

# SUPPORT



## SME University Partnership Online Resource & Training

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## Launch of The SUPPORT Programme

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On November 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> 2010 the Universidad Politécnica de Valencia (UPV) was the venue for the first meeting of the SUPPORT Programme partners and the formal launch of the Programme.

Representatives from the SUPPORT Programme partner organisations based in France, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Spain and the UK (see details on page 4) attended a series of meetings. Having introduced themselves and their organisations, the group went to work agreeing a series of individual work packages (described on page 3) which ultimately will help SMEs to break down barriers and gain access to under-exploited research in HEIs and to help universities to find outlets for their previous research, making them more aware of marketing needs.

UPV staff gave partners a demonstration of an innovative web based platform which will facilitate the submission, review and editing of Programme related work between the partners.

The SUPPORT partners have agreed to next meet in Ireland on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2011.



**SUPPORT Project partners from the UK, Ireland, Poland, Germany, Spain and France pictured during the kick-off meeting at Universidad Politécnica de Valencia**



Lifelong Learning Programme

This Programme has been funded with support from the European Commission

## **The SUPPORT Programme explained**

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**SMEs are important for the future of the European economy. They don't just account for a significant amount of economic activity and employment but make an important contribution to, and in some regions are the primary source of, innovation and wealth creation**

Investment in knowledge of itself does not reverse stagnant economic growth and persistently high levels of unemployment. There is now a recognition across the European Union that mechanisms are needed to ensure that further and higher education institutions which gather and teach knowledge if they are to make a contribution to economic growth need to disseminate research findings more effectively to the world of business and industry. They must focus much more on commercial application of new knowledge. Too often the potential of SMEs to exploit the research findings of Higher and Further Educational establishments is untapped.

The aim of SUPPORT is to develop resources which can help SMEs to break down barriers and gain access to under-exploited research in HEIs and to help universities to find outlets for their previous research, making them more aware of marketing needs

### **The project will:**

- Identify the barriers that SMEs face when trying to access HEI research
- Identify the barriers & training needs that HEI staff experience when trying to access and engage with SMEs
- Design & produce a DVD training course for delivery to SMEs and HEI students
- Design & produce a complementary web-site, directly targeting SMEs
- Pilot test a training resource with target users
- Promote this resource to encourage uptake
- Carry out an evaluation of the project to feedback into future policy

### **As a result of the project:**

- The barriers entrepreneurs & HEIs face in six EU countries when trying engage with each other will be mapped and disseminated to stakeholders in those jurisdictions as well as the European Commission.
- Entrepreneurs will be provided with the specific skills/knowledge which can help them to innovate.
- HEI staff will gain a deeper understanding of how SMEs function.
- SME access to the course will be encouraged
- There will be a network of HEIs sharing experience of working with SMEs to promote innovation.

### **Work Package 1 – Project Management**

This covers the co-ordination of all project activities, especially administrative and financial responsibilities, and co-ordination of effective, positive communication between partners both at transnational meetings, other face-to-face contacts, and via telephone and email. Lead partner: Louth county Enterprise Board (IE)

### **Work Package 2 – Needs Analysis and Good Practice Review**

This work package aims to provide partners with a thorough understanding of the learning needs of SME staff, SME support providers & HEIs with regard to improving and increasing cooperation & collaboration between SMEs & HEIs. Lead partner: Martin Luther University (DE)

### **Work Package 3 – Development of Road Map**

Based on the needs analysis & good practice review, a "Road Map" guide for SMEs & HEIs will be developed and printed. Lead partner: Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency (GB)

### **Work Package 4 – DVD Training and Resource Pack Development**

This work package will identify, and develop materials in line with the needs analysis and good practice review to write and produce a DVD resource pack to meet the needs of target groups. Lead partner: University Polytechnica Valencia (E)

### **Work Package 5 – eLearning Materials Development**

This work package will identify, and develop materials in line with needs analysis and good practice review to write the "bite sized" eLearning materials to meet the needs of SME staff & HEI students. Lead partner: Midshare (FR)

### **Work Package 6 – Website Development**

This package will focus on the transfer the learning materials into an intuitive, effective eLearning format for incorporation into the website, in five partner languages. It will search-engine optimise the SUPPORT web-site with regard to terms relating to SME & University collaboration and SMEs accessing University research. Lead partner: Canice Consulting (GB)

### **Work Package 7 – Pilot Testing**

This work package will thoroughly test the materials (eLearning website & DVD resource pack) with target groups in all participating countries and to use the feedback achieved in order to advise the partnership of modifications that can be made to the materials which will improve their quality, relevance, usefulness and usability by the target group. Lead partner: Northern Chamber Poland (PL)

### **Work Package 8 – Dissemination**

The aim of our dissemination strategy will be to efficiently communicate to the target group & wider stakeholders the value and relevance of the project & thus to generate genuine interest for collaboration in the project activities and for using its end results (reports, Web-site, DVD Resource Pack etc.). Lead partner: Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency (GB)

### **Work Package 9 – Monitoring, Quality and Evaluation**

This work package will monitor the quality of the Partnership's work and also commission an external evaluation and get feedback on the general satisfaction of partners and users of programme materials. It will assess the Project's implementation and the whole working process from the beginning to the formal end date of the project. Lead partner: Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency (GB)

### **Work Package 10 – Exploitation**

This work package will set out a way to successfully transfer the results/outcomes of the Project to key-actors who could adopt its methodologies or materials: SME owners and staff members, SME management or human resources departments, Higher Education Institutes, SME Support bodies such as Chambers of Commerce, Enterprise Agencies, Business Incubators, as well as trainers or consultants providing services to SME. Lead partner: University Polytechnica Valencia (E)



Canice Consulting is an international consultancy operating in the fields of local and regional development, enterprise and employment development, and management and technical support to EU networks and programmes. Operating from Lisburn, staff have in-depth knowledge of EU policies and programmes and considerable experience of working within Northern Ireland, other regions of the UK and in other EU countries. With significant experience in training programme design, project management and SME development, the company has developed a particular specialism in online learning development and search engine optimisation techniques. As such, the company is ideally suited to the transfer and adaptation of the training materials, as well as ensuring excellent visibility and page ranking, thereby returning well for searches pertinent to the project for example on; transfer of innovation, SME University cooperation, new product development, licensing, patents and related terms.



LCEB is the primary agency in County Louth, Ireland dedicated to SME development. In its 17 years of existence its experienced staff has provided advice, counselling, training and resource development support to well over 3000 local enterprises, along with over €4,500,000 in direct financial support. The Board also delivers over 50 SMEs development training sessions, a Schools Enterprise programme, a 'Women in Enterprise' programme, along with the Plato and M1 Skillnet networking and development programmes. Business start-up and development advice is provided by the Board's own staff.

LCEB has developed a range of information and training services. However, they face the challenge of engaging micro enterprises to think about innovation as a key and core business driver and of maximizing the impact and value-for-money of innovation training on these small businesses, thereby ensuring that the SME sector are assisted to fulfil their growth path and contribute to economic growth.



## MARTIN-LUTHER-UNIVERSITÄT HALLE-WITTENBERG

Founded in 1502, the Martin Luther University (MLU) is the largest research organisation and supplier of higher education in the federal state of Saxony-Anhalt with more than 17,500 students. The research potential of this full-scale university comes from 10 faculties and 15 Scientific Centres hosting over 300 professors and thousands of scientific staff. Its integrated approach of technology and knowledge transfer in combination with promotion of spin-out companies has repeatedly been acknowledged internationally by the OECD (LEED). Among the most important transfer-related activities are: campus transfer company "UNIVATIONS Institute", academic entrepreneurship network "UNIVATIONS" (start-up consulting, micro-business training, business development aid), "INVESTFORUM Saxony-Anhalt" (micro-business and SME equity acquisition support), school-level business plan competition "futurego", SME internationalisation support programme "projectEAST" (workshops, contact network, public funding consulting).



MindShare Consulting (MSC) was founded in 1994. MSC's original focus was advanced facilitation and meeting services using innovative tools (an early proponent, user and champion of innovative GroupSystems applications). This expanded to management consulting, especially related to education/training concerned with change and innovation management and leadership. A multi-year collaboration with INSEAD (CALT – The Centre for Advanced Learning Technologies) has led to involvement in European deployment of the EIS Change and Innovation Management Workshop. Clients have spanned the USA, Europe and Puerto Rico. A particular focus has been SMEs.

In addition, involved in successfully completed EC (eTen) projects:

KLAB (Knowledge & Learning Among Businesses): innovative e-service exploiting reality/need of SME managers to learn from peers.

ChangeMasters: edutainment services for Change & Innovation Management.

Is currently partner on Leonardo project IIME Introducing Innovation in Micro Enterprises.



Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency is the primary micro-enterprise support provider in the Newry & Mourne District providing a continuum of support to entrepreneurs, focused on training, especially finance, marketing and ICT, and personalised management for business start-up owner-managers, and specialist mentoring for existing businesses on a rapid growth trajectory. Since 2001, NMEA has assisted 1,077 entrepreneurs to develop businesses, employing 2,000 people and generating £tens of millions of revenue annually in Northern Ireland. As well as delivering its programme of support to micro-enterprises, NMEA co-ordinates the primary intervention on the island of Ireland (Tradelinks) to support and encourage trade between micro-enterprises in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic; it is also the primary provider of support to non-profit "Social Enterprises" in counties Armagh and Down and it is active in a number of urban and rural regeneration programmes. NMEA employs 14 staff including a Chartered Accountant, a Chartered Planner, a Doctor of Business and Economics, a marketing specialist, a commercial property advisor, an IT specialist and two community development experts. NMEA's aim in this Project is to work with innovation-ready micro-enterprises to help up-skill their owner-managers and workforce making a positive contribution to local economic development.



Established in 1997, the Northern Chamber of Commerce (NCC) in Szczecin is the largest self-governed organisation representing over 1400 companies from the West Pomerania Region in Poland, which means that this is the largest regional Chamber of Commerce in Poland. The principle task of the NCC is to provide services to member companies, including training and education services, the organisation of co-operation visits and the facilitation of networking opportunities, financial assistance and interest representation and lobbying.



UNIVERSIDAD  
POLITECNICA  
DE VALENCIA

The UPVLC is a dynamic and innovative institution that is dedicated to research and teaching. The UPVLC's vocation as a service results from its commitment to society. We provide our students with the knowledge they need to be able to work as graduates in their professional field, and we offer them an all-round education. One of the UPVLC pillars is its research capacity. Its departments undertake research projects jointly with national and international bodies and companies. Research is not simply a means of educating, but is a way of maintaining direct contact with society, its reality and needs, while ensuring a permanent fine-tuning of university structures. The IDEAS programme is a ground breaking initiative of the UPVLC that focuses on helping to implement entrepreneurial ideas with a technological or innovative base. As new enterprises are created, the UPVLC contributes towards modernizing the Valencian entrepreneurial network and pays foundations for innovation and research.

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