Digital libraries and content
- Challenge 5 - Sustainable and personalised healthcare
- Challenge 6 - Mobility, environmental sustainability and energy efficiency
- Challenge 7 - Independent living and inclusion
- Future and emerging technologies (FET)

Detailed information can be obtained in the ICT Work programme in ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/ict/docs/ict-wp-2007-08_en.pdf

The first “Competitiveness and Innovation framework Programme (CIP)” is a coherent and integrated response to the objectives of the renewed Lisbon strategy.

The three specific programmes in the CIP framework are:

- Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme
- ICT Policy Support Programme
- Intelligent Energy-Europe Programme

The ICT Policy Support Programme will build on the aims of the previous e-TEN, Modinis and e-Content programmes and will support the aims of the new integrated strategy i2010 - European Information Society 2010.

The ICT programme will stimulate the new converging markets for electronic networks, media content and digital technologies. It will test solutions to the bottlenecks that delay wide European deployment of electronic services. It will also support the modernisation of public sector services that will raise productivity and improve services.

Actions under the ICT-policy support programme will

- underpin regulatory and research actions of the Commission to stimulate emerging digital economy based on the convergence between network services, media content and new electronic devices
- provide a bridge between research investment and wide adoption, by providing a testing ground for pan-European electronic services in both the public and private sectors
- reinforce European cultural and linguistic identities by support for the production and distribution of European digital content
- assist the development of an open and inclusive European Information Society through stimulating innovative approaches to inclusion, quality of life and public services.

About TRN

TeleRegions Network is preparing an Innovation Day, which will be held in Brussels in April of this year.

This event will have the objective to provide Regional Governments and other key players with the up-to date information about the instruments in place to facilitate their work promoting innovation in their regions and in their enterprises, especially SMEs.

More information will be in www.teleregionsnetwork.org, when the initial arrangements will be done.

Links

Community Research & Development Information Service
www.cordis.lu

Information and Communication Technologies service for FP7 on CORDIS
<http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/>

European Innovation Portal
<http://cordis.europa.eu/innovation/en/home.html>

Search for partners in FP7
<http://www.ideal-ist.net/>