

# Technology Transfer and Business Support

KNOW-HUB



The KNOW-HUB project (full name “Enhancing Regional Competences in Strategic Management of Innovation Policies”) funded by the INTERREG IV program of the European Union, aims to grow and exchange the experiences of European regions in designing and implementing the next generation of smart and effective strategies for innovation. The project actively collaborates with the Smart Specialization Platform (S3) in their work on reviewing and improving their Smart Specialization Strategies for Research and Innovation (RIS3).

The KNOW-HUB project started in January 2012 and will conclude in December 2014. It involves 10 European sub-national regions that share good practices and collaboratively find solutions to common problems in helping to boost regional development by the identification and implementation of better policies.

In 2013, the KNOW-HUB practitioners were involved in a series of Mutual Learning



Mutual Learning Circles seminar

Circles seminars in order to discuss key issues on “S3 and Policies”, “Effective Instruments for Innovation Policies” and “Current Problem Identification and Solving”. The knowledge that was exchanged is being used in designing implementation plans that are customized for each region, and include specific measures to help in achieving smart specialization.

In all project activities, ARC Fund closely collaborates with the Municipality of Gabrovo, which is the Bulgarian region within the focus of the KNOW-HUB project. ARC Fund also supports the local initiative of the municipality to screen the economic performance of local companies in order to identify the key competitive advantages of the region. The KNOW-HUB project maintains a web portal that features:

- An encyclopedia of regional innovation strategies and instruments;
- A repository of good practices;
- A blog and newsletter on important activities related to the smart strategies and policy instruments in the EU;
- Short videos on regional innovation and a library of publications and reports specifically selected for readers.

The project will also deliver two practical guides with references to the knowledge and good practices identified in KNOW-HUB, as well as training sessions for public stakeholders to spread “win-win” collaborations beyond the project consortium.



Know-Hub website

ETNA Plus - European Transport Network Alliance



- Making Transport Sustainable;
- Making Transport and Transport Systems Seamless;
- Keeping European Transport Competitive through Research.

In 2013, the ETNA Plus consortium started working on their partner search facility for potential participants in calls for proposals, as well as on curriculum for training sessions for NCPs. A brokerage event for finding project partners in Transport-related calls of Horizon 2020 was organized within the EC Transport Infoday on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013 in Brussels. ARC Fund was responsible for the organization of Green Vehicle b2b session with the participation of more than 30 transport organizations throughout Europe. Complementary to the b2b sessions and awareness raising Infoday, a number of innovative transport companies will be enrolled for the ETNA Academy Trainings and webinars for building capacity in Horizon2020 project participation.

ETNA Plus started in January 2013 and aims at advancing innovation in the transport sector by fostering trans-national cooperation. It is funded by the Seventh Framework Program of the European Commission. The project networks the national contact points (NCPs) and supporting organizations in the area of transport across Europe in preparation for the coming Horizon2020 Program of the EU. ETNA Plus promotes the active participation of current and new actors and regions in the Horizon2020 transport research calls and projects under the following priorities:

The project website features relevant information in the field of transport, such as news, factsheets, newsletters, open calls, a partner search tool, and training materials.

Enterprise Europe Network – the Network for SME support

After 7 years in operation, the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) has helped more than 3 million companies to make the most of the European Single Market. It has also attracted around 40,000 small businesses to international events and missions for business cooperation and technology transfer. Europe's largest business support network contributes to the competitiveness of SMEs by making it easier for them to internationalise, innovate and access EU funding. Close to 600 major players in the business support community have connected through the network in order to offer a one-stop service to help companies reach their full potential.

It provides support services designed to help SMEs do business abroad and to find European funding for their research and innovation projects. The network was created in 2008 by DG Enterprise & Industry and is a key part of the EU's Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Program (CIP), which aims to encourage competitiveness in European businesses. It is managed by the Executive Agency for Competitiveness & Innovation (EACI).

EEN-Bulgaria, being part of the network, helps the small businesses in the country internationalise, innovate and seize the opportunities of international markets.

With over 3,500 professionals participating, the network is present in 54 countries. This helps small companies seize the unparalleled business opportunities of the global

The network in Bulgaria consists of 14 partnering organizations in 8 cities, and covers the whole country. It is coordinated by ARC Fund.



Map of EEN-Bulgaria nodes

As in previous years, the focus of the network was to help the internationalisation of Bulgarian SMEs through business partnerships, to encourage and support innovation via technology transfer and modern innovation support services, and to facilitate access for SMEs to research programs and funding opportunities.

ARC Fund maintains the internet portal of the network in Bulgaria, which is the leading Bulgarian portal for business information and advice, technology transfer and innovation, and consultancy. It is also a repository of information on how to participate in national and European funding programs, especially in terms of technological development,

research and marketing of new products and technologies. Each partner maintains its own regional portal of the network.

During 2013, the activities of EEN – Bulgaria focused on the sectors of ICT, Food and Beverages, Mechatronics and Automation, Textiles and others. A special focus is put on collaboration with the business clusters in Bulgaria. As such, ARC Fund is member of the Cluster of Mechatronics and Automation and the Association of the Business Clusters in Bulgaria. It supported and promoted the 4<sup>th</sup> Balkan and Black Sea Conference Days of Clusters, held on 31 October – 1 November 2013 in Sofia, that gathered clusters from Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia, Turkey and other countries.



Screenshot of the EEN in Bulgaria

Brokerage events

Throughout the year, ARC Fund organised several business and technological brokerage and matchmaking events in various economic sectors. These included: engineering, machine building, ICT, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources, and the food industry. These types of pre-arranged meetings allow for contact between businesses and research organizations in search of business, technology and project partnerships.

Enterprise Europe Network - Bulgaria co-organized, with the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Navigation of Valencia, a B2B Matchmaking event during ANUGA 2013, the world's leading food fair for retail trade, food service and catering. The B2B Matchmaking event took place in Cologne, Germany and was held on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> of October. The fair was attended by 363 participants from 28 countries, where 685 scheduled bilateral meetings were held. Some unscheduled meetings were also

organized on-site with the support of the EEN officers. ARC Fund organized the profile submission and on-site participation of 18 Bulgarian companies for the matchmaking event. Many were also taking part in the trade mission to the fair, led by the Bulgarian government's Agency for SME Promotion.

Following its good ties with the Bulgarian ICT industry, the EEN organised, along with its international EEN partners, several brokerage events in the framework of major international ICT fairs and conferences. These included the World Mobile Congress Barcelona (February 2013), CeBIT Hannover (March 2013), CeBIT Eurasia – Istanbul (October 2013), SIMO Madrid (October 2013), and EU ICT Days in Vilnius (November 2013). In total, the EEN team at ARC Fund supported 16 Bulgarian ICT SMEs to submit their partnership profiles and pre-arrange their b2b meetings. These added up to a total of 120 meetings for all 5 brokerage events.



B2B meetings at ANUGA, Cologne, 2013  
WMC Barcelona, CeBIT Hannover, CeBIT Eurasia, SIMO Madrid, ICT Days Vilnius

The Enterprise Europe Network, in cooperation with the Bulgarian Association of Electrical Engineering and Electronics (BASSEL) and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Plovdiv, organized a mission of German companies in the sector of swimming pools, water management, electrical engineering and sensors production, on the 29th and 30th August, 2013 in Plovdiv. The event aimed to provide an opportunity to establish new business contacts and partnerships between companies from Bulgaria and Germany in these sectors. Six German companies, led by tti-Magdeburg, an EEN partner, had the opportunity to interact with 56 representatives of 42 Bulgarian firms.. The companies identified matching interests (deployment, service, technical adaptation of the products for the Bulgarian customers) and committed themselves to get in contact with more concrete business proposals in the following weeks. Several Partnership Agreements were processed during the event. Major regional newspapers, TV, radio stations covered the business forum. A welcome address was given by the Mayor of Plovdiv. The business mission ended with group visit of one of the largest breweries in Bulgaria – “Kamenitza”, based in Plovdiv.

Apart from this, the EEN has organized an individual company mission in Sofia in January 2013, held for the German company ItN Nanovation AG and Bulgarian company EkoMaks Bio Ltd, as potential partners in the area of water filtration technologies.

In March, in cooperation with Inter Expo Center – Sofia and the Bulgarian Industrial Association, the EEN organized a B2B matchmaking and technology transfer event, entitled IndustryMatchMaking - IMM2013 within specialized international exhibitions in the area of metallurgy, automation & mechatronics, and transport.

The forum was an excellent opportunity for companies and organizations from Bulgaria, UK, Serbia and Turkey to establish valuable business contacts with local and foreign companies for business cooperation, technology transfer or participation in EU-funded projects for competitiveness and innovation. The bilateral meetings offered participants the possibility to make direct contacts with potential partners, to learn about the news and trends, to promote their business activities and to exchange experiences.

In its role as the coordinator of the national EEN consortium, ARC Fund continuously organized intra-consortium activities as well as information days and capacity-building seminars in the framework of the annual series of event “In Support of Entrepreneurship”. In 2013, the EEN team at ARC Fund became part of the EU IPR Helpdesk Ambassador Scheme – a network of regional reference points for intellectual property inquiries and advice in support of SMEs across the EU.



*German company mission in Plovdiv, co-organised by Enterprise Europe Network at ARC Fund*



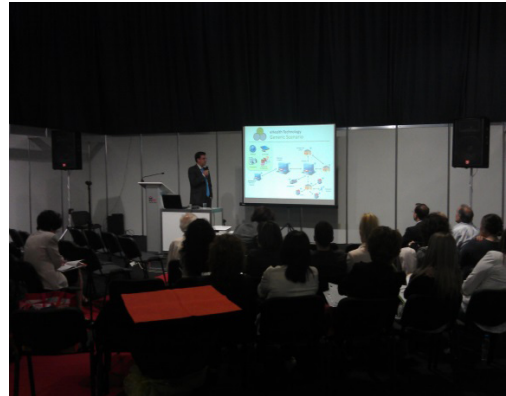
Left to right: Days of Clusters in Sofia, co-organised by Enterprise Europe Network at ARC Fund; training seminar from the series of events “Supporting Entrepreneurship 2013”, organized by EEN.



### ICT for AgeingWell

In 2013, the Applied Research and Communications Fund joined the 'ICT for AgeingWell' thematic network, funded by the Competitiveness and Innovation Program of the EU. The aim of the **AgeingWell** Network is to build and animate a European network focused on improving the quality of life of elderly people by promoting the market uptake of ICT solutions for the facilitation of the aging process. Europeans are living longer than ever, thanks to economic growth and advances in health care, and ICT for Ageing Well solutions are essential tools for improving the quality of life of the ageing population. Relevant initiatives are being developed at the European, national and regional level, but they are mostly working in isolation. The aim of the **AgeingWell** Network is, therefore, to create a community that brings together the key initiatives in the field of ICT for Ageing and thus to improve communication and cooperation between them. This should be done

with a view to better deploy such ICT for Ageing solutions, exchange good practices, and disseminate information to stakeholders across Europe. In accomplishing this, ARC Fund focused its activities on the promotion of the network and raising the awareness about the opportunities this niche area creates for the ICT industry. The kick-off event of the Network in Bulgaria was a training seminar entitled “e-Health - Opportunities for Financing of e-Services in Health” organized by ARC Fund, within the framework of the international exhibition of innovations in medicine BULMEDICA/ BULDENTAL at the Inter Expo Center in Sofia.



*Kick-off event of the AgeingWell thematic network in Bulgaria*

During the seminar, attended by representatives from Bulgarian Red Cross, National Health Insurance Fund, media and others, the consortium partners: Optimus Comunicações, S.A. (Portugal), Artica Telemedicina, S.L. (Spain) and Euroconsultants, S.A. (Greece,) talked about the experience of their countries in ICT services for ageing and the place of e-Health in EU in 2014-2020.

The Thematic Network took part also in the 12th European Conference of the Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe in Vilamoura, Portugal. The panel prepared by the network's partners was "Future Policy Framework for ICT & Ageing" in which ARC Fund's team delivered approaches for the assessment of the socio-economic impact of ICT for ageing projects.

The Bulgarian Association of Information Technologies (BAIT) was engaged as a key associate member of the network, providing fora for communicating the prospective opportunities for development of the Bulgarian ICT industry in this rapidly emerging niche area.

On a regular basis, the team implementing this project contributes to the development and upload of the Knowledge Centre of the Network.

By the end of the project in 2015, it is foreseen that the consortium should:

- Develop Guidelines for deployment and sharing of good practices between key competence centers (Good Practices Handbook);
- Develop Guidelines Handbook which intends to be a working tool to support all ICT & Ageing stakeholders in their decisions to develop ICT for ageing solutions in different EU Member States;
- Develop an ICT for Ageing Knowledge Centre with the aim to share relevant information and results with the AgeingWell Community;
- Develop an ICT for Ageing Society Strategic Agenda, with the aim of providing a study on options for a future structure and implementation of EU innovation funding;
- Promote European innovation synergies between innovative ICT & Ageing enterprises (in particular SMEs) and the investment community;
- Raise awareness within the European community of ICT&Ageing stakeholders;
- Update with regular news on the ICT & Ageing sectors through the **AgeingWell** web portal, newsletters, and social networks (Twitter, LinkedIn).

The **AgeingWell** network is open to ICT providers, health services providers, clusters and networks, insurance companies, investors, entrepreneurs, regions and municipalities. Launched in 2012, the network has already more than 40 associate members from across the EU.

### ECAbit

ARC Fund coordinated the ECAbit Network of Business Incubators and Technology Parks for two mandates in the period from 2008-2012, in partnership with and support from World Bank's infoDev Program. One of ARC Fund's senior experts has been elected to sit at the new ECAbit Network board for the next period of the networks activities from 2013-2015.

Founded in May 2005 in Kiev, Ukraine, the network aims at strengthening the business and incubation and innovation ecosystems in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, (ECA) as well as the Middle East and North Africa. A major component of the conducted activities was the organization of numerous training events, and the provision of high value-added services to its members.

### EUWIN

The European Learning Network for Workplace Innovation (EUWIN) was established at the beginning of 2013, in order to help optimize the productivity and innovativeness of European organizations. The network aims to do this through the introduction of innovative practices in organizations regarding the management of their employees, the organization of their activities and their utilization of technology. Organizational change, in this context, is largely aimed at unlocking the latent potential and productivity within employees, improving their levels of professional satisfaction, and improving the communication channels and strategic knowledge of those in leadership positions.

EUWIN achieves its goals through the aggregation of practical cases, as well as academic knowledge, and communicates this information to organizational representatives. More practically, network representatives organize a series of workshops, undertake outreach activities via social media channels, and develop an online database of knowledge on workplace innovation.

First, stakeholders (i.e. practitioners, social partners, policymakers, and representatives of intermediary organizations) are brought together to identify specific challenges to improving the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace, and offer examples of innovative practices. Following this, six regional workshops will be held in order to arrive at an understanding of the needs of each of the six target areas. These workshops aim to gather regional experts and thought leaders in order to develop and aggregate new approaches or modes of workplace

innovation. Finally, the action will conclude with two highly interactive workshops where participations will exchange good practices and knowledge in an international context. As mentioned, the action is organized around six regions. These include:

1. Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Finland and Norway;
2. France, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Belgium (fr.);
3. Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Czech Republic, and Slovakia;
4. Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, and the Former Yugoslav Republics;
5. UK, Ireland, Netherlands, and Belgium (fl).
6. Lithuania, Poland, Latvia, and Estonia.

For its part, ARC Consulting utilizes its longstanding coordination of the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) in Bulgaria to help integrate the findings of the network activities into the 500+ organizations involved in the EEN. ARC Consulting's links with the EEN also allow the network's outputs to be directly communicated to businesses and allow for a two-way exchange, facilitating consultations between the network and the business community on the validity and practicability of the outputs of the project. The EUWIN was formally launched on 10 April 2013 in Brussels, at the European Parliament. Representatives of two companies from Bulgaria attended the event and made presentations on how they perceive and implement workplace innovation: DeConi and UniTech Control. The launch event brought together more than 100 business managers and policy makers to discuss the best ways to organize EUWIN and further make the case for advanced workplaces in Europe.



## BOO-Games

In 2013, progress on the 'Boosting European Games Industry' (BOO-Games) project built on the foundational activities conducted in 2012.

ARC Fund's main activities during the year focused on the development of an abridged version of a 472-page report entitled - 'BOO-Games Regional Analysis Report' - which was developed by the consortium partners and finalized at the beginning of 2013. Together with the University of the Arts in Utrecht (HKU), a member of the Boo-Games consortium, ARC Fund worked on the structure, design and development of the abridged summary report, which aims to present the research findings of the project in a more targeted way, facilitating the communication of the main conclusions of the study to all stakeholder groups. The summary report was finalized at the end of 2013.

During the year, the BOO-Games consortium organized three Thematic Seminars aimed at discussing and presenting information related to the stimulation of the digital games sector in Europe. Taking part in these events, ARC Fund could further develop its expertise in the field and strengthen its networks of EU organizations working on the promotion of the gaming sector in Europe.

These events included:

1. The "Supporting Games: Funding Opportunities and Communication Challenges" Thematic Seminar held in Stuttgart, Germany on April 25<sup>th</sup>.
2. The "Access to Finance for SMEs working in the creative industry" Thematic Seminar held on June 14<sup>th</sup> in Paris, France.
3. The "Access to markets and international collaborations for the video games industry" Thematic Seminar held on September 13<sup>th</sup> in the West Midlands, UK.

Apart from the projects' partners, the events were attended by local and European digital games experts and businesspeople, cluster managers, finance experts and policymakers from the project's target regions and from across the European Union. The final phase of the project includes the aggregation and elaboration of best practices to support the digital games sector. As Bulgaria is one of the two targets for the transfer of good practices (the other being Malta), ARC Fund has worked with the consortium to help ensure positive impacts from these activities. This has included providing guidance to the structure of the 'Good Practices Guide'. ARC Fund is being consulted on the format of an International Conference to take place in Malta in January 2014, in order to ensure its success.



*The BOO-Games Abridged Report*



*"Access to Finance for SMEs working in the creative industry" Thematic Seminar held in Paris, France. It was organized within the Digital World Festival FUTUR EN SEINE*