

RAPIDE NEWS

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RAPIDE



A short history of a European success story RAPIDE

The idea of RAPIDE was born at the Regions for Economic Change Conference in February 2007. Juliet Williams, chair of the South West England RDA challenged the participating regions to INNOVATE or DIE! (Which became a running gag within the RAPIDE network)

Delegates from 26 regions across Europe came to the beyond Best Practice summit held in Cornwall in July 2007. The target was to discuss the key factors for the successful support of regional innovation. Finally our 12 partner regions from all over Europe made up the RAPIDE network to develop public tools to bring innovation faster to the market.

The 12 partners of the entirely new created partnership had actually no mutual experience in co-operating together. Therefore the RAPIDE network used the first months to build trust between the partners. The first three working summits concentrated on the already identified key factors for regional innovation support.

- managing risk
- financing innovation
- developing successful partnerships

The trust building within this first phase was so successful that the design of the second phase could be much more flexible and enabled the participating regions to

capitalise on the mutual learning process and to develop totally new ways of innovation support. This dynamic process demanded an ongoing re-planning of the project structure. A series of small working groups replaced mega conferences.

The key results are 17 concrete Action Plans which will implement following 5 innovative RAPIDE Actions

- Innovation Voucher Schemes
- Pre-Commercial Procurement projects (PCP)
- Business Angel Network Academy
- Assessment tool for start-ups
- Digital Storytelling to bring innovators to finance/market

The key success factor for RAPIDE was the DIRECT COMMUNICATION with key players in the EC and in the regions. Therefore the RAPIDE network followed its own recommendation to take risk and not to stay limited to the original project plan.



A personal Thank You

RAPIDE was a challenge. A challenge for me and a challenge for all partners.

I started as project manager only 5 months after the official start of the project. Nevertheless I was able to influence the future steps of the project right from the start of my assignment. This was only possible due to the strong confidence and support from the Lead Partner (RDA South West England), the South West UK Brussels Office and several other partners.

Further I would like to use this opportunity to thank Kincso Izsak from DG ENTR and Luisa Sanches from DG REGIO for their ongoing support for the network. Only with them it was possible to organise our numerous RAPIDE Action Groups.

Special thanks go to Matt Havard who is still actively working on RAPIDE despite the national political decision that the RDA South West England ceases to exist. He is following the rule that the captain is leaving the sinking ship at last.

Last but not least I want to thank all the RAPIDE partners from Észak-Alföld, Galicia, Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Lapland, Örebro, Prešov, Saxony Anhalt, South Bohemia, South West England, Tartu, Wales and Western Greece for their flexibility in the project design and their enthusiasm to explore new ideas to bring innovation faster to the market.

Benjamin Kucher
RAPIDE project manager



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The way forward?



Some thoughts how to improve European network projects

As formulised in our first RAPIDE recommendation to the European Commission I believe that it should be possible to bind payments on pre-defined content deliverables (milestones) instead of reimbursements of costs.

That means that the project partners should have a contract with the Managing Authority /JTS defining "milestones" and each milestone is worth a specific sum. The project partners have to report about the milestone to get the money, but they do not need to deliver receipts. In that way it would be more important to evaluate the content output instead of the financial controlling. This would even give to the partnership the opportunity to enforce the co-operation of lazy partners.

Further I believe that RAPIDE was a success because of the partner's enthusiasm. The project succeeded despite and for sure not because of the vague definition of its themes in the original application form. In my opinion only projects with a clear understanding and definition of the targets to be achieved should be approved for funding.

For further information on the envisaged projects and the recommendations please contact me under my new address.

Benjamin Kuscher
KWI Consultants Ltd.
Burggasse 116
A-1070 Vienna
Tel: +43-676-352 33 69
e-mail: Benjamin.Kuscher@kwi.at

- RAPIDE goes future

For all RAPIDE partners it is obvious that "Innovation is to bring innovative ideas and research to the market." Also Ms. GEOGHEGAN-QUINN – EC commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science highlighted that the EU is targeting on accelerating of bringing innovation to the market. The aim is by Geoghegan-Quinn to speed up Innovation process „from Research to Sale“.

RAPIDE developed several tools and methodologies how to bring innovation faster to the market. Therefore the RAPIDE network was encouraged by the EC to develop those tools even further.

Several RAPIDE partners decided to prepare a Pre-Commercial Procurement Project for the 8th Call of the FP7 in autumn 2011, which will develop a digital selection tool for funding and financing of start-ups. This tool called "DigStar" should not only replace existing application forms but it will close the gap between the selection criteria of private and public funds.

The RAPIDE tool of digital storytelling will be able to present and pre-select patents and start-up applications in a totally new and comprehensive way.

Multimedia presentations will enable private and public investors to identify much more effectively competitive companies for their funding.

The European Commission formulated in its communication about the INNOVATION UNION from 6th October 2010 that it is committed to build trading platforms that match supply and demand of innovation.

That is exactly what we will do in our future project.

**RAPIDE is in the future!!!
Congratulations to your work!!!**

- RAPIDE Actions

Last but not least we need to remind all of you to work with your RAPIDE Action Plans. The DG REGIO geographical units are encouraged to request in the near future if your specific action plans are actually implemented or not.



For more information on RAPIDE Actions or this Newsletter please contact

Benjamin D. Kuscher
RAPIDE Project Manager
c/o South West UK Brussels Office
Schuman 11, B-1040 Brussels / Belgium

+32/474/53 44 52
bkuscher-rapide@southwestuk.be
www.rapidenetwork.eu



RAPIDE Actions

