

Success Story

Completing the team to increase exploitation perspectives of H2020 proposals

How universities and research institutes can easily get in touch with suitable SMEs to strengthen their project consortia

The Institute of Bioprocess and Biosystems Engineering at Hamburg University of Technology is distinguished for its research on designing novel enzymes, pathways and cells and on developing integrated bioproduction systems for chemicals, fuels and pharmaceuticals from renewable materials.

With a first stage proposal addressing the European Commissions' research funding programme Horizon 2020 together with international partners, the institute convinced evaluators with a concept to develop two novel microbial platforms and highly integrated new biotechnological processes to overcome the technical and economical limitations in the reuse of CO₂ for biosynthesis of value-added chemicals. In order to further strengthen the exploitation aspects, it was decided to look out for additional industrial partners, if possible SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises), before submission of second stage proposal.

Advisors at Tutech Innovation GmbH, a Hamburg based technology transfer agency closely linked to Hamburg University of Technology, had already supported the team of Prof. Dr. Zeng, head of institute, in preparation of several winning proposals for research funding and also in management and controlling of these projects. In order to find a suitable industrial partner to complete the consortium, they suggested to try out the partnering support services of Enterprise Europe Network (EEN).

This network with regional offices in more than 60 countries worldwide has been established by European Commission in order to support SMEs to innovate and to grow on international level. TUTECH is participating in this network as regional partner responsible for the City of Hamburg. Thanks to the funding by European Commission and by the City of Hamburg, TUTECH can offer EEN services free of charge to SMEs, but also to their possible partners like universities or research centres in search of industry contacts. To find a suitable project partner, the EEN team at TUTECH published a R&D cooperation request in the Partnership Opportunity Database of Enterprise Europe

Network. With thousands of business, technology and research partnering profiles this database is a great opportunity to find suitable cooperation partners from Europe and beyond in every sector. Access is open to public (<http://www.een-hhsh.de/marktplatz.html>), but profiles are also disseminated actively to possible matches by the network of about 3000 Enterprise Europe Network business advisors in all parts of the world - all of them being well connected to innovative companies within their region.

Within only two weeks responses to the partnering profile lead to several valuable contacts and in further negotiations two companies agreed to join the consortium:

The company PAK GIDA URETIM VE PAZARLAMA AS (PAKMAYA), addressed with the partnering request by Turkish EEN partner KOU Teknopark, is producing yeast and other food ingredients industrially and thus has a strong interest in bringing research results of the project to market application.

With support of EEN business advisors at KVK Netherlands a contact to Bioprocess Pilot Facility B.V. could be established. At BPF companies and knowledge institutions can develop and proof on pilot scale novel, sustainable and environmentally friendly production processes based on biological materials. The BPF is especially designed to enable the step-up from laboratory scale to industrial scale.

The joint H2020-proposal has been submitted on 4th May 2017. The consortium with the new partners as well as the EEN teams at TUTECH, KOU Teknopark and KVK Netherlands keep fingers crossed that evaluators will be convinced both by the excellent research approach and by the strong market perspectives within the consortium.

“The Institute of Bioprocess and Biosystems Engineering is very happy to find two additional strong partners in PAKMAYA and BPF to cover vital aspects in the proposal work plan to meet all call requirements. By covering essential steps in the value chain of the intended process and PAKMAYA’s interest in exploitation, the potential project impact will be increased considerably by these partnerships.”

Prof. Dr. An-Ping Zeng, Head of Institute of Bioprocess and Biosystems Engineering at Hamburg University of Technology

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