



European
Commission

European
eic **INNOVATION**
Council *BETA*

**EMPOWERING
EUROPEAN
INNOVATORS**

BUSINESS ACCELERATION SERVICES

Corporate Days
2017-18

*Research and
Innovation*



EIC pilot Business Acceleration Services
Corporate Days 2017-18
European Commission
Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
Unit A.2

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European Innovation Council

Corporate Days

Innovation is central to Europe's ability to generate new jobs and economic growth in the coming years and to tackle major challenges that society is facing including sustainability, climate change, the health of ageing populations, energy and food security. Without productivity growth, our societies cannot raise living standards. Innovation, in all its forms, is a major source of productivity growth in advanced economies. We will therefore need to continue to invest in research and innovation (R&I) in order to drive prosperity and compete with other major economies.

Europe is home to many innovative start-ups and SMEs, yet few have succeeded in scaling up to become global leaders. If Europe is to reclaim its place as the world leader in innovation and technology, public policy and funding at EU level must cater to the specific needs of European innovators and researchers with innovative ideas by refining and filling the gaps in the existing support schemes and provide support that covers each stages of the innovation chain (from idea to market deployment and scale-up).

Bridging the gap between SMEs and large companies can prove to be a vital strategy for business acceleration and growth. For many organisations, mutually beneficial partnerships are a straightforward way to access larger deals, accelerate market penetration and tap into global distribution and marketing channels.

To this end, and under its Business Acceleration Services line, we have organised 15 EIC Corporate Days. More than 300 pre-selected SMEs have been invited to network and pitch their top-class innovations and business proposals to top managers of aerospace giant AIRBUS, to ABB the leading supplier of industrial robots and 13 other of the leading corporates in Europe working on open innovation: Iberdrola, BMW, Procter&Gamble, Roche, Enel, Vinci, Solvay, Electrolux, Suez, Sonae, Ferrovial, Medtronic and Veolia.

These events have facilitated hundreds of significant business contacts, an unparalleled learning experience and dozens of follow up collaborations. According to the feedback survey from the first 6 events, 38 companies are now exploring business opportunities with the corporate. This translates into a success rate of over 20%, considering the number of companies in attendance. Another 10 new EIC Corporate Day events are planned until mid-2019.

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ABB

Västerås, Sweden

[Learn More](#)

On 24 October 2017, a selected group of 14 EIC SME Instrument top innovators had the opportunity to pitch their business cases, receive feedback and network with top managers from ABB, the global leader in industrial technology ABB. They shared experiences with the incubated start-ups of the ABB's innovation hub SynerLeap and learned about the state-of-the-art applied research in robotics, industrial automation and energy at the famous ABB Corporate research center in Västerås (Sweden).

'It has been a great day, the selection of companies has been fantastic and all of them are of interest for ABB. We need more ambitious entrepreneurs in Europe who are ready to think big.'

Dr. Kurt Kaltenegger

ABB, VP and Head of Technology Ventures



14
innovative
SMEs



10
member
states



20
corporate
insiders



Airbus

Hamburg, Germany

 [Learn More](#)

On 29-30 January 2018, a selected group of 30 EIC top innovators had the opportunity to share their vision, pitch their technology and network with top managers of ARIBUS, the global leader in aeronautics. The companies also shared experiences with other companies and affiliates and got to know the Hamburg aviation cluster at the Centre for applied aviation research (ZAL).

‘We are very excited about this event that gives us the possibility to meet at the same time so many fascinating enterprises pitching on new technologies to get them on board of our aircrafts.’

Torsten Bardewyck
Airbus, Head of R&T Business Development EU



30
innovative
SMEs



12
member
states



30
corporate
insiders



Iberdrola

Bilbao, Spain

 [Learn More](#)

A selected group of EIC pilot innovators had the chance to present their business cases and network with top Iberdrola representatives in Bilbao, Spain. Iberdrola is the largest energy company in Spain and one of the five biggest utilities in the world. The event was hosted by Iberdrola and its venture capital initiative Perseo. The companies presented their business models and solutions to the main representatives of Iberdrola and the Basque Country’s innovation ecosystem at the Torre Iberdrola in Bilbao on 8 and 9 May 2018.

‘...working and partnering with SMEs is a central part of our open innovation model; also the EIC-backed companies selected for the event are some of the most interesting ones working on the future of smart grids and renewable energies in Europe.’

Diego Díaz
Iberdrola, Head of New Ventures



15
innovative
SMEs



9
member
states



+50
corporate
insiders



BMW Munich, Germany

 [Learn More](#)

Last 14 May 2018, the BMW Startup Garage, the Venture Client unit of the BMW Group, welcomed 12 companies backed by the EIC pilot to present their ideas and business cases for the future of mobility and the automotive sector. The event was comprised of pitching sessions and one-on-one meetings, giving companies the opportunity to present their solutions to all attendees, but also to further discuss them in detail with selected BMW representatives.

‘We look for companies that offer us extraordinary technical solutions or innovations. I think the selection of companies here today is very high-quality and that’s exactly what we found.’

Bernhard Schambeck
BMW, Head of BMW Startup Garage



12
innovative
SMEs



+30
one-to-one
meetings



80
corporate
insiders



P&G and Partners Brussels, Belgium

 Watch Video

On 13 and 14 June 2018, 96 EIC innovators had the opportunity to present their business cases and network with representatives from P&G, ABInBev, DEMA, GSK, Nokia, Puratos, Solvay and Cargill at the InQbet accelerator, Procter and Gamble’s Innovation Center in Brussels. The event was broken down into 15 presentation sessions, covering 10 topics ranging from healthcare to circular economy and artificial intelligence. A new edition of this event is now planned for 3-4 April 2019.

‘SMEs have insights, expertise and technologies which can really help us delight consumers and improve their lives; we’re very excited to be hosting this event.’

David Ingram
R&D Leader, P&G Brussels Innovation Center



96
innovative
SMEs



160
one-to-one
meetings



+150
corporate
insiders



Roche

Basel, Switzerland

 [Learn More](#)

On 16 June 2018, the Business Accelerations Services team travelled with sixteen EIC SME Instrument funded companies selected to present their visions for the future of healthcare to Roche corporate representatives at the company’s Digital Innovation Lab in Basel, Switzerland. On 17 June, Roche selected 4 companies to pitch at its annual innovation summit in front of over 300 Roche representatives.

‘We were impressed with the diversity and the maturity of the companies we saw today. Their products can certainly be an added value for Roche.’

Alain Bindels
Roche, Digital Innovation Lab Director



18
innovative
SMEs



11
member
states



+300
corporate
insiders



Enel Catania, Italy

 [Learn More](#)

On 25 and 26 June 2018, selected companies funded by the European Innovation Council (EIC) pilot had the opportunity to present their vision for the future and cutting-edge innovations in the field of renewable energy at the Enel Innovation Hub&Lab in Catania. The 18 companies present specialised in solutions relating to renewable energy (solar, marine, wind and storage) and energy distribution.

‘Open Innovation is the best tool we have to quickly find new solutions and technologies and bring them to the market. Programs like the EIC pilot help us identify the best companies to bring into our ecosystem.’

Fabio Tentori

Enel, Head of Enel Innovation Hubs



18
innovative
SMEs



+20
one-to-one
meetings



30
corporate
insiders



Vinci

Paris, France

 [Learn More](#)

On 9 July 2018, a networking event held at VINCI’s Leonard innovation hub in Paris brought together a selected number of companies funded under the European Innovation Council (EIC) pilot to showcase their projects and share their visions for the future of sustainable construction and infrastructure. After a rigorous screening process, 18 EIC SME Instrument–funded companies gathered in Paris to explore business opportunities with top Vinci managers.

‘We saw an interesting batch of mature entrepreneurs that are focused and know how to execute. Their maturity and quality are above what we’re used to.’

Philippe Dewost
Vinci, Chief Leonard Officer



18
innovative
SMEs



10
member
states



100
corporate
insiders



Solvay

Brussels, Belgium

 [Learn More](#)

The European Innovation Council (EIC) pilot and Solvay promoted a networking and pitching event bringing together 19 innovators working in the fields of advanced composites, material engineering and IT solutions. On 16 October 2018, selected companies funded by the European Innovation Council pilot gathered at the Solvay Campus in Brussels to pitch their ideas, network and discuss with Solvay managers, venture capital investors and representatives from other large corporates like L'Oréal and Safran.

‘There is a good breed of potential investments that can come out of this event. We’ll sure follow up with some of these companies.’

Stéphane Roussel
Solvay Ventures, Managing Director



19
innovative
SMEs



15
member
states



+80
corporate
insiders



Electrolux

Porcia, Italy

 [Learn More](#)

14 companies funded by the EIC pilot travelled to the Electrolux Innovation Factory in Italy to share their vision and explore business opportunities with Electrolux managers and partners. On 30 October, the recently inaugurated Electrolux Innovation Factory hosted the EIC Corporate Day, aimed to unleash the innovation potential by connecting some selected SMEs to promote business opportunities and to support projects to accelerate innovation together.

‘SMEs have a great potential for us because they are fast and agile... I’ve already seen several companies and solutions with whom I can see myself exploring further opportunities.’

Giovanni Pacini
Electrolux, Global Director for Digital Industrial Operations



14
innovative
SMEs



+80
one-to-one
meetings



+50
corporate
insiders



Suez

Barcelona, Spain

 Watch Video

On 14 and 15 November, the European Innovation Council (EIC) pilot and SUEZ, in partnership with Naturgy, promoted a Corporate Day in Barcelona. 19 companies funded by the EIC pilot shared their vision towards a circular economy with top corporate representatives. The companies present were selected by their innovative approaches to water management and distribution, waste management, air quality, data analytics, IoT, energy efficiency, asset inspection, and predictive management.

‘Open Innovation is really important for SUEZ because SUEZ is a big company and it isn’t always agile, but because SMEs are more agile they can help us bring new solutions to market faster.’

Andrew Collier
SUEZ, Digital Open Innovation Leader



19
innovative
SMEs



76
one-to-one
meetings



+60
corporate
insiders



Sonae

Lisbon, Portugal

[Learn More](#)

The European Innovation Council (EIC) pilot and Sonae joined efforts to promote a more sustainable future for food production. On 21 and 22 November, in Lisbon, 13 companies backed by the EIC pilot had the opportunity to share their vision and solutions during speed presentations, discussions and one-to-one meetings with Sonae representatives, key partners and like-minded innovators. Smart labels, 3D food printers and crop monitoring technologies were some of the topics on stage.

‘... the overall quality of the companies I saw today was above average for what I typically see. I think most of these companies have all that it takes to succeed in the markets that they’re addressing.’

Alexandre Santos
Sonae IM, Head of Portfolio Development



13
innovative SMEs



+60
one-to-one meetings



100
corporate insiders



Ferrovial Madrid, Spain

 Watch Video

The EIC pilot and Ferrovial partnered for a business acceleration event directed at companies working on sustainable approaches to urban mobility, user experience (airports and toll roads), energy efficiency and new technologies for the construction sector. After a tough selection process, 21 companies funded by the EIC pilot were selected to present their projects to an audience of Ferrovial representatives and key partners and engage in one-to-one meetings with relevant corporate stakeholders.

‘...by working with SMEs, we become more agile because these companies are more agile. But also, by collaborating with them, we are able to test new business models and new technologies that would be hard to test within the company.’

Ciro Acedo Boria
Ferrovial, Head of Open Innovation Ecosystem



21
innovative
SMEs



+40
one-to-one
meetings



60
corporate
insiders



Medtronic

Tolochenaz, Switzerland

 [Learn More](#)

On 28 and 29 November 2018, the European Innovation Council (EIC) and Medtronic, a leader in the world of medical technology, gathered to discuss the transformation of healthcare and promote business partnerships. 20 companies backed by the EIC pilot took the stage and shared their innovative health care solutions for medical devices and therapies, mobile and remote health, patient engagement, diagnostics, artificial intelligence, augmented and virtual reality, data analytics and robotics.

‘The technologies of the companies I’ve seen today are truly innovative and undress unmet needs. There were a number that we found really interesting and which I’m sure we’ll follow up after the event.’

Charity Kufaa
Medtronic, VP Strategy & Business Development EMEA



20
innovative
SMEs



20
one-to-one
meetings



60
corporate
insiders



Veolia

Paris, France

 [Learn More](#)

On 11 December 2018, Veolia met with 14 SMEs backed by the European Innovation Council (EIC) pilot for business acceleration and matchmaking event at its headquarters in Paris. The companies shared their solutions to transforming business with Veolia representatives. There were a total of 115 B2B meetings with Veolia employees from various Group entities across the world: Africa and the Middle East, Latin America, Northern Europe, United Kingdom, Ireland and France.

‘...our goal was to scrutinize and identify contributions from outside more closely; ask new questions and learn; shorten distances and be closer to all those we serve and interact with by working with the EIC’s innovative SMEs.’

Estelle Brachlianoff
Veolia, Chief Operating Officer



14
innovative SMEs



115
one-to-one meetings



80
corporate insiders

Accelerating Europe's SMEs

3 lessons learned

Strategic targeting

The adage “time is money” is undoubtedly true when you want to connect an SME with a big corporate. With the EIC Corporate Days, the objective was not to cast the net far and wide; it was about creating targeted and mutually beneficial opportunities. On the one hand, corporates were able to convey their business needs beforehand and have more targeted conversations with the SMEs. On the other hand, the SMEs were able to talk to relevant decision makers.

Less time pitching, more time selling

The EIC business acceleration events have grown from pitching to sales acceleration events, and from the feedback collected so far, they're already having a profound impact on the bottom line of the SMEs. By integrating sales acceleration opportunities in the events, it was possible to generate more relevant conversations; companies found more adequate prospects and hopefully this will lead to even more business deals in 2019.

There are different paths for business acceleration

Entrepreneurs have different needs when it comes to scaling-up their business. Some are looking for financial partners; others are focused on establishing partnerships that will allow them to access a global distribution network or need help securing larger deals. We believe in connecting SMEs with other similar businesses—that kind of peer2peer networking is crucial. These are some of the reasons behind the EIC Innovators' Summit in Berlin, and that's why we have launched the EIC Community - an online platform to bundle with peers and business partners.

If you'd like to learn more about all the EIC pilot Corporate Days, please get in touch via email contact@phase3-services.eu.

You can also see our future events at <https://europa.eu/Uj67JJ>.

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The European Innovation Council pilot (EIC Pilot) supports top-class innovators, entrepreneurs, small companies and scientists with bright ideas and the ambition to scale up internationally. The EIC Pilot brings together the parts of Horizon 2020 that provide funding, advice and networking opportunities for those at cutting edge of innovation.

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