UPSIDE goes International

Karlsruhe, August 20th, 2015

One of the most important objectives of the research project UPSIDE is to boost the competitiveness of the participating regional research-driven clusters via dedicated internationalization activities. In order to do so in a purposeful way, the partners have developed a common internationalization strategy that includes the main target regions of each cluster as well as common internationalization measures. The US were identified as one of the common target markets for the UPSIDE consortium and a first step towards the US was already done in autumn 2014, when CyberForum visited the Silicon Valley.

In order to intensify and expand the connections to the US, particularly to clusters and research institutions, CyberForum visited Atlanta and Puerto Rico in August 2015. Atlanta was identified as excellent hub for internationalization activities due to following reasons: Atlanta is a geographic node for the US. Its airport – since 1998 it is the world's busiest airport by passenger traffic – connects the US to South America, Europe and Asia, and is located only7 miles south of the central business district of Atlanta, Georgia. In addition, many cluster-like institutions are located in Atlanta, e.g. the *Technology Association of Georgia (TAG)* which has emerged as a world-class membership organization and an engine for economic development for the state of Georgia, with over 28,000 members representing over 2,000 tech and tech-enabled companies, or the *Centre of Innovation for Information Technology*, with its centres of innovation, research alliance, incubators and research centres. A meeting with the Director of the Centre of Innovation for Information Technology, Glen Whitley, reinforced the importance of Atlanta as internationalisation hub for the UPSIDE consortium: In addition to the clusters, also an excellent research infrastructure gives distinction to Atlanta: Besides the renowned *Georgia Institute of Technology (GeorgiaTech)* and *Georgia State University* a plethora of universities, graduate institutions and colleges contribute to the economic success of the metropolitan region.

Figure 1: Building of the Georgia Department of Economic Development

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Last but not least, one of the seven *German American Chambers of Commerce (GACC)* is located in Atlanta. With 2,500 members and an extensive national and international network, the GACCs offer a broad spectrum of activities and services and assist German companies with their US market entry and expansion plans. Both, the Centre of Innovation for Information Technology as well as the GACC are willing to cooperate with the UPSIDE partners in order to support not only market entry in the US, but also to sound potential cooperation possibilities, e.g. by signing the Business Roaming Agreement (see also www.clusterize.org).

Puerto Rico was the next stop for exploring potential cooperation possibilities in the US: The world renowned conference AMCIS. Americas Conference on Information Systems (AMCIS) is a preeminent research conference in the information systems discipline conducted under the auspices of Association of Information Systems. Each year, AMCIS attracts up to a thousand or more attendees principally from North America but increasingly from other regions of the world as well. AMCIS 2015 was held in Puerto Rico from August 13-15, 2015 and offered plenty time for discussions with prestigious IT researchers. Contacts were established to the universities of Dallas, Illinois, Maryland and the School of Business at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, just to name a few. These contacts will be maintained for future cooperation possibilities, e.g. common research projects with focus on information technology. But Puerto Rico did not only offer excellent contacts to research, it has also a long history of excelling in this dynamic industry. Besides Microsoft, also Cisco, Oracle, Hewlett-Packard and numerous other software and hardware makers also have major operations in Puerto Rico. In addition, Puerto Rico is home to two of the top 20 largest university engineering programs in the US and a strong pipeline of talent, over 10,000 engineers, scientists and IT professionals are graduated every year.

Figure 2: AMCIS conference

This was reason enough to visit its capital San Juan and meet some of the local clusters in order to sound potential cooperation opportunities. Together with Puerto Rico Creative Economy (PRCEI), CyberForum organized a workshop in the "El Colaboratorio" with clusters from Puerto Rico, which

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was attended by representatives of following clusters and similar associations: Foundation for Puerto Rico, FabLab (Turabo University), Internet Society of Puerto Rico, Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company, Inversión Cultural (NGO for Cultural Entrepreneurship) and the Puerto Rico Creative Economy Initiative. "El Colaboratorio" is a shared office / workspace and can accommodate some 70 peple in more than nine meeting rooms, more than 50 assigned work spaces, 30 interactive desks and other open areas. The goal is to allow the participating nonprofits to exchange ideas and "share their passion for Puerto Rico's future development." During the workshop, first discussions on specific cooperation measures were started with the present representatives of the triple helices. Also, a bilateral discussion with a representative of Puerto Rico Information Technology Cluster took place after the workshop.

Figure 3: El Colaboratorio building in San Juan

The contacts made during the business trip will be pursued in order to increase the competitiveness of the UPSIDE project partners by implementing the internationalisation measures defined in their internationalisation strategy. The UPSIDE consortium will figure out how international partners and/or their single members can be integrated in the different measures defined in the JAP (e.g. knowledge transfer by networking, identifying RTD projects, signing the Business Roaming Agreement etc.). The level of integration will be defined based on relevance to and preferences of the project partners and potential international partners. According to the nature of the actions defined, the partners will also seek additional funding opportunities at the regional, national and European levels.

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 the 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
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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)
- eGovlab ,Stockholm University (Sweden)
- Interactive Institute Swedish ICT (Sweden)
- Bevel (Sweden)
- Baltic Innovation Agency OÜ (Estonia)
- Tartu City (Estonia)
- E-Zavod (Slovenia)
- Mestna Obcina Maribor / City of Maribor (Slovenia)
- Samenwerkingsverband Regio Eindhoven (The Netherlands)
- Technische Universiteit Eindhoven (The Netherlands)
- Living Labs Global (Denmark)

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

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