

## What's on the Network

### Few places left at IRE impact assessment event

**Only a limited number of places for participants remain for this event in Bilbao on 29-30 January 2008.**

The conference 'Impact assessment for better governance of regional innovation policies', organised by the IRE Secretariat in collaboration with the Basque Government, Basque Development Agency (SPRI) and LABEIN Tecnalia in Bilbao on 29-30 January 2008, has been met with great interest from the IRE network. Only a limited number of places remain for additional participants, so those interested in participating are recommended to register without delay. The last day for registrations is 14 January.

The aim of this event is to present current developments in impact assessment and benchmarking tools that could be applied in the innovation policy-making of European regions, and show practical examples of successful applications. An overview of initiatives related to evaluation of the innovation performance and policies in Europe will be made. Participants will discuss how the new tools can be applied in the regions and what should be next steps on the European level for the development of an 'impact assessment culture', so that it becomes an integrated part of regional innovation policy.

The draft agenda of the event and the registration form are available through the link below. Participants will receive a hotel booking form upon registration. Pre-reserved rooms for special conference rates are available until 14 January. To take advantage of them, please register before this date.

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### Further Information

Contact: [Nathalie BRAHIM](#)

[Back to top](#)

## Success Stories

### Tapping into IRC resources for safer water

**Water monitoring systems are a little more complicated than most people realise. A good system not only assists in ensuring good water quality, it also serves to assist in water analysis and direct pollution control. There is still room for innovative systems that improve current water quality measurement and now, thanks to the Innovation Relay Centres (IRC), one such system will begin to flow into European and international markets.**

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### Further Information

Contact: [Francesca Borrelli](#)

[Back to top](#)

### A Window of Innovation

**Wood, regal, warm, glorious wood. As a building material it's the *pièce de résistance*, the *crème de la crème*. It is irreplaceable, always fashionable and considering today's focus on energy savings, somewhat sinful to use.**

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### Further Information

Contact: [Francesca Borrelli](#)

[Back to top](#)

## Schemes

### The Project Generation Facility

**The Project Generation Facility was funded by Phare to be a support for projects elected for funding and assistance. Professional advice was provided in the areas of economic competitiveness, human resources, environment, infrastructure and regional development. The project accepted for structural funds funding were to be a portfolio of Hungarian projects ready for seeking EU funding.**

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### Further Information

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[Back to top](#)

### The Knowledge Dock

**The University of East London created the Knowledge Dock Network for helping the SMEs to make effective technology choices. The Network brings together expertise and modern high tech facilities and offers access to a wide range of business services and support networks.**

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### Further Information

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[Back to top](#)

### Creating and Accessing New Markets

**Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Executive, Strathclyde European Partners and Highlands and Islands Enterprise have worked out four different projects to improve Scottish companies' knowledge in marketing. This to teach SMEs how, where and when marketing affects on a business, and what skills are necessary. A website has been set up to help Scottish business in developing their marketing skills. The website offers to play a marketing game to improve the understanding of marketing activities for Scottish SMEs.**

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### Further Information

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[Back to top](#)

### Interface – the knowledge connection for business

**Interface works closely with all of Scotland's universities and research institutes and has links to thousands of world-leading experts in a wide range of sectors who can help give Scottish companies answers to their individual business challenges. Interface provides an impartial and free knowledge connection for companies to the Scottish academic base. Following the brokerage between the business and academic partner Interface continues to monitor progress of the relationships and provides support and guidance on contractual and funding options.**

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### Further Information

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[Back to top](#)

### The OMNIPACK Cluster – Cooperation for Innovation

**In the Hradec Kralove region of the Czech republic a group of companies in the packaging industry has joined its forces and created the OMNIPACK Cluster. Their aim is to become the most progressive centre for packaging in Central and Eastern Europe through collaboration in production, in-service training and R&D activities.**

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### Further Information

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[Back to top](#)

### MediaLab project

**This project has allowed both SMEs in the highlands and islands of Scotland and the Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) stakeholders access to the MIT MediaLab in Boston. HIE's role was to act as a broker on behalf of its SMEs and stakeholders to channel opportunities coming out of MediaLab into new products, processes and spin-out companies.**

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Contact: [Laura DINGWALL](#)

[Back to top](#)

### UNISTEP – UNIversity Students Entrepreneurship Programme

**UNISTEP is a programme that supports student entrepreneurship by providing them with the appropriate lab type environment where they can develop and create their own prototype.**

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### Further Information

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[Back to top](#)

## News from the IRE Network Members

### European "Regions of knowledge" work to provide access to innovation financing for European SMEs

**Promoting innovation and involvement in SMEs with RTD are generally recognized as important factors, if Europe is to stay competitive and continue to create growth and jobs in line with the goals of the Lisbon agenda. The aim of the BRIDGE2Growth project was to explore and identify the barriers of innovation financing for SMEs in four European regions and develop tools and policy recommendations to overcome these barriers.**

The BRIDGE2Growth project has explored the barriers for innovation financing in SMEs in four partner regions – North Denmark (DK), Emilia-Romagna (I) , West Midlands (UK), and West Pannon (HU). Coventry University Enterprises Ltd. has conducted a survey among SMEs and financiers in the four regions to identify specific administrative and financial barriers in each region – and has also included some examples of best practices summarized in a comprehensive study report. From a macro-perspective the University of Ferrara has gathered and analyzed information and data about the innovation environment in the regions. These results will be published shortly.

Parallel to the abovementioned analysis Brabo Ventures started with the development of the B2G Toolbox. This Toolbox is designed to help SMEs and the regional advisors to the SMEs to understand the demands and perspective of innovation and its financing and the role of risk capital providers (venture capital, business angels, private equity providers) towards supporting innovation. In order to stimulate innovation and facilitate the access to finance for the innovative research and technology based SMEs, Brabo Ventures has screened and selected the best tools currently freely available on the market.

These tools and guidelines have now been bundled and packaged in an easy-to-access format and the B2G toolbox provides tools covering all aspects an innovative company is confronted with when looking for innovation financing, ranging from IPR issues to business plan development and specific tools addressing RTD issues.

As soon as the first results of the project were available workshops were held in the partner regions for stakeholders, regional policy makers and SMEs interested in innovation.

Workshops were organized in the 4 participating regions, were SMEs and investors were presented the Toolbox as well as the Gate2Growth business plan investor readiness Self Assessment Tool, a tool which based on market needs was translated in due course of the project. Institutions and policy makers expressed their interest in a further adaptation of the Toolbox with more local and translated tools. Eventually, the overall feedback of the toolbox proved to be very positive and suggestions were made demanding for a local and European wide embedding of the Toolbox.

The partners agreed in the adaptation (i.e. localization) of the toolbox in their own regions and in the other member countries and in developing a next project for implementation of the Self Assessment Tool.

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### Further Information

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[Back to top](#)

### Partner search for exchanges and co-operation of local actors on scientific culture

**The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies is looking for partners for a project proposal presenting Bio-Medical research and development conducted in Universities, Industry and Medical centers via exhibitions, demonstrations, talks, and tours to the public. Other specific demonstrating tools will be developed with a science museum or other science-in-society organisation.**

The idea behind the proposal is to create a Science City by joining forces and capabilities of local biotech actors in order to expose the public to the different aspects of life and biomedical sciences (biotechnology, pharma and medical device) including research; industry; tech-transfer; investments; etc. being held in the city. The science museum (or a similar organisation) will be responsible for providing the public with basic understanding of what is meant by BioMed. In order to response this call the Jerusalem Institute plans to build a network of 4-5 centers, all operating a similar format, exchanging best knowledge and going through a comprehensive evaluation.

In particular, project partners will lead local activities that will present:

- Innovative research in academic institutions and industry
- Commercialisation of academic inventions by highly specialized technology transfer companies
- Highly developed R&D infrastructure - technology parks and incubators
- Start-ups based on innovative technologies

Partners should be able to work on city-level, have good contacts with the Academy and the Industry in its region and have good practice in producing public-oriented science exhibitions and activities.

Please see below a further description of the call for proposals:

#### SIS-2008-1.1.5.1 Exchanges and co-operation of local actors on scientific culture

**Description of the topic:** *several projects funded under FP6 are generating interesting results in terms of promoting science culture in local settings. The concept of Science Cities is also gaining prominence in some countries in terms of the stimulation and regeneration of local economies. Clearly the potential of cities should be harnessed to act as agents for reinforcing the links between science culture and society. This activity aims then to exchange best practices and cooperation between cities (and/or regions) for the development of a scientific culture at the local level. Action in 2008 will focus on the creation of a European mission-oriented network of cities (preferably of different sizes) specifically constituted to cooperate on science in society issues. The network should at the same time ensure a high-quality and active participation of its members and the broadest geographical coverage of Member States and Associated countries. The network should ensure the performance of concrete actions such as:*

*exchanges of best practices (twinning, coaching, networking); actions that can foster the co-operation of local actors on scientific culture in an attractive way; also using their scientific technical and cultural heritage; developing two-way communication between scientists and citizens. Evaluation will treat positively those proposals which propose actions liaise with existing Science Shops, science museums / centres or encourage the development of new Science Shops (or similar organisations) as a tool to provide local civil society organisations with the scientific knowledge they need. Existing network organisations should propose new partnerships with other structures and actors.*

**Funding schemes:** *Co-ordination and support actions (coordinating) and Co-ordination and support actions (supporting)*

**Expected impact:** *Actions for the development of a scientific culture at the local level should in particular bring together relevant local actors involved in science, culture, entertainment, education, local economical development, citizens' participation, media (e.g. local authorities, outreach departments in universities and research centres, science museums, science cafes, schools, libraries, Science Shops, citizens' conferences, local civil society organisations, localFP7 Capacities Work Programme: Science in Society media, enterprises etc.). The European financing will not, however, support individual cities developing their local actions but the networking, the exchanges, the co-operation and the promotion of local scientific culture involving different cities/regions. Projects must include appropriate feed-back activities in order for the Commission to get policy inputs.*

Those interested in discussing collaboration are welcome to contact:

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[>>Read More](#)

### Further Information

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[Back to top](#)

## What's on the Network

[Few places left at IRE impact assessment event](#)

### Success Stories

[Tapping into IRC resources for safer water](#)

[A Window of Innovation](#)

### Schemes

[The Project Generation Facility](#)

[The Knowledge Dock](#)

[Creating and Accessing New Markets](#)

[Interface – the knowledge connection for business](#)

[The OMNIPACK Cluster – Cooperation for Innovation](#)

[MediaLab project](#)

[UNISTEP – UNIversity Students Entrepreneurship Programme](#)

### News from the IRE Network Members

[European "Regions of knowledge" work to provide access to innovation financing for European SMEs](#)

[Partner search for exchanges and co-operation of local actors on scientific culture](#)