

Business Roaming Agreement as Part of the Joint Action Plan of UPSIDE

The UPSIDE consortium members CyberForum e.V. and Economic Development Department (EDD) Karlsruhe take over as joint coordinators the Business Roaming Agreement after the dissolution of the Swedish Cluster 55°.

The Business Roaming Agreement, which is to support the internationalization of small and medium-sized companies, was originally initiated by Cluster 55° and other international partners. The official handover of the network coordination took place on October 22nd 2014 at the Palais Niederösterreich in Vienna, during the final conference of the EU project ClusteriX.

Approximately one year after CyberForum and the EDD became partners of the Business Roaming Agreement (BRA), they now also take over the coordination of this network contract. The BRA currently connects 67 cluster and cluster-like organizations with the goal of visualising the cross-border links between the participating networks and by doing so to support in particular small and medium-sized enterprises in their internationalization efforts. In addition to Europe, which is spatially very well covered with 58 BRA partners in 23 countries, target markets in America (3 partners), Asia (5 partners) and Australia (1 partner) are supported by the BRA.

The BRA allows all members of the participating clusters to access infrastructure (e.g. offices or conference rooms) of the other partners. In this way, members of e.g. CyberForum can use the infrastructure of networks such as InterspaceLA (Los Angeles, USA), Future Position X (Beijing, China) or even STC Australia (Scoresby, Australia) for a certain period of time. There, they can become acquainted with their target market and establish contacts with potential business partners. They are supported in their business activities by local staff who shares its long-time experience in the regional economy.

The BRA promotes internationalization activities and thus global competitiveness, particularly of IT and high-tech companies, and lowers barriers to enter into new markets especially for small and medium sized enterprises. The BRA acts in this way as a kind of exchange program, in which companies around the world can access existing networks and premises and gain (local) knowledge of the industry. Member companies of the BRA partners therefore gain access to events, venues and offices from Malmö to London to Hong Kong.

The BRA was developed through the Interreg IVC project "ClusteriX" funded by the European Union and was initiated by Cluster 55°. The resolution of Cluster 55° made it necessary to find new coordinators, which continue the BRA in a sustainable way and thus support the internationalization efforts of companies. "In particular for medium-sized companies it is a big step to enter international markets. With the BRA, we can lower the barriers for international activities significantly and support



even small businesses and start-ups in these first difficult steps”, said David Hermanns, CEO of CyberForum e.V.

Within the framework of the European project “UPSIDE – User Driven Participatory Solutions for Innovation in Digital-centered Economies” the BRA will be expanded and further elaborated in the next two years by the UPSIDE consortium as part of their Joint Action Plan. CyberForum – as LEAD partner – and the Economic Development Department Karlsruhe are both involved in UPSIDE, which illuminates the topic of Smart Cities from various user-centric perspectives. UPSIDE receives funding from the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration and connects different cluster actors from Europe, which aim to strengthen the competitiveness of its member companies by encouraging cooperation.

About UPSIDE

The project UPSIDE – User-driven Participatory Solutions for Innovation in Digitally Centred Eco-Systems aims at delivering economic and societal benefits by fostering the emergence and development of User-driven Participatory Solutions for Innovation in Digitally-centred Ecosystems. The project aims at promoting the development of cooperation frameworks and synergy linkages between research, innovation activities within companies, urban development policies and open user-driven innovation ecosystems “which are close to the interests and needs of cities and their stakeholders, including citizens and businesses, and which may bridge the gap between short-term city development priorities and longer term technological research and experimentation.”¹

Project Facts

Project Acronym: UPSIDE

Project Title: User-driven Participatory Solutions for Innovation in Digitally Centred Eco-Systems

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Budget: €2,791,323 (total, EC Funding: €2,601,967)

Web: <http://www.upside-project.eu/>

Project Partners

- CyberForum e.V. (LEAD partner / coordinator)(Germany)
- Wirtschaftsförderung Karlsruhe - Economic Development Department Karlsruhe (Germany)
- inno AG (Germany)
- Stiftelsen Elektronikcentrum i Kista (Sweden)
- Baltic Innovation Agency OÜ (Estonia)
- Tartu City (Estonia)
- E-Zavod (Slovenia)

¹

Hans Schaffers et al.: Smart Cities and the Future Internet: Towards Cooperation Frameworks for Open Innovation. SpringerLink.com



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- Living Labs Global (Denmark)
- Bevel (Sweden)
- Interactive Institute (Sweden)
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