

UNITE **4** Horizon Europe



**Building collaboration
capacity for Horizon Europe**

Welcome to Unite for Horizon Europe Project!

While the Horizon 2020 programme has demonstrated closer and more increased collaboration activities in comparison with its predecessor FP7, the European Commission is looking to “raise the bar in the quality and widening of participation” in its follow-up Horizon Europe programme period, commencing after 2020. It particularly concerns the involvement of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in innovation partnerships as the latter have been reported considerably low, resulting in lower intensity of cross-sectoral cooperation among knowledge providers and smaller businesses. Observing this gap inspired an international consortium of partners from Cyprus, France, Finland, The Netherlands, Spain, Germany and Ireland to undertake a brand-new Erasmus+ project “Unite for Horizon Europe” (UNITE4H), which aims to identify the limitations and help build strategic engagement capacity between academics and SME representatives to develop, apply and implement projects within the Horizon Europe framework.

Notably, many SMEs continue to struggle to adopt the right strategy, business processes, skills, or other resources to get involved in European funding partnerships. Similarly, even though the participation of the higher education institutions (HEIs) and research organisations in the Horizon 2020 has been the strongest among others, their involvement for the new framework is deemed to be further enhanced by the provision of tailored support for collaboration with a more diverse range of stakeholders. In the light of the low success rate and missed opportunities for more strategic cooperation between HEIs and SMEs, the availability of supportive engagement training programmes is crucial.

Throughout the life of the project, we will produce several outputs. The project starts off with an investigation into the needs and challenges experienced by HEI and SME representatives, resulting into a programme framework. Based on this framework, we will develop a training programme and toolkit to increase awareness, skills and knowledge capacity among academics and SME representatives. The two training programmes, one for SMEs and one for HEIs, each consist of several modules. During the last phase, these modules will be pilot tested among academics and SME representatives within the partners’ institutions and networks.



We believe that the results of this project will not only have impact on the individual level with the academic development and career advancement of the participants, but also on the institutional level, where the HEIs and SMEs will build awareness on mechanisms they can put in place for collaborative innovation, as well as at the system level, where the European research priorities are more effectively addressed through international strategic collaborations between HEIs and SMEs. Needless to say, we envision that the results of the UNITE4H project will be seen through new partnerships and development within Horizon Europe framework and beyond.

On Behalf of UNITE4H Project Consortium,
The University Industry Innovation Network

Our Goal

The goal of the Unite for Horizon Europe (UNITE4H) project is to help build strategic engagement capacity between European academics and researchers and SME representatives to increase the proportion of successful collaborative participation in the Horizon Europe initiatives. We believe an increased engagement between HEIs and SMEs, as well as foundations and other stakeholders around targeted Horizon Europe projects will not only help deliver on a united approach to societal challenges, but also help strengthen the means of funding for HEIs to be able to concentrate their efforts on the entire innovation cycle from research to market.

Our Objectives

- 1** Identifying the engagement needs and challenges experienced & collaborative opportunities envisioned by the academics and SME representatives across Europe;
- 2** Developing the Horizon Europe Engagement Training Programme to increase awareness, skills and knowledge capacity among academics and SME representatives;
- 3** Pilot-Testing Horizon Europe Engagement Training Validation Report workshops among HEIs and SME representatives.

Our Intellectual Outputs

Horizon Europe Engagement Programme Framework

The framework will be built on in-depth research that will identify the status-quo of academics and SME representatives' engagement skills and competences, as well as facilitators, challenges, and perceived partnership opportunities. The research will involve desk research, interviews, and surveys to be conducted primarily in the partner HEI and SME contexts, as well across Europe.

Horizon Europe Engagement Training Programme and Toolkit

The programme modules within the two training programmes, will broadly cover an overview of the Horizon Europe programme, desired selection and nature of SME-HEI partnerships according to identified priorities, and SME & HEI customised skills and competence development for strategic research engagement. The toolkit will consist of learning, teaching and assessment resources and facilitator guidelines.

Horizon Europe Engagement Training Validation Report

The report will capture the pilot testing of the Training Programme by the partner HEIs and SMEs. The pilot programme will be delivered to academics and SME representatives within the institutions and the networks of the project partner organisations. The report will involve feedback collected from both participants and the trainers as well.

The Training Programs



SME Representatives

The training modules for this target group among others will cover the research opportunities for SMEs presented within Horizon Europe funding framework, strategies for overcoming barriers and challenges of cooperation with HEIs, the use of SMEs' strengths and their contribution to the research project development and implementation, etc.



HEI Researchers and Academics

The training modules for this target group will include an overview of Horizon Europe funding framework research opportunities, internal and external asset mapping, institutional challenges in setting up partnerships with businesses, strategies on running collaborative research projects, etc.



Our Consortium

Crazy Town
Jyväskylä, Finland

Meath County Council
Navan Meath, Ireland

The University-Industry Innovation Network
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Univations
Halle, Germany

Institut Mines Télécom Business School
Évry, France

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid
Madrid, Spain

Novatex
Strovolos, Cyprus

Our Consortium



Novatex - Project Leader

A SME in Cyprus, working in different fields with their expertise in university engagement, project participation and management. Novatex holds a close collaboration both with universities and industry and co-organised many information events on the use of technological advancements.



Institut Mines-Télécom Business School

One of France's major educational and research establishments. IMTBS has a strong connection to a local network of SMEs in both research and education to support SME innovation and providing education for future employees.



University Industry Innovation Network

An international leader on university-industry engagement, entrepreneurial & engaged universities and knowledge transfer. They conduct research, organise events and provide training and consultancy services to their community of 80+ organisational and 500+ individual members.



Crazy Town

One of the most experienced organizations in Finland that specializes in the subject of promoting university-business-cooperation, in particular, from the practitioners' point of view. They have extensive experience in connecting businesses and universities with hands-on trainings, workshops, and matchmaking activities.



Univations

An affiliated institute of M.-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg, responsible for all strategic entrepreneurship and knowledge transfer activities of the University, bridging between the HEI and enterprise sector in the regional innovation ecosystem.



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Meath County Council

A local authority in Ireland, with over 15 years of experience with EU projects – many of them initiated and managed by them. The Council operates the Local Enterprise Office whose emphasis is job creation through enterprise, and which maintains direct and constant links with the HEI across the country and more widely across the EU.



Carlos III University of Madrid

An international oriented university, committed to innovation. UC3M has over 230 industrial partnerships on knowledge transfer and business interaction. Their mission is to contribute to the improvement of society through teaching of the highest quality and cutting-edge research in line with stringent international guidelines.

www.unite4horizon.eu

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