

15th Bled Electronic Commerce Conference

eReality: Constructing the eEconomy

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**eCommerce Projects and Initiatives - IDEAL-IST
Brokerage Event: Matchmaking in eReality**

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Panel Abstract

The panel addresses participants of the 15th Bled Electronic Commerce Conference from across the EU and Associated States with a strong interest participating in the IST Programme and with a specific project idea in mind. The brokerage offers support for finding adequate project partners and wishes to initialise the process of

future co-operation. The panel also wishes to inform delegates how Ideal-ist will offer its services throughout FP6. Just as the transition from Framework IV to Framework V led to changes in focus and theme for Ideal-ist, then known as Idealfit, an EU funded project, set up in 1996 with the aim of reducing the barriers faced by organisations wishing to participate in the IST programme, the transition from Framework V to Framework VI also requires that Ideal-ist concentrate on themes that reflect the focus of IST project results from Framework V as well as supporting the IST thematic priorities of Framework VI going forward. Ideal-ist, is preparing and organising itself, through focused, themed international workshops and a more structured partner search mechanism in the fields of integrating research, European Research area to aid proposers, especially SMEs, understand what roles are to be played under Framework VI. This paper will analyse the changes to be faced under Framework VI, what FPVI means for Ideal-ist and how the project will continue to act and serve as a central mediator between the European Commission, national institutions of countries associated to the programme and potential or successful proposers under Framework VI.

1. Introduction

The new framework programme focuses on main principles where Ideal-ist can play a significant and valuable role to supporting companies in RTD projects. The paper will briefly examine Ideal-ist's role in the framework of networks of excellence and integrated projects. It will go on to describe how the support of integrating companies into Europe and into the Common Market through EU IT research funding is carried out. It will highlight its promotional activities through collaborations with the EC and IST. Ideal-ist's success can be monitored through its high number of partner searches. The paper will look into the eEurope+ objectives and will conclude with future considerations and lessons learnt.

Over recent years it has become increasingly evident that international companies, both small and large, in the field of IT industrial research, require assistance in obtaining EU financial support. As computing and telecommunications converge, and EC programmes emphasise integration and application of technologies, new relationships are required between actors in the different sectors. Thus, finding suitable partners in other countries and different sectors is one of the most pronounced barriers to participation in EC RTD Programmes faced by potential project proposers. IDEAL-IST project with its network of 31 members helps overcome this barrier by facilitating new relationships between potential participants. This is achieved through active search for partners on behalf of proposers, who are targeting specific Programme Calls and Tasks. This active search is based on two mechanisms, distribution of partner search inquiries through the IDEAL-IST network and organisation of brokerage events held at international

conferences and workshops. Both mechanisms have an intrinsic European dimension and help establish transnational partnerships.

2. Framework VI

As already announced Framework six will concentrate on a number of priority research areas in which EU action can add the greatest possible value, it will define activities to enable them to exert a more structuring effect on the research activities conducted in Europe thanks to stronger links with national, regional & other European initiatives. Special effort will be made to maximize the dissemination of results and to express them in terms that are readily understandable to decision-makers to help them implement public policies.

There are two new aspects of the framework programme where Ideal-ist can offer its services. One is in the opportunity for the candidate countries to participate fully in all the activities. These candidate countries are members of Ideal-ist and already enjoy a strong link with the EC. Furthermore, the fact that the programme opens up to the rest of the world, more particularly on account of the possibility of third country organisations who have access to a substantial proportion of the activities and where Ideal-ist has strong links.

2.1 Instruments to Integrate Research

The key features in the priority areas are those instruments characterised "to mobilise critical mass" necessary to achieve ambitious objectives as well as producing structuring and integrating effects on fabric of European research.

2.1.1 Expressions of Interest

Ideal-ist, in collaboration with the EU and with its National constituencies, is currently in the process of organising international workshops, to work in line with the EU's invitation to submit expressions of interest published in March 2002, these EoIs will allow for input for the preparation of the workprogramme. The EoIs are to help stimulate partnerships and proposal building. Ideal-ist is able to access target audiences under the thematic priorities and to attract potential, international partnerships through these workshops organised before the deadline on the 7th June 2002.

2.1.2 Networks of Excellence

The main features of the networks of excellence are to create “virtual” centres of excellence comprising a “critical mass” of key actors including universities, research centres, enterprises and SMEs, as well as large companies are considered here.

2.1.3 Integrated Projects

The integrated projects are designed to support research that is objective and result driven. Each integrated project should support industry-academia collaboration including SMEs. Partnership minimum requirement is of three participants from three different countries but in practice the number is expected to be substantially higher. Ideal-ist aims to organise a series of international events that will target potential participants under a specific thematic priority.

3 Ideal-ist objectives

Ideal-ist’s objectives respond primarily to bridging the current gap for SMEs in understanding EC mechanisms through the form of a National Contact Point (NCP) or members working on behalf of their NCP.

The objectives will be achieved through active search for partners on behalf of proposers who are targeting specific Calls and Tasks. This active search is based on an innovative concept already developed under the Idealfit initiative and continuously revised and improved with clear objectives: to reduce the time of response and to broaden the search at EU level while keeping a high degree of focus.

Proposers are given support by NCPs at an international level that is an area where proposers appreciate the expertise as NCPs have information regarding potential partners for a consortium readily available.

Brokerage events held at conferences sponsored by the IST Programme, will offer assistance for SMEs to attend, in order to meet potential partners, obtain up-to-date information on current projects, and present their project ideas. Between 60 and 75 SMEs will be assisted in this way.

Specific training of Ideal-ist partners by the Commission in new or altered parts of the IST Programme modalities will take place, procedures and contracts, which can then be communicated effectively at a national level. Training will, in addition, provide the opportunity for the NCPs to report on experiences within their countries, so that the practical interpretation of Commission documents can be explored.

The Ideal-ist consortium is involved in promoting FP6 within its own country and has a large number of contacts within the relevant communities. They are therefore well positioned to achieve an impact across all European industry.

All Ideal-ist activities have an intrinsic European dimension. Partner search and brokerage help establish transnational partnerships. Workshops always include representatives from a minimum of three countries. Reports for the Commission obtain EC Working Groups and Evaluations, to help them understand the Commission's priorities and procedures.

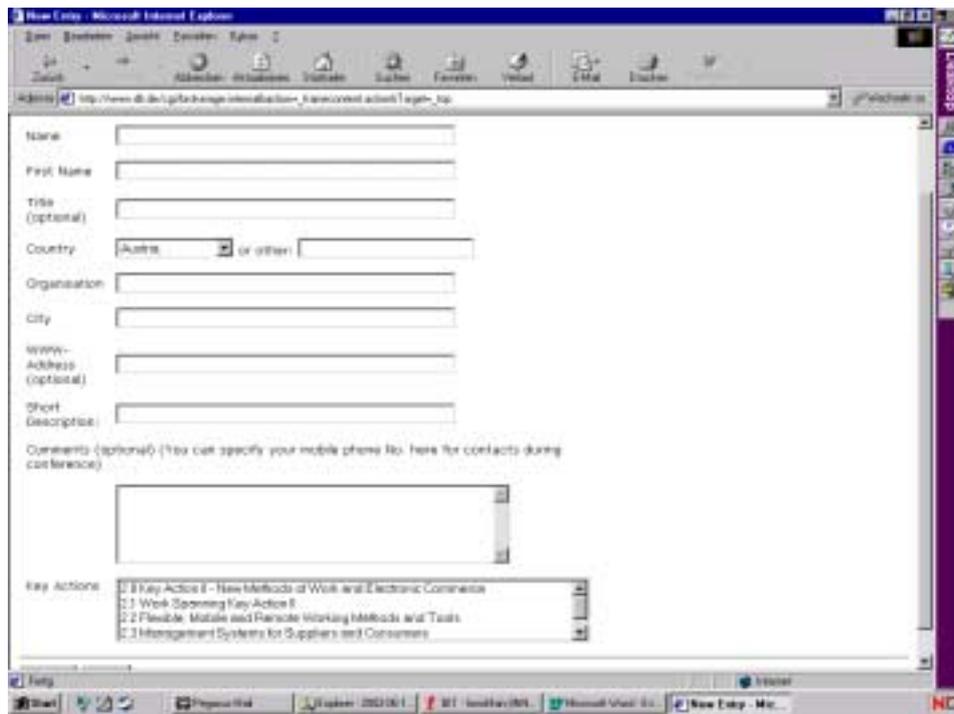
Ideal-ist's objectives respond primarily to bridging the current gap for SMEs in understanding EC mechanisms through the form of a National Contact Point.

4. Procedure in eReality

IDEAL-IST brokerage event at eReality Conference, consisting of two session timeslots, will be divided in two parts. The first part is planned as a presentation session with a short introduction of IDEAL-IST project, its services for potential project proposers, and its role in the coming 6th Framework Programme of the EC. In this part the representatives of companies will have the chance to briefly present their project ideas and give a company profile.

In the second part of the brokerage event representatives of IDEAL-IST will support and mediate in matchmaking among participants. There are several opportunities for finding the right and competent partners:

- pre-registered expressions of interest via web-based eBrokerage application form (See <http://www1ideal-ist/ebrokerage/bled>). This form asks for the contact data and the field of interest, but keeps email addresses confidential to avoid spam mails. (in the following an example of web based registration form is shown)
- by presentations given during the "*Cooperation Agora*".(the presentations should last no longer than 3 mins. and are limited to 1 Power Point slide);
- Due to the restricted time, available for presentations during the first part of the event, participants will also be encouraged to prepare simple posters briefly outlining company profile and project ideas. These posters will be arranged in front of the hall to further facilitate establishing contacts. Subject to authors' approval expression of interests and presentation posters (with strict page restriction to 1 page per pre-registered participant) will also be included in the Business volume of the conference proceeding, which may help in finding suitable partners after the brokerage event.



Agenda of the Panel

Session 1

- Welcome (Thomas Zergoi) 5min
- Welcome & Importance of int. Co-operation (Andreja UMEK VENTURINI) 5min.(tbc)
- IDEAL-IST - its services & role within 6th Framework Programme (Miha /Silvana) 10min.
- Participation in FP6 (Prof. Manfred Horvat) 30min (tbc)
- Co-operation Agora (organised time slots 3mins.(1slide) for each company to introduce itself and offer a project idea);

Session 2

- Introduction of Brokerage procedure (Thomas Zergoi) 5min
- Business Meetings amongst those who participated in the Co-operation Agora organised during the first session above. These meetings will be organised under the different thematic priorities under 6th Framework

Programme and organised before hand thanks to the pre-registration web based eBrokerage application

Objective

The objective of the event is to facilitate communication between the conference participants, helping them to take the first steps towards future co-operation in EU funded projects within the 6th Framework Programme of the EC.

5. Conclusions Visions, Future considerations

IDEAL-IST, to sum up, provides an effective, partnering service to proposers within the area of IT research support. This service to proposers begins from the moment of the publication of a call through to offering advice on submission and aiding proposers on how the evaluation procedure works. The lessons learnt from IDEAL-IST have been in wishing to cater for a more informed SME regarding the IST programme. Under FP6, Ideal-ist, sees itself as focusing and promoting the element of partnering more than its other services as it can see that under FP6 the need for an efficient partnering search is vital.

SMEs and larger organisations, in general, welcome the idea of a national link between the European Commission and themselves. Through training facilities offered by the European Commission over recent years, the NCPs have been able to solidify their efforts and services to potential proposers in terms of partner search and advice resulting in the creation of an effective R&D proposal.

The IDEAL-IST consortium focuses on letting proposers think about collaborative working within EU projects and it manages to go a step further in assisting organisations in overcoming initial language and cultural barriers whilst allowing proposers to thinking globally. This assistance is particularly effective and is achieved thanks to modern day technologies and communication tools that the Internet has to offer. This communication access is homogenous to all the 31 partners of IDEAL-IST. Moreover, the IDEAL-IST consortium members maintain a synergy amongst themselves.

In short, IDEAL-IST helps businesses in making the right contacts and this leads to unlocking the job-creating potential for high-growth small businesses in the field of innovative technology. On the other hand companies welcome the incentive for adapting new areas of business without running the risk of failure and the companies feel that IDEAL-IST can be one of their solutions to adaptation.