

Working Groups Meeting

MINUTES

13th November 2018

CDMA EC Building
DG Research & Innovation
Rue du Champ de Mars 21, 1050 Ixelles, Belgium

Background

An introduction to interactive Working Groups (WGs) discussion session has been given by Dr. Bojan Boskovic from CNT where the workshop participants have been given an opportunity for suggestions and discussion about:

- Scope and aim of the EPPN WGs activities and
- EPPN WGs governance and membership and
- EPPN WGs first actions

A short introduction of aim, scope and possible activities of the WGs has followed. Results of the short initial survey among the EPPN proposal supporters and pilot project coordinators regarding WGs have been presented.

- WGs structure suggestions
- What do you expect from the EPPN WGs
- How could EPPN WGs help your organization
- Input that we received regarding the EPPN WGs from stakeholders in preparation for the workshop

Finally, main outcomes expected of WGs activities and discussions have been summarized as follows:

- Increase the business, number of requests/ access services to the pilot lines.
- Support collaboration with identified innovation hubs.
- Examples of good practices in operational procedures when working with companies (type of contracts, pricing, IPR, marketing...).
- Sustainability issues and solutions of pilot lines.

The workshop participants have been divided in to three WGs discussion groups that have been moderated by EPPN project partners:

- WG1 Technical collaboration and dissemination (moderated by Andrea Reinhart and Amro Satti, NanoFutures)
- WG2 Finance and market (moderated by Bojan Boskovic and Jelena Aleksic, CNT)
- WG3 Policy and regions (moderated by Paula Galvao and Marina Dias, INL)

Working Group 1 – Technical Collaboration and dissemination

Participants:

Welchy Cavaloconti
Stefan Adolfsson
Chrysonthi Panagiotopoulou
Nikolaus Ladenhauf
Bertrand Fillon
Ana Mania
Nieves Gonzalez
Nico Meyer
Eleni Gartzou
Elena Rodriguez
Jaime Ochoa
Piotr Karkoszka
Jan Meneve
Tiago Gomes Sequeina
Amro Satti
Andrea Reinhardt

Membership:

Members' list of 1st meeting will be shared with all;

- 15 members: 6 of them related to pilot facilities, 3 SMEs;
- Online EPPN group platform will be used;
- One personal meeting per year and phone conferences on request.

Scope/aims/actions:

- Stay alive;
- Create business for SME and pilots (monitor the impact on rescued/grown jobs);
- Attract more pilots (particular local/regional ones);
- More interaction with SMEs on webpage in future, special landing page for SMEs offering the latest information about e.g. open pilot calls for SMEs, voucher funding programs from regions;

Innovation Hub:

- Based at Coatema, together with ZENIT (regional NCP) and NL (e.g. Holst Centre) and SME cluster network event in May is under discussion/planned
- At the coming NRW nano conference, we will get feedback from potential involved partners and then come back to EPPN team for more details.

Session in detail:

The WG session was based on pre-prepared questions that were asked to the attendees.

Questions:

- Q1 How do you sell/search services today, how important are online tools for you?
Q2 What are you expecting with highest priority from EPPN working group and online tool: funding, customers, contact to potential candidates/employees, new investors?
Q3 EPPN is in English, does this limit the usability for your team
Q4 Was it easy for you to register your pilot using the online tool of EPPN?
Q5 Search function, what is most important?
Q6 How many personal meetings for the working group?

Visibility and link with EC clusters and councils:

Q7 Are you informed about EC's activities in safety, modelling and characterisation?

Q8 Are you already active in these clusters and councils?

Q9 Do you think it will be beneficial to link your pilot line with these clusters?

Q10 EPPN will make your pilot line more visible, which tool do you prefer (links on websites, promotional materials, other)?

The session started with a best practices example from Coatema. They highlighted that currently gaining customers is based on a mouth to mouth networking. Their business model is based on answering customer needs by performing validation trials using their pilot lines.

The attendees then commented on what they expect from EPPN as an online tool. Some of the expectation were as follows:

- To raise awareness of new customers and members;
- Allow customers to contact facilities;
- There's a need to making the tool simple;
- Increase the visibility of the pilot lines, specifically those that are not involved in European projects and only accessible to local networks;
- It is not clear on the website that the EPPN tool is made to attract the SMEs to find pilot facilities, rather it looks like it is made to attract more pilot lines to register. This should be fixed;
- Currently there isn't wide use of online tools;

Jan Meneve from VITO (BE) commented that the difficulties of an online tool is related to its management and competition with other search engines. A targeted event at a pilot line facility can help raise awareness of EPPN tool.

The attendees commented on the limitation of having the tool in English. Specifically for small SMEs the language barrier can be an obstacle to find what they are looking for.

Question regarding activities in cluster and councils for characterisation, modelling and safety revealed that there is some participation in these initiatives. Fraunhofer IFAM commented that participation in projects related to these initiatives grant access to stakeholders within the field.

Increasing the visibility of the pilot lines should be done by linking their websites to EPPN and disseminate that they can be found on EPPN. Also EU councils and clusters should refer to EPPN.

General comments included:

- There should be a way to follow updates and progress of pilot facilities that might have interested stakeholders;
- Overreaching aim of pilot lines is to connect with end users to have something in return;
- EPPN should be more oriented to invite SMEs to use it.

Working Group 2 – Finance and market

Participants:

Annamalai Arunjunai
Richard Twohig
Margarete Remmert-Rieper
Saeed Dehghani
Barbara Priscila Andreon
Ester Hurtos
Maria José López-Tendero
Vassiliki Missa
Morten Brix Roedern
Donal Killackey
Itziar Alonso
Ulrich Froriep
Hans Pedersen
Bojan Boskovic
Jelena Aleksic

Initial comments from Test Bed (TB) representatives

- Main question for TB will be how to become self-sustainable and how to prepare an efficient business plan. EPPN's support would be helpful;
- TB need to get to know the market and potential end user, how to reach out to them and to spread the word on TB activities and services they offer;
- The platform should be more visible so that TB could use it for promotion. The EPPN platform cannot be the main vehicle to find end users. Most interesting customers of TB would be technical personnel from industrial end users;
- EPPN could provide support to create synergies between the TB and to spread the word to industrial end users.

Session in detail:

Questions:

Question 1:

How could EPPN help Test Beds and existing pilot projects?

Question 2:

What could be the main aims of this WG?

Question 3:

What could be done better in the EPPN platform?

How could EPPN help TB and existing pilot projects?

- **EPPN could have a list of TB and project's services and offers** including pictures of existing equipment
- SMEs and LEs should be attracted to the platform and they should **have free access to information without registration**

What could be the main aims of this WG?

- How to attract investors

- WG2 Finance and market could be a possibility for TB to ask for financing advice.
- Participating in the WG should also enable sharing experiences

What could be done better in the EPPN platform?

- Platform should **include a uniform catalogue of successful user cases** of use of pilot facilities performed so far. Practices on sustainability should also be included;
- Platform could share best practices on companies providing services;
- More end users should be involved in the platform and EPPN meetings;
- Crucial part would be the **validation of the data in the platform**. Users won't give a second chance to the platform if data are wrong or if features are not working for them;
- It is important to have **clear picture on industrial infrastructures offering their services**;
- When services are listed and well defined, it would be easier to match the correct financing pathways;
- **Search keywords should be redefined**;
- **Pitch presentation template** should be offered as a download on the platform;
- Pitch presenters could **publish their presentations** on their platform pages;
- The EPPN platform should be a place to share experience on projects and best practices and for promotion of all service offers;
- Maybe **different interfaces for different users** could be created (for SMEs, TB owners, pilot facilities owners etc.);
- At the moment, users are only contributing and bringing input to the platform, but they are not getting anything back. Maybe the current users are not future paying customers.

Recommendations for future actions:

- Development of the business model of EPPN for the future
- Emphasis should be on validation, although it is a question of time and money and it is extremely difficult to do it on large scale. Maybe "screening" instead of validation would be more appropriate to use

Working Group 3 – Policy and Regions

Participants:

Didier Van den Abeele
Michael Lennart Johnsson
Damien Dupin
Moritz Warnecke
Paula Galvão
Marina Dias

Session in detail:

The WG session was based on pre-prepared questions that were asked to the attendees;

Questions:

Question 1

Which mechanisms would you identify as a way of promoting company's use of pilot lines as testing grounds, for fast product validation and first productions?

Question 2

What types of the indirect support (i.e. direct support for users of pilot facilities) are currently in use?

Question 3

At a regional level, do you feel the need to define what a pilot line is?

Question 4

Are there initiatives for mapping national/regional pilot lines?

Question 5

What are the National and Regional funding mechanisms for pilot lines?

Question 6

Is there any action plans to support the exploitation of pilot lines? How do you monitor these plans?

Question 7

Which policies would you identify as a good example in supporting SMEs access to pilot facilities?

Question 8

Would you identify any good practices specific to an industrial sector?

Question 9

How can EPPN support the mapping of national/regional pilot lines?

Main Outcomes:

Marketing:

- French example: Sectorial institutions organise evening cafés to present the competencies of the pilot lines (mechanics, materials, production system). An association pushed initiative, they receive fees from the associates so they have to provide these type the service;

- The publicity of the marketing has to be driven from the point of view of the business;
- Disseminating Good (and bad) practices;
- Competence clusters (in France) are the main actors in contact with the companies.

Funding:

Directly, there are two levels:

- **Support to SMEs to access the services.** Flanders example - a 80k€ Voucher scheme;
- **Support directly the infrastructures**

Then,

- There are the SME specific support schemes at national level. An idea: Support from European Level to launch vouchers schemes for SME s to access the infrastructures;
- DG Regio and Interreg are focusing on programmes to promote interregional investments;
- Maybe develop COST initiatives to promote exchange of experience among pilots, pays travels.

Is there a need to have a definition of Pilot Lines?

Yes, **there are different understandings of what a pilot line is, at regional level.**

Ask pilot lines to explain competencies (including production capacity, services and turnover and clients). Volume of activity in terms of production capacity is critical (also business).

There is a need to evaluate pilot lines from the regions at 2 levels.

- RIS strategy;
- Evaluating pilot lines is needed based on competencies, marketing activity
- Then 2 models of implementation:
 - 1 driven at regional level by a leader a Large company;
 - From an RTO at national with regional satellites of technology transfer intermediaries.

Regional/National mapping:

- There is the example of France on mapping of competence centres and innovation hubs also the pilot lines within the innovation hub;
- Germany also has a similar example.

BUT not clear how these "static" exercises are useful.

Regional Support on the Exploitation of Pilot lines

- Basque country has a scheme to give out 50K for pilot lines to develop a business plan;
- There is **no standard way for supporting measures to exploit pilot lines.** It will depend of the:
 - Market they are acting in;
 - Level of maturity of the technology. If it's a destructive technology or a well-established value chain.

Future of the Working Group:

- Talk to DG Regio and the S3 platform;
- ERRIN set up a specific working within this network;
- Check if there is a policy group within the cluster collaboration platform;
- Also plug into Interreg;
- Pre demonstration of interest for the IH from France and Basque country.