Ref. Ares(2020)7574573 - 14/12/2020

Co-funded by the Horizon 2020 programme of the European Union

Project acronym:

TARGET SME

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 870496

Proactive communication and marketing measures for SMEs

DESIGN OPTION PAPER

Co-funded by the Horizon 2020 programme of the European Union

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02.12.2020

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I. Introduction

In the knowledge-based economy, enterprises from the SME sector often look for various opportunities to develop their activities. Competing with price is not effective anymore. That's why building a competitive advantage by introducing unique, innovative products or services to the market is gaining importance. In the management literature, there are statements that small and medium-sized enterprises need the skills to quickly respond to changes, implement new technologies and be part of an innovation ecosystem that indicates various market opportunities. Innovation agencies aiming at engaging SMEs in innovation process should take into account that the companies often are not open for support and even do not know how they can take advantage of Innovation Agencies (IAs) offers.

According to the Expert Advisory Group on Innovation in SMEs final report there is rather a passive approach where the SME is supposed to actively look for support and where the institutions wait for the companies to find them instead of being a proactive strategy reaching out for non-obvious clients and solutions. That's why it is recommended to rethink the marketing/communications strategy and shift it from a passive and traditional one to proactively looking.

In order to take up this challenge, the Target SME project's main goal was to increase the agencies' capacity and efficiency in the field of seeking new ways to attract innovative SMEs by using emerging communication and marketing tools and facilitating interaction and partnerships with various actors of the innovation ecosystem. The SMEs (project's target group) are understood as the companies launching new products/technologies, markets or operating in R&D or having potential for innovation implementation, regardless of their date of incorporation or their stage of maturity. At present, the tendency to internationalize the SME sector activity is quite noticeable. Being aware of the market instability, companies look for new development opportunities by participating in internationalization processes. In this context, a positive feature of the SME sector is its high flexibility, which helps to adjust the company's goals and activities to the changing environment.

The innovation agencies provide the services in the field of:

- entrepreneurship consultancy,
- creating a company,
- innovation implementation,
- developing a business plan and business modeling,

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- advice on the possibility of co-financing from European funds.

The SME sector needs greater institutional and financial support as it is largely dependent on changes in the environment. Due to the fact that the implementation of innovations is a difficult and new process for smaller companies, an important element of support is an effectively conducted innovation policy, focused on helping entrepreneurs. SME support from innovation agencies with appropriate involvement of various resources might have a great impact on building the competitiveness of the SME sector. The partners share the common need of reaching out to more companies in the area covered by their mission to involve them in the innovation activities. They are under growing pressure from the governments to demonstrate tangible results and impact over the economy as well as professionalise their procedures and services, especially taking proactive marketing approaches to the potential beneficiaries. They see promising answers for these problems in development of a well targeted comprehensive approach to implementing new communication and marketing tools.

The project assumes that any activity to engage SMEs in the innovation field should take into account that the companies often do not want to be helped and often do not know how they can take advantage of support and innovation offered. That's why building innovations agency brand awareness and communication process is so important. Every organization has a brand or corporate image, regardless of whether it manages it specifically or not, or whether it is aware of this or not. "*A brand is simply an organization, product or service with personality* " - this is the shortest brand definition by Wally Olins[1] - one of the most experienced practitioners in the world of branding. Branding interacts with marketing, design, internal, external communication. It becomes a channel through the organization and has an impact on every part of the company and each group of stakeholders. As a first step, it is necessary to understand where the innovation agency is positioned in relation to the market and to the surrounding ecosystem (local institutions, business associations, innovation actors, other business supporting institutions). Secondly, a strategic and forward-looking approach has to be adopted with a view to define where the IA is heading to, clearly setting the mission, values and goals that tenants and local authorities can easily identify with. Once agreed how we would like the agency should be perceived, it is important to develop a communication strategy accordingly to the target groups and use the suitable set of communication tools to reach the planned objectives.

A successful branding/communication plan requires:

- Identification of the target audience which defines the next steps.
- Value proposition - the key issues around which the strategy is built.
- Dissemination – delivering the right message to the right markets.
- Organisation – an entity responsible for sustaining the message.
- Building relationships with public authorities, the researcher community, education organisations and enterprises.

[1] Brand New. The Shape of Brands to Come., Wally Olins, 2014

All the points above were discussed by the TargetSME project partners in order to get inspired and design new communication and marketing tools. This Design Option Paper provides an overview of existing marketing and branding tools used by innovation agencies and draws useful recommendations for their managers. On the whole, it is suggested to smartly allocate resources on marketing and branding, valorise territorial branding, ensure a broad participatory process from the community around the agency and promote the use of a new generation of communication tools.

II. Description of the project Target SME and main results

1. Methodology of Target SME

TargetSME applies the TWINNING+ methodology of peer learning for innovation agencies to enhance the partners' and other agencies' capacity to deliver well focused, effective support and bringing the desired macroeconomic effect. The project concept responds to the methodology postulates in the following manner:

Common innovation support challenge: creating the valuable and well perceived by SMEs brand of innovation agencies by designing new elements of communication strategy.

The partners share the common need of reaching out to more companies in the area covered by their mission to involve them in the innovation activities. They are under growing pressure from the governments to demonstrate tangible results and impact over the economy as well as professionalise their procedures and services, especially taking proactive marketing approaches to the potential beneficiaries. They see promising answers for these problems in development of a well targeted comprehensive approach to implementing new communication and marketing tools.

The project assumes that any activity to engage SMEs in the innovation field should take into account that the companies often do not want to be helped and often do not know how they can take advantage of support and innovation offered.

2. SME sector characteristics

a) Introduction

The map of European companies is diverse, colored in intensity and activity in certain industrial sectors, as each region or country has its own economic achievements and indicators vary according to the business support measures in place, the approach to investing in innovation, productivity, etc. But one thing is clear that SMEs across Europe are the engines that sustain growth for long-term development in developing countries.

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When assessing regional entrepreneurship, innovation and economic growth, we always pay attention to the number of operating businesses, their investments in innovation and research, productivity, and the field of economic activity. In this section, we will briefly review the performance, strengths and areas for strengthening of SMEs in the Lithuanian, Estonian, Polish Wielkopolska and Spanish Andalusian regions.

b) SME Sector Characteristics in Andalucia

- **Companies by size**

Companies by size	**Number of companies**
SMES without salaried employee	**272.131**
SMES with salaried employee (1-100)	**232.690**
Micro companies (1-9 employees)	213.702
Small Companies (10-99 employees)	18.988
Large companies (100 and more employees)	1.259
TOTAL COMPANIES	**506.080**

Source: Data 2019 from the National Statistical Institute

In 2019, Andalusia was the third autonomous community that concentrated active companies, with a total of 506.080 companies, 15% of the country's total active companies, behind Catalonia. The number of companies with economic activity in Andalusia recorded an increase for the sixth consecutive year.

97.7% of the companies are under 20 employees or without employees. On the contrary, the distribution of employment according to the size of the companies registers the highest percentages in the companies with more employees. In this sense, 46.8% of the employees are working in large companies. The evolution of the number of employees in companies has been severely affected in February 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic.

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- **Companies by sector**

Sectors	**Companies**
Agriculture	10,10%
Industry	9,35%
Construction	6,85%
Services	73,70%
TOTAL COMPANIES	**100%**

Source: Data 2019 from the National Statistical Institute

- **Level of Innovation in SMES**

Innovation is a key factor for the competitiveness of SMEs. According to the FAEDPYME Andalucia 2019 report, Andalusian SMEs have an innovative activity similar to the national average, although those that have made innovations have done so with greater intensity. In terms of product innovation, 75.4% of SMEs in Andalusia made changes or improvements to products/services and 65.7% marketed new products or services.

In addition, 66% of SMEs in Andalusia have made changes or improvements to production processes and 72.4% have acquired new equipment goods. In this sense, more than half of Andalusian companies have made significant investments in the acquisition of new equipment assets, compared to 45.8% in Spain.

- **Issues and challenges faced by SMEs in partner countries in 2020**

According to the Small Business Act for Europe (SBA) Fact Sheet, SMEs play a major role in Spain's 'non-financial business economy'. They generate 61.3% of total value added and 71.9% of total employment, exceeding the EU averages by roughly 5 percentage points on both fronts. Micro firms are particularly important to the Spanish labor market, accounting for 38.7% of total employment. This is significantly higher than the EU average of 29.7%.

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The COVID-19 pandemic continues to advance in the world and, in the absence of effective vaccine or treatment, the high health and economic impact and uncertainties about the future persist. Following the sharp contraction of the world economy in March, April and May, in which governments imposed social confinement measures and other economic constraints, government restrictions began to relax in May and economic activity started recovered, but the emergence of epidemic outbreaks in various countries around the world throughout August forced governments to take new restrictive measures, while pessimism increases over the year's economic forecasts.

Therefore, the chances of a rapid recovery are ruled out, uncertainty grows about the damage that the crisis is causing in the productive fabric and the possibility that increased delay in payment of companies could affect the financial system. It also adds uncertainty if income maintenance measures to temporary workforce restructuring plan and freelancers will continue, as well as other variables that weigh on the future, such as the effects on Brexit on the Andalusian economy, US protectionist measures or doubts about the recovery in the EU.

In this sense, the national government of Spain and the regional government of Andalucia have designed and implemented several programs to promote economic growth and job creation through initiatives that accelerate ecological and digital transitions.

c) SME Sector Characteristics in Wielkopolska

- **Companies by size**

Companies by size	**Number of companies**
SMES	**444.183**
Micro companies (1-9 employees)	430.723
Small Companies (10-99 employees)	14.806
Medium and large companies (100 and more employees)	7.178
TOTAL COMPANIES	**448 670**

Source: Data 2020 from the National Statistical Institute

The Wielkopolska Region is one of the leading areas characterized by the highest level of investment attractiveness in Poland. In this context the size and quality of labour market resources, market absorption, transport accessibility, developed economic infrastructure and the general stage of economic development constitute the strengths of the region.

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The Wielkopolska Region enjoys a significant share in domestic production in reference to numerous branches of the industry, this includes 28% of beverage production, 23% of textile production, 22% of electrical equipment production, etc. Moreover, Wielkopolska is a leading producer of furniture, clothing and foodstuffs. The majority of business entities operating in the Wielkopolska Region represent the private SMEs sector.

There are 448 670 national economy entities operating in the Wielkopolska Region (as of 31.03.2020), excluding people running individual agricultural farms. Natural persons running business activity continue constituting a leading group of the national economy entities (76%). Commercial companies constitute nearly 12%, while civil law partnerships – 6,5%.

The Wielkopolska Region significantly contributes to domestic production in reference to numerous industries, this includes 28% of beverage production, 23% of textile production, 22% of electrical equipment production, etc. What is more, Wielkopolska is a major producer of furniture, clothing and food products.

The Wielkopolska Region ranked number 3 in the country as regards its share in the creation of GDP - 9.8% (PLN 207.1 billion in 2018, namely EUR 48.6 billion).

The evolution of the number of employees in companies has been severely affected in March 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Companies by sector**

Sectors	**Companies**
Construction	17,21%
Medical sector	5,5%
Services	77,29%
TOTAL COMPANIES	**100%**

Source: https://aleo.com/pl/infografiki/dane-firm-z-woj-wielkopolskiego

- **Level of Innovation in SMES**

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The quality of Polish entrepreneurship is improving. As a group, the SME sector has an increasing contribution to building social prosperity. Data shows that they produce an increasing portion of Polish GDP. Moreover, the openness of economic operators and their development orientation are growing. Although it still happens too rarely, companies become increasingly internationalised – the percentage of exporters and the average export value increase, and so does the ability to use the benefits of online presence. Polish companies also increasingly invest and develop and implement innovations, although the scale of development activities is still not sufficient.

The Wielkopolskie voivodeship took first place in two categories in Poland: the number of active small enterprises per 1,000 inhabitants (62,60) and the number of people working in small enterprises per 1,000 inhabitants. The voivodeship took second place in terms of 9 variables, i.e. the number of active (micro and medium) companies per 1,000 inhabitants, number of micro-workers per active entity, working (micro, medium) per 1000 inhabitants, revenues per company (micro-size), revenues per worker in a small company and investment outlays of micro-company.

According to the latest research by the Central Statistical Office on innovative activities of enterprises, in 2016-2018 the total innovation of enterprises was at the level of almost 22%, i.e. this percentage of the surveyed companies implemented innovations.

The latest survey conducted by Polish Agency of Enterprise Development the six segments were distinguished, conventionally named:

- Companies not focused on innovation - 32% of all companies
- Innovatively active companies in terms of human capital - 15%,
- Non-innovative companies - 17%,
- Companies technologically ready for innovation - 17%,
- Medium-innovative companies - 17%,
- Highly innovative companies - 2%.

- **Issues and challenges faced by SMEs in partner countries in 2020**

It seems natural to ask to what extent and for how long the pandemic will change the approach of enterprises to innovation. The fact that this will happen is almost certain. Digital transformation has become a necessity and an opportunity for many enterprises, which is why there is a growing interest in solutions enabling the provision of remote work, e-commerce or customer service via the Internet. Mobile technologies, cloud solutions, artificial intelligence and business analytics are used more and more often. All this will probably have a positive impact on the next data on innovative activity of enterprises and will probably be continued in the coming years. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that the pandemic is still ongoing and the second lockdown or further restrictions on the functioning of society and the economy are being introduced. Automation and digitization of processes requires new competences and investments. It is also still necessary to remember that the possibilities of introducing changes largely depend on the specifics of the industry. Tourism, the event industry, passenger transport or consumer services (such as hairdressers or beauty services), and even industrial production - still depend on the physical presence of a human being. Therefore, the full assessment of the situation, one would like to say "after the pandemic", will be announced in the next year or even next years.

d) SME Sector Characteristics in Lithuania

Assessing the 2019 indicators of the business structure of the year 2019, it should be noted that the economic environment was favorable for business creation and business development. The slowing growth of the EU countries lead to a more moderate demand for the products of Lithuanian companies in export markets and slow down the GDP growth prospects. This affected companies' investment decisions accordingly. In 2019 some economic indicators showed signs of slowing economic growth, with more modest growth in corporate income and profits, more moderate growth in productive investment, and declining labor market tensions. Therefore, it can be stated that the period of 2018–2019 the economic environment in Lithuania can be assessed as favorable for business.

- **Companies by size**

Companies by size	**Number of companies**
SMES	**107 444**
Micro companies (1-9 employees)	88 407
Small Companies (10-99 employees)	17 223
Medium and large companies (100 and more employees)	1814
TOTAL COMPANIES	**107 444**

Source: Data 2020 from the National Statistical Department

SMEs play an important role in Lithuania's non-financial business economy. In 2018, they generated 69.4% of the economy's value added and 75.9% of employment, exceeding the respective EU averages of 56.4% and 66.6%. On average, SMEs in Lithuania occupy near 3.8 people, and it is close to the EU average - 3.9. Average SME productivity (calculated as value added per person employed) was approximately €18,500 in the reference period, less than half the EU average of €44,600. Although it has caught up impressively over the past two decades, the fact that productivity is still below the EU average reflects remaining barriers to investment, skills mismatches, relatively low firm dynamics and a large informal sector.

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"Small Business Act" for Europe report published by the European Commission states that SMEs are economic growth drivers in Lithuania as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) create three out of four jobs in Lithuania and that is 10 % higher than the EU average.

Due to the steadily growing Lithuanian economy and because of a generally favorable business environment, the number of operating SMEs rose to 84,510 at the beginning of 2019.

At the end of 2019, there were 107,444 enterprises in Lithuania, most of which (almost 82%) were very small (with 0–4 employees) and small (with 5–9 employees). The share of operating enterprises with up to 250 employees (which is one of the criteria for the definition of small and medium-sized enterprises) in the national economy has remained almost unchanged in the long run and amounted to over 99%. However, long-term trends show that business enterprises in Lithuania tend to shrink.

Very small companies in 2018 created only 15% in the economy added value and employed almost 22% of the workforce. As the added value created is much lower than the share of employees, this shows that these companies are much less efficient than larger companies. In terms of productivity and investment, these companies lag significantly behind large companies due to economies of scale, thus, the fragmentation of business enterprises has a negative impact on the long-term development of the Lithuanian economy.

Many firms have successfully scaled up in recent years. The latest available data indicate that 1,781 (10.9% of all firms in the business economy16 with at least 10 employees) were high-growth firms in 201617. This is slightly higher than the EU average of 10.7%.

As in previous years, at the beginning of 2019 most SMEs were active in trade (29.1%, or 24,700) and services – professional, scientific and technical (12.3%, or 10,400), transport and storage (9.8%, or 8,300).

In 2019, the technology start-up community grew by almost 60%, to more than 500 companies, and attracted more than €70 million of venture capital – 1.7 times more than in 2018.

The majority of the companies in Lithuania are in some sort of engagement with international partners, especially in the areas of production and logistics. However, they admit having trouble cooperating with those partners in terms of mutual R&D projects. Therefore, Lithuanian SMEs need innovation development and partner search assistance programs that would enable them to create exclusive products and services.

- **Companies by sector**

Sectors	**Companies number**
Construction	9020
Manufacturing	8054

Services	11365
Trade	24780
Agriculture	2344
Logistics	8565
Other	43316
TOTAL COMPANIES	**107 444**

Source: The Lithuanian Department of Statistics (Statistics Lithuania)

Manufacturing is the largest sector of the Lithuanian economy, generating 20.4% of Lithuanian Gross Domestic Product. Manufactured goods account for more than 80% of total exports of Lithuanian goods and services.

The main industrial sectors are electronics, chemical products, machine tools, metal processing, construction material, household appliances, food processing, light industry (including textile), clothing and furniture. The country is also developing oil refineries and shipyards. The World Bank estimates that the manufacturing sector alone contributes to 17% of the country's GDP.

Agriculture contributes 2.9% to the GDP and employs 8% of the workforce (World Bank, 2019). The industrial sector accounts for 25.5% of GDP, employing around 25% of the active population. Lastly, the services sector contributes 60.3% to the GDP and employs more than two thirds of the active population (68%). The information technology and communications sectors are the most important contributors to the GDP. Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the country's economy (with 3.6 million arrivals in 2018).

Breakdown of Economic Activity By Sector	Agriculture	Industry	Services

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Employment By Sector *(in % of Total Employment)*	6.6	25.9	67.4
Value Added *(in % of GDP)*	3.0	25.3	61.6
Value Added *(Annual % Change)*	6.6	4.3	3.6

Source: World Bank, Latest Available Data. Because of rounding, the sum of the percentages may be smaller/greater than 100%.

- **Level of Innovation in SMES**

The Ministry of the Economy and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania state: “Innovation is one of the main factors accelerating the development of the Lithuanian economy and ensuring economic growth. The growth of innovation of Lithuanian companies improves competitiveness not only in domestic but also in foreign markets. Continuous innovation plays a central role in the future role of Lithuania’s economy and the country aspires to be the innovation centre of the North Baltic region. When promoting the creation and implementation of innovation, particular focus is placed on cooperation between business and science, protection of intellectual property, and clusterization of innovative companies. In Lithuania, as elsewhere in the world, innovation is the key driver of economic growth enabling high added value to be created and ensuring economic development.”

The performance of EU national innovation systems is measured by the Summary Innovation Index, which is a composite indicator obtained by taking an unweighted average of the 27 indicators. According to the scores for the Summary Innovation Index for all EU Member States in 2019 Lithuania belongs to the third group of Moderate Innovators, where performance is between 50% and 95% of the EU average.

- **Issues and challenges faced by SMEs in partner countries in 2020**

As stated in 2019 SBA Fact Sheet “despite substantial efforts and tangible improvements, access to (traditional bank and alternative) finance remains a major challenge for many Lithuanian SMEs. In context of the ‘second chance’ principle, Lithuania should maintain work to improve the time needed, the cost involved and the conditions for resolving bankruptcies. SME stakeholders would like to see a more consistent application of the ‘think small first’ principle. Despite above EU average scores in

State aid & public procurement, Lithuania missed important green procurement policy targets. In view of the current situation on the labour market, it should continue to work on closing the skills gap by improving efficiency and training at all levels. It also needs to step up efforts to support SMEs' transition to the green economy".

The situation in Covid-19 has a significant impact on the performance of SMEs. A significant number of economic indicators reveal that COVID-19 has seriously damaged many countries' economies. SMEs have not managed to escape the economic catastrophe. Some companies have been able to significantly increase revs, but most businesses have been negatively affected by this pandemic.

A recent survey conducted by the Bank of Lithuania revealed that almost two thirds of businesses experienced the negative impact of COVID-19. The issue that happened to make the biggest impact was the reduced demand for goods and services. Canceled or delayed orders and late customer payments also had a significant impact. According to the survey, almost three-quarters of companies' profits declined due to these reasons.

Almost 60% of the SMEs surveyed by the Bank of Lithuania believe that the recovery of their business will take at least one year. This planned recovery time is dependent on the duration and "volume" of the "second wave" of COVID-19.

e) SME Sector Characteristics in Estonia

- **Companies by size**

Companies by size	**Number of companies (2019)**
SMES less than 10 employees (Micro companies)	**125.662**
SMES with salaried employee (10-49)	**6779**
Startups (out of the SMEs)	650
Large companies (50-249)	1159
TOTAL COMPANIES	**133.784**

Source: Data 2019 Statistics Estonia

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In 2019, the total number of companies in Estonia was 133.784, 56% of them are located at Harjumaa Country and most of them (78%) are located in Tallinn (capital of Estonia). Around 94% of the companies are micro companies, that have less than 10 employees (or no employees at all). At the same time most of the employees work at large companies and there is heavy demand on flexible working conditions (e.g. part time or project base work). Due to COVID-19 situation there is a decrease in establishing companies. In addition it has affected employment level and level of average salaries.

- **Companies by sector**

SECTOR	**10-49 employees**	**Less than 10 employees**	**%**
Agriculture, forestry	297	11 238	
Mining industry	35	113	
Manufacturing	**1 291**	**7 700**	**6%**
Energy (incl. Gas)	**37**	**365**	**0,3%**
Water supply; sewerage; waste and pollution management	**56**	**244**	**0,2%**
Construction	1 078	12 992	
Wholesale and retail trade;	1 126	20 656	
Transport and storage	572	8 031	

Accommodation and catering	607	3 411	
ICT (6%)	**272**	**8 892**	**7%**
Finance and insurance	74	2 223	
Real estate development	135	8 273	
Science and Technology	**388**	**18 363**	**14%**
Administrative and support services	359	6 473	
Education	56	2 214	
Health and social work	**247**	**1 927**	**2%**
Arts, entertainment and leisure	73	4 706	
Other	76	7 841	
TOTAL	**6779**	**125.662**	

Source: Data 2019 Statistics Estonia

Tehnopol's goal is to enhance the creation and development of technology companies, through its activities in the focus fields: green tech, health tech and ICT.

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Majority of the SMEs that interest Tehnopol are in the Science and technology sector, but also in ICT, manufacturing, energy, water and waste management. Even though the number of energy companies is very small, the interest there is relatively high. Similar to other countries, the energy market is led by the monopoly and there are only a small number of competitors. The same situation is in the Health tech sector, where the market is divided by big players (International + local start-ups).

- **Level of Innovation in SMES**

According to the Estonian Statistics office, the number of the companies who are innovative is 2800, the relative importance of innovative companies is around 73%. The investments to innovate companies reach up to 1 billion euros, According to the Innovation survey (2016-2018) nearly 69% of Estonian SME companies (up to 49 employees) are innovative (according to the definition the company had launched during the survey period either new and different product, service or business process. A bit more than half of them invested into innovating business processes that are directly related to development of existing products and services. Based on that we can conclude that Estonian SMEs are innovative, but it's more like imitative innovation. Only 15% of the companies launched completely new products. Innovative products revenue was around 15% out of total revenue.

- **Issues and challenges faced by SMEs in partner countries in 2020**

Majority of companies in Estonia are micro companies that are created within part 5-10 years and therefore they play an important role in Estonian economy. Most of them are active in retail and wholesale, manufacturing and construction sector. Even though SMEs are important, their revenue is modest, approximately 80% of them earn revenue that is between 1-50.000 euros per year. Estonia has run different programs to enhance its economy. One of them is an e-residency program, that enables foreign founders to establish a company in Estonia from a distance and sign digitally documents etc. During the last decade the increase in creation of new companies indicates there is enough demand for different products and services offered by new as well as existing companies. The ones who want to be successful in the long-run need to release their growth ambition, invest into development of products and services, diverse product portfolios and innovation. Only then they can be better from innovative newcomers.

Similar to other countries COVID-19 pandemic has affected most heavily SME-s as they do not have the experience in surviving the crises from the past as well as they do not have enough wealth to keep the business going without income in the long run. COVID-19 has influenced all the sectors, but according to the Estonian Statistics accommodation and catering as well as arts, entertainment, leisure sectors are the ones that were hit the most. It is interesting that at the beginning there was a strong belief that it will not affect as heavily technology companies, but already several weeks after lockdown the first news of redundancy of employees started to leak. Even highly admired unicorn Bolt turned to the government and asked for financial support. Government and local municipalities created different programs to support companies and it helped to maintain survival level for the majority and during the summer the companies were recovering. Unfortunately the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic has hit Estonian economy, so it is too soon to estimate anything yet.

3. The way of precise defining target groups. Design process – personas and needs

a) Target groups characteristics of innovation agencies

All the project partners created their persona which is a character that represents a type of customer or user of your service or product. Persona is created based on a synthesis of what the agencies have learned about your real customers. This approach is research-based and designed to help in better understanding SMEs' needs, behaviors, experiences, and goals.

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- **Kaunas Science and Technology Park**

Kaunas STP

CUSTOMER OVERVIEW

SECTOR

an analysis of the long-term clients at Kaunas STP suggests that we have the largest number of members of the scientific community in the ICT sector (such software, Apps, IOC, WEB, Software for Med tech. Robotics, E-commerce etc.). Med-Tech and Biotech sectors are represented by quantitative number of SMEs. The representatives of these sectors are the main clients of Kaunas STP.

MARKET

International and Local. According to the survey (interviews carried out by Kaunas STP) results, most of the companies interviewed are in some sort of engagement with international partners, especially in the areas of IT services and products, MedTech solutions and services sales. However, they admit having trouble cooperating with those partners in terms of mutual R&D projects. Most of them state that they have never participated in the international R&D project or the cooperation level with international partners regarding R&D is low. They also recognize experiencing high international competition as a barrier for their further internationalization activities. Therefore, Lithuanian SMEs need innovation development support and partner search assistance programs that would enable them to create exclusive products and services in close international cooperation.

IDEAL CLIENT PROFILE

Peter

Tech Startup team

AGE: 27 years old

SECTOR: ICT sector

STATUS: Already established START-UP

COMPANY LIFETIME: 2-5 years in the market

THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 5 employeesy

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

SIZE OF THE COMPANY

Small (from 1-10 employees) / 98% of all companies located in Lithuania are micro and small ones).

AGE OF THE COMPANY

Usually SMEs are up to 5 years.

GOALS

SMEs main aim is to innovate and grow fast. Businesses have ambitions not only to survive but also to grow innovative businesses.

BEHAVIORS / HABITS

Companies are looking for information on how to attract investment, demanding new knowledge in business development and process management, new product development.

CHALLENGES

The main challenges companies are facing lack of long-term strategic vision, lack of knowledge and targeted strategies for entering new international markets, recruitment of skilled staff, high competition in the local and foreign markets.

INFLUENCERS

Experienced mentors consult, advice, support; Enterprise Lithuania supports business development - advice and assistance for startup start, growth and export.

QUESTION MARKS

How do we make it more effective to attract new members to the community? How to persuade existing members to park community events, activate use of services? Strengthening Clustering Processes?

Kaunas STP

CUSTOMER OVERVIEW

THINK & FEEL

- We have a really good product development
- We can do better than the other companies in the market
- I won't tell anyone about my secret key to the business success
- I think we really have the potential for my product
- We don't have enough marketing and sales skills
- We do some sales, but not enough
- We need the financial support for the product development
- I see the potential of our product

SEE

- The growing IT service demand in the market
- The new possibilities to enter to the abroad markets
- A lot bureaucracy getting the public financial support
- The high competition of the salaries in the IT sector
- That other (bigger) IT companies invest more to solve the HR problems
- Sees successful IT start -ups in the region
- See the possibilities around (Acceleration programs
- National support programs for programs for START- UPS

HEAR

- You need to adopt the innovations
- You have to be visible in the local and abroad market
- Have the external expert for the advisory
- You need to hire competent IT specialist to have the best and really skilled IT personnel
- Investing your own money is risky, you have to look for additional investment
- You have to look for the national support programs for the start-ups

SAY&DO

- Does not invest too much to the HR (motivation systems, competence growth of the employees)
- "I am an expert in my IT business, I know much about it, I really doubt anyone can understand and advice me better in my business"
- Takes advice only from the friends/ partners/ colleagues that have expertise in the IT sector, does not trust too much external consultants
- Has different vision compared with the employees' vision, is oriented in the business growth
- "We do not our best, we have to be more oriented to the fast growth and result"
- Do good local sales

Peter

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- **Poznan Science and Technology Park**

PPNT

CUSTOMER OVERVIEW

SECTOR

Production, furniture, cosmetics, chemistry, IT

MARKET

PPNT offers mainly research services to the developed technology companies. At the same time, brand awareness is primary related to PPNT's research services and scientific, unique competences. PPNT has three focus fields: chemistry, physics and IT. PPNT clients need help either with technology development, IPR consulting, new business opportunities, they all want to grow fast and they all are very much focused on their companies and its success. There are no direct competitors, but there are plenty of consulting companies for giving specific advice (business model, financing etc). PPNT's competitive advantage is its holistic approach to SME sector needs, analysing the company, agreeing company goals and working out the plan to achieve those goals.

IDEAL CLIENT PROFILE

John Resourceful

CEO, experienced in business

AGE: 40 years old

SECTOR: technology company

STATUS: developed company

COMPANY LIFETIME: 5+ years in the market

THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: over 10

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

SIZE OF THE COMPANY

SME, 20+ employees (up to 250 employees), turnover up to 20 million euros.

AGE OF THE COMPANY

5 + years.

GOALS

To grow and achieve success through that, be proud of the difference their product makes.

BEHAVIORS / HABITS

They are used to run their business their way. They are quite sceptical about the quality of innovation agencies support. They're looking for EU funds.

CHALLENGES

Sales and marketing, qualified employees.

INFLUENCERS

Other companies, technology experts.

QUESTION MARKS

How to deliver clearly our value proposition to SME sector, and increase their recommendation index and satisfaction level, get successful cases, that we could use in marketing (attracting new customers).

PPNT

CUSTOMER OVERVIEW

THINK & FEEL

- Where to find qualified employees?
- How to grow my business quickly?
- I'd like to go abroad.
- I'm ok in my country but I want to go global.
- I need sale and marketing strategy for international expansion.
- How to get money for the expansion?

SEE

- Everyone is growing, not me.
- Revenue is ok, but can be better.

HEAR

- Pay me more.
- You're aready doing very well, why do you want to expand?
- It is risky.

SAY&DO

- We need to enter new markets in near future.
- Our product is better than others'. It is innovative enough.
- I need sales people.
- I need somebody who help us in internationalization.
- We need to have a growth mindset and trainings.

John

Poznan Science and Technology Park · Málaga TechPark; Parque Tecnológico de Andalucía · Kaunas Science and Technology Park · Tehnopol

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- **Tallinn Tehnopol**

Tehnopol

CUSTOMER OVERVIEW

SECTOR

Technology sector continues its growth and success. Technology is nowadays part of majority companies core business, as it helps to deliver better products and services. According to the survey. The common denominator for Estonian technology companies is their creativity and the ability to ignore the concept of impossible. The overall turnover of sector is 3.6 billion euros, it has nearly 5000 IT companies and employes 6% of the entire workforce. (source Enterprise Estonia).

MARKET

Tehnopol offers business consulting services to technology companies in each growth phase: teams with the idea, start-ups, scale-ups and corporates – they all can rent a real estate, test their services in our business park and get professional consulting to unlock their potential.
Largest segment in (both income and number of client contract) in consulting services are formed by scaleups. At the same time, brand awareness is primary related to Tehnopol's start-up activities (Startup Incubator). Tehnopol has three focus fields: green technology, smart city and health tech (leading Estoniain health tech cluster – Connected Health). All the scaleups belong to one of these fields. They all need help either with product development, exporting, investments, new business opportunities, they all want to grow fast and they all are very much focused on their companies and its success. There are no direct competitors, but there are plenty of consulting companies for giving specific advice (leadership, business model, marketing etc). Tehnopol's competitive advantage is its holistic approach to scaleups needs, analysing the company, agreeing company goals and working out the plan to achieve those goals.

IDEAL CLIENT PROFILE

Raido

CEO of a scale-up

AGE: 35 years old

SECTOR: technology company

STATUS: Scale-up

COMPANY LIFETIME: 5+ years in the market

THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 20 employees

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

SIZE OF THE COMPANY

Scaleups, 20+ employees (up to 250 employees), turnover up to 50 million euros

AGE OF THE COMPANY

5 + years.

GOALS

To grow and achieve success through that, be proud of the difference their product makes.

BEHAVIORS / HABITS

They are used to run their business their way. They have a mindset of the startup, and organisation that has grown out of that scale and needs already proper procedures for things to get done. They are agile in their activities, they do not trust easily advisors.

CHALLENGES

So far, they have been brightest in their field and now it is hard to admit themselves that they need external advice, trust issue and readiness to do things differently varies by company. But when the consultant has won their trust and proved that their advice is valuable, the good relations lead to real success. Another challenge is that the startegy that has worked so far, does not provide the desired growth and there is a need to get advice for entering new international markets, launching new products, developing new business lines etc.

INFLUENCERS

Friends that are successful businessmen, field experts with real practical experience, leaders of corporates, media.

QUESTION MARKS

How to deliver clearly our value proposition to scaleups, and increase their recommendation index and satisfaction level, get successful cases, that we could use in marketing (attracting new customers).

Technopol

CUSTOMER OVERVIEW

THINK & FEEL

- We are very successful in what we do
- We do things better than other competitors
- I don't trust others to share that I have challenges as well
- I am very self confidents – I AM THE ONE WHO KNOWS how things should be done
- Actually I need help with export, launch of the new product, marketing
- We should be more sales oriented
- I am a strong believer of myself, my company, our procust, constant economical wellness and success
- People who are rising their problems at work annoy me.
- I do not know how to be a leader and I do not like it, but at the same time I do not want to learn it.

SEE

- The increase in technology services demand in the market
- The new possibilities to enter to the abroad markets
- A lot inefficiency dealing with big players on the market
- Competition over top-notch professionals (work conditions, salaries)
- Bigger technology companies invest more to solve the HR problems
- Feels that successful startups are stepping on their knees

HEAR

- Innovation is the key to the success
- Brand and product awareness is important
- Good technology specialists are hard to get, they are really golded and awarded by cool startups or rich corporates
- Success and money are two most important things to run after

SAY&DO

- On one hand works hard, at the same time is superficial on some fields of the business (soft values such as branding, people etc)
- "I am an expert in my tech company, I know much about it, I really doubt anyone can understand and advice me better in my business"
- Takes advice only from the friends/ partners/ colleagues that have expertise in the sector, does not trust too much external consultants
- Has different vision compared with the employees' vision, is oriented in the business growth
- Has a strong focus what matters to him, a bit arrogant and antisocial

Raido

Poznan Science and Technology Park

Málaga TechPark; Parque Tecnológico de Andalucía

Kaunas Science and Technology Park

Tehnopol

- Malaga TechPark

Malaga TechPark

CUSTOMER OVERVIEW

IDEAL CLIENT PROFILE

Derek Müller
COMPANIES

PROFILE

German
30 years old, single,
High Economic Status
He studied Economics and Business
He runs a company in Malaga TechPark

MOTIVATIONS

Derek is a motivated person. He sets big goals and works hard to achieve them. He likes music, reading innovative articles, and buying good clothes

PERSONALITY

Open mind
Responsability
Emotional range
Kindness
Openness

IDEAL CLIENT PROFILE

Celia Martínez
EMPLOYEES

PROFILE

From Malaga
31 years old, with boyfriend
Medium-high purchasing power
Degree in Psychology
Human Resources Manager in a company in the park

MOTIVATIONS

Celia is motivated to get success: she looks for opportunities to improve herself and to show that she is a capable person. She has concerns regarding the digital world. She is more and more active on Twitter.

PERSONALITY

Open mind
Responsability
Emotional range
Kindness
Openness

Malaga TechPark

CUSTOMER OVERVIEW

IDEAL CLIENT PROFILE

Pablo Távora
CITIZENS

PROFILE

40 years
Married and father of a toddler
Real estate agent
Medium purchasing power / Born and living in Malaga city

MOTIVATIONS

Pablo likes to know the projects that are carried out in his city. He is active and like others to be too. He is also very critical of what he does not like about his city.

PERSONALITY

Open mind
Responsability
Emotional range
Kindness
Openness

IDEAL CLIENT PROFILE

Marina Romero
MEDIA

PROFILE

35 years old.
Married, no children.
Journalist in a local digital newspaper
Medium purchasing power
She lives in a small city next to Malaga

MOTIVATIONS

Marina prefers activities that help her develop personally. She lives attentive to everything that surrounds her. Very active on Twitter. She likes meeting interesting people who really contribute. Help with social works.

PERSONALITY

Open mind
Responsability
Emotional range
Kindness
Openness

- **Analysis of the Innovative SMEs behaviours in the participating regions**

During the first months of the TARGETSME project, the partners focused on the collection and peers-to peers analysis of information in each participating country, on qualitative user characteristics, important factors of the SMEs behaviour as an input for the design process: understanding the user needs, preparing attractive messages and support offer. SMES from Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and Spain were interviewed during this phase of the project.

- **Characteristic of founders**

Age of the founders: average 37

Qualification: Higher education

Motivation: the creation of their companies was based on economic, social and various factors. In this sense, for 73% of the SMES interviewed, the main motivation was the inspiration to develop an interesting idea, followed by economic perspective and individual fulfilment.

Previous experience with founding a company: For 66,7% of the interviewees, it is the first time that created a company.

Team: 55% of the interviewees decided to create and run their company alone, meanwhile the rest opted to work as a team with 2 or more partners.

Self-assessment: nearly 50% of them did not have awareness on how to run a business, or only basis awareness.

- **Characteristic of companies**

Year of foundation: 73,5 % are consolidated companies with more that 3 years of experience, and 60% of them have more than 5 years of experience.

Business areas: ICT is the main represented sector with companies elaborating IT solutions, Blockchain development or IoT for example. The service and health sectors are present too with initiatives from different fields, such as solutions for testing blood for example.

Size: 60 % of the SMES interviewed have 5 employees or less meanwhile 30% have between 6 and 10 employees. Only 10 % have more than 10 employees.

Source of financing: 40% of the finance for the company are coming from friends and relatives, meanwhile public subsidies are bootstrapping represent another 40%. The rest includes bank loan, credit, venture capital and other sources of funding.

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Stage of the company: the companies are mostly at the start-up stage for 46,7% of them, and growth stage for a third of them.

The turnover of these companies falls within a range of 100.000 and 300.000 euros, one of them with more that 1 million. For nearly three quarters of these SMEs, the most important factor for market and competition strategy is Technology Innovation. In this sense, all the companies interviewed have been involved in a process/product innovation in the past 12 months.

It is worth mentioning also that 66% of these companies are involved in international business strategy.

The SMEs mentioned that they encounter competition from other companies, which they counteract being smarter and innovating every day, focusing on their strengths, and adapting to predictable future needs in society.

Regarding grant schemes, on regional, national, or European level, even if the companies consider applying in the future to these programs, only 28% are using them actually.

- **Location factors and business support services**

According to the survey, generally what makes a location attractive to establish a company is first the supply of qualified employees, followed by networks, scientific environment, knowledge of the local economy and infrastructure as well as economic climate towards business. For all these reasons, science and technology parks are good environment options.

Bottlenecks for innovative SME: Innovative SMEs experience problems especially related to going international (33%) and bureaucracy (26,7%). The areas of conducting business which are most difficult to master are also related to market issues – how to become visible on the market, how to build a recognizable brand and finally to hire qualified, experienced co-workers.

According to the interviewees (33%), areas of improvement are indeed necessary in the field of marketing activities and brand building as well as internationalization (26%).

Experience with incubators / innovation intermediaries: The availability of incubation support in the regions participating in the survey is rather good, 66% of the SMEs interviewed showed a good opinion in this sense, meanwhile 20% recognize that they do not have experience with them.

Quality of business support services: Most of the interviewees mentioned that the services they used were rather good and the services are useful: mentors, seminars, networking, community, infrastructure, marketing activities. Nonetheless, they all mentioned that the communication of the services available is not well promoted and they need more detailed information on such services.

Several concrete suggestions on how to optimize the existing business services support for current and future SMEs were proposed by the SMEs, such as:

- To be closer to the companies
- To be more oriented on SME needs
- To promote internationalization
- To improve the quality of the services proposed

- **Experience with innovation actors**

The SMES interviewed mentioned that they became aware of the business support services available in their region with different means, such as:

- Public institutions
- Networks
- Events
- Direct search in google and social media

Three quarters of the interviewees trust the quality of service provided by public business support providers and underline that that the most needed services from incubators and innovation actors are consultations and mentoring (40%), and the promotion of the product/service of the company through incubator's communication channels (33%).

4. Communication and marketing activities. MarCom STP and Good practices

The new proactive strategies when all innovation support institutions are actively looking for new clients and approaching innovative SMEs by applying new communication and marketing tools are recommended. The way of acting from traditional and most cases passive form should be changed and all strategies rethinked.

This process of generating new marketing and communication methods must be systematically reviewed, updated, because the market trends are constantly changing. What worked yesterday, what we always applied, will not necessarily work tomorrow, will not necessarily bring the expected benefits, will not necessarily reach those customers we hope for.

Therefore, this consortium of partners has developed, tested the methodology commonly used in practice in the day-to-day operations of business support organizations and offers it to MarCom whenever it is necessary to review the customer value proposition, evaluate existing communication and marketing tactics and generate new ones.

In this section, we also present partners' best practices, experiences and future action plans for new external customer engagement tools and initiatives.

a) Methodology for the Design of Marketing Communication for Science and Technology Parks (MarCom STP)

- **The aim**

The following methodological guidelines have been designed specifically for and tested with Science and Technology Parks. It is designed to facilitate the development of marketing communications' (MarCom) strategy and a plan by encompassing major concern areas in the MarCom of Science and Technology Parks (STPs).

The Methodology is also intended to provide a framework for an STP to analyze/ audit its current MarCom strategy and/ or activities in the search of efficiency windows or innovative ideas in attracting new tenants into an STP.

- **What is MarCom?**

MarCom can be described as all messages and media deployed to communicate with the market in both, providing the stakeholders with the information on the achievements of an STP, and in attracting new relevant tenants to the STP. It uses different marketing channels and tools in combination.

MarCom channels focus on any way a business communicates a message to its desired market and/ or stakeholders, or the market in general. A MarCom tool can be anything from the marketing mix: from advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, sponsorship, communication, social media and promotion to public relations.

Thus, generally speaking, MarCom is a very wide area including advertising, direct marketing, branding, packaging, online presence, printed materials, PR activities, sales presentations, sponsorships, trade show appearances and much more.

- **How STPs are specific with regards to the MarCom?**

Simply put, the STPs provide locations that foster innovation and the development and commercialization of technology and where governments, universities and private companies may collaborate. The specificity of MarCom of STPs as compared to MarCom of other organizations hinders on the following assumptions:

- ➢ STP is a property-based development that accommodates and fosters the growth of tenant firms and that is affiliated with a university (or a government and private research bodies) based on proximity, ownership, and/or governance. This means that a Park is often significantly influenced by multiple stakeholders among which the science institutions have a major role. As such the STPs should carefully streamline their MarCom with the stakeholders, especially the key one.
- ➢ On a macro-level STPs are often perceived as contributing to national and/or regional economic development, stimulating the formation of new high-technology firms, attracting foreign investment, promoting exports, solving unemployment and upskilling problems of a specific region/ country. This way the Parks can be seen as being accountable to the public and national/ regional government on their role in the implementation of the economic/ social strategy and/ or policy. All of this may suggest a specific agenda for MarCom of the STPs and/ or MarCom channels in particular.
- ➢ The Parks usually center their activities around knowledge sharing, innovation promotion, and the facilitation of commercialization of research outcomes. In this role it is important to the Parks to project a proper image in order new relevant tenants are being attracted.

Methodological framework

In order an STP embraces the complexity of its MarCom, the methodology proposes to employ 3 perspectives:

- ➢ Strategic management perspective which promotes a fit between the internal organizational and external environments;
- ➢ Marketing perspective in which marketing is defined as the satisfaction of client needs and wants; and
- ➢ Systemic data organizing/ analysis perspective represented by Edward de Bono’s Six Thinking Hats and the PMIU.

To manage external data in a systematic way we propose to use the PESTELE method.

- **Logical sequence of MarCom development**

The logical sequence of steps to be taken in the development of ideas for MarCom of an STP is the following:

- ➢ The major internal organizational factors are to be considered in the light of the organization’s mission, vision, shareholder and stakeholder interests, strengths and weaknesses. The factors are to be listed (randomly or ranked).
- ➢ The target client needs are to be identified and listed. If insufficiently known, the data on present and potential client needs and wants is to be collected.

- The external factors are to be identified and listed using PESTELE framework (randomly or ranked).
- The impact of each factor and data entry on the marketing communication (strategy, policy or plan) as well as ideas stemming from each factor and data entry are to be analyzed using the Edward de Bono Six Thinking Hats' framework.
- The list of impacts and ideas generated in the previous step are to be filtered using the PMIU method.
- The I (interesting) and the U (unique) ideas are to be the ones to be used in the MarCom of an STP resulting in many applications: marketing goals, marketing KPIs, target audience selection, ideas for marketing projects/ promotions, ideas for marketing copy, content and many more. All of those ideas then can be organized into a marketing communication PLAN (not discussed further in the current document).
- All of the above-mentioned data/ fact identification, listing and analysis can be organized in a table presented in picture Num.1 of this document.

- **Guidelines for factor analysis**

More specifically on each factor group and the factors inside each group:

1. Internal organizational factors may include answers to the following questions:

- What is the mission of the organization? To be operational, the mission should be inspiring rather than a set of vague "wooly" key-words.
- What is the vision of the organization for 3 years from now? The vision should have very clear key elements defining the Park as a specific services' hub.
- What are the expectations of each of the share-holders of the organization? Can those expectations be quantified and expressed in KPIs?
- What is the identity of the organization? What is its culture?
- How resourceful is the organization? Are the resources substantial in achieving the goals set by the shareholders? How can the organization compensate for the lack of resources?
- What are the core strengths and weaknesses of the organization? It is important to list the one that either facilitates or hinders the development, not just any pluses and minuses.
- Who are the direct competitors? Who are indirect competitors? What has the organization got in terms of strengths that other competing alternatives have not got? What is the real competitive advantage as seen by the clients, and not the organization itself?

2. Data on target clients can be identified using the following provisional questions:

- Who are the target clients for the organization? How many different client segments are there? The organization should know that not all client segments are target segments. Even though all segments might not be refused the services of the Park, the Park's MarCom is directed only to a very limited number of segments, preferably one only, thus the term “target” segments. The target client segment should have a clear profile.

- Is the organization satisfied with the current client profile? Would it like to change it and attract a different client segment? How?
- What are the needs and the wants of a target segment? It is preferable that the organization collects qualitative rather than quantitative data on its clients’ needs and wants.

3. External organizational factors.

- It is important to emphasize that external organizational factors are defined as those that an organization cannot have a direct influence on. Whereas the internal organizational factors are considered to be those that an organization can have a direct influence on.
- It is important that an organization would indicate an impact of the factor on its MarCom activities instead of only listing the factors.
- **Political** factors relate to how the national or regional government intervenes in the economy. For example, political factors include tax policy, labor law, environmental law, trade restrictions, tariffs, public procurement, political stability, etc. Political factors include goods and services which the government aims to provide or be provided and those that the government does not want to be provided. Furthermore, governments have a high impact on the health, education, and infrastructure of a region and a nation.
- **Economic** factors include economic growth, exchange rates, taxation, inflation rate, and interest rates. These factors affect how organizations operate and make strategic development decisions.
- **Social** factors, for example, include the cultural aspects and health consciousness, population growth rate, age distribution, career attitudes, unemployment and skills provision, and emphasis on safety.
- **Technological** factors include technological aspects like R&D activity in the region or on the national level, R&D policy, the structure and nature of the innovation eco-system, automation, technology incentives and the rate of technological change. These can determine barriers to entry, minimum efficient production level and influence the outsourcing decisions. Furthermore, technological shifts would affect costs, quality, and lead to innovation.
- **Environmental** factors include ecological and environmental aspects such as weather, climate, and climate change, which may especially affect industries such as tourism, farming, and insurance. Furthermore, growing awareness of the potential impacts of climate change is affecting how companies operate and the products they offer, both creating new markets and diminishing or destroying existing ones.
- **Legal** factors include company law, law on bankruptcy, consumer law, antitrust law, employment law, and health and safety law. These factors can affect how a company operates, its costs, and the demand for its products.
- **Energy/ Ethical** and other external parameters can be considered as well if appropriate and if having a positive or a negative/ limiting impact on the operation of an STP or its tenants.

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The Six Thinking Hats' framework developed by Edward de Bono originally is intended to facilitate group discussion in the efficient search for creative solutions to the problem(s) discussed by the group. The instrument is helpful in organizing group discussion around 6 key topics represented by the Hats. Here we suggest that the Hats be used to organize the discussion over each of the factors identified using the above-mentioned questions and factor framework.

- **The white hat** is the consideration of the facts known/ collected on the issue under discussion. No emotions or gut feelings are acceptable but mere neutral and objective facts. If facts/ information is not available, it should be collected.
- **The yellow hat** is to analyze the pluses in every fact/ data set, factor, etc. identified. It is important to notice that the search for positive elements in each observation can lead to many ideas.
- **The black hat** is used to look for the negative, risky, "dangerous" elements in the facts collected.
- **The green hat** is the hat for ideas, stemming from the white, the yellow and the black hats. A brain storming (A. Osborn) technique or a mind-mapping (T. Buzan) technique can also be applied in the ideation process.
- **The red hat** is the hat for the feelings evoked by any of the hats preceding it and can also facilitate the generation of new ideas for MarCom.
- **The blue hat** is to organize the process, to discuss the progress and to consider next steps in the search for MarCom ideas for an STP.

- **Choosing ideas for MarCom**

Once a deluge of MarCom ideas is abundant from the usage of hats, the ones to proceed with should be identified. In this light the PMIU method can be used.

The acronym stands for P-pluses, M-minuses, I-interesting and U-unique. If an idea is merely a "plus", it should be abandoned, as it is not catchy enough to be implemented or would not bring an STP the MarCom effectiveness it would strive for. If an idea is a "minus", it should be abandoned all together. Yet, if an idea is "interesting", it is worth to be pursued and elaborated, and if an idea is "unique", it should be implemented right away, even if it looks a bit risky or a bit too bold – this means that it would catch the attention of the target market.

The MarCom for an STP strategy, specific ideas, an action plan, etc. can be developed from the "interesting" and the "unique" ideas in the table. Thus, the presented framework not only provides ideas for the MarCom of an STP, but also provides an opportunity to arrive at more creative solutions.

Below is a table Num.1 in which we try to feature all of the above elements in one system of the MarCom of an STP.

A factor	Comments, ideas, data	The Thinking Hats		U-

								I-nteresting	nique
1. Internal organizational factors	· Aaa · Bbb · Ccc	*… *…	*… *…	*… *…	*… *…	*… *…	*… *…	*… *…	*… *…
2. Data on target clients	· Aaa · Bbb · Ccc								
3. External organizational factors	· P….. · E….. · S…. · T…. · E…. · L…. · E….								

The plan

Once the best ideas – the I and the U - for MarCom for an STP strategy have been selected, the ideas can further be organized into another table, where specific tasks in implementing each of the ideas can be outlined, the timeline can be drawn, the responsible employees identified and the budgets assigned. Such table can be referred to as a strategic MarCom plan of an STP. It is feasible to plan the implementation of all the ideas in one year.

b) GOOD PRACTICES MALAGA TECHPARK

- **What is our identity**

Málaga TechPark is a hub of innovative attraction in Andalucía and Europe for advanced companies, a dynamic ecosystem that hosts all types of entities dealing with innovation. The PTA supports and promotes the growth of high-tech companies and entrepreneurs, and it is the primary location for foreign technological investment in Andalusia. The Technopolis hosts 636 companies and 20,000 employees from more than 30 nationalities.

The vision of the PTA is to promote the clusters located in the PTA in Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Big Data, Blockchain, and Cybersecurity in order to create synergies, coordinate projects and make the most of the possibilities of R&D in Malaga and in the region of Andalucía. The main goal is to support the companies working in these technologies to integrate them into application, products and services, and to encourage the technology transfer to the rest of the companies of the ecosystem and the region.

- **Vision/ ambition**

The ambition of Malaga TechPark is indeed to become the epicenter of the technological innovation and digital business in Southern Europe and to lead a change in Andalusia, rooted in talent, entrepreneurship and digital innovation. Malaga TechPark is the largest technology hub in Spain. The Technopolis is in Malaga, and Malaga is an interesting, appealing place to be. This land is full of talent, and companies notice this. Most park users are millennials and the brand of the park must respond to this, to attract and retain talent. Malaga TechPark needs a younger brand and looks like it is a place to work, but it is also a place to live. More services, more leisure spaces, more shared places and moments must be established.

- **Clients- who are they?**

Global Companies: Malaga TechPark has large multinationals, Spanish and foreign companies, as well as companies with a clear international projection.

Employees: Nearly 20,000 workers work at the PTA, with an increase of 6% from the previous year. A very notable figure which is expected to grow considerably in the coming years. Malaga TechPark contributes to 20% of the employment of the province of Malaga. It is a young population, with very good training and very demanding, who has traditionally been quite critical of some infrastructures of the park.

Local companies: A model that has obtained significant successes in the park is the local startup example that becomes a technological leader after a few years of implementation.

University community: Malaga TechPark's relationship with the University of Malaga (UMA) is fruitful and students are aware of and participate in these programs. Other training initiatives such as Dual VET programs also involve many young people. In the park there are educational buildings belonging to the UMA, ESIC Business & Marketing School, the Institute of Secondary Education Campanillas or the MIT School.

Institutions, Entities and Associations: Administrations: Public institutions are necessary allies of the objectives of Malaga TechPark. The entity's own shareholding nature involves the regional

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government and City Council in its power bodies. Associations from a wide range of fields also have weight, because of their ability to catalyze public opinion, On the other hand, opportunities for collaboration with other entities, foundations, professional colleges, counterpart parks and sectoral bodies always arise.

Citizenship. The positive image of the Technopolis which is shared by specialized audiences has not yet curdled among the local population. For the inhabitants of Málaga, Malaga TechPark is synonymous with traffic jams, and in general they have a scarce knowledge of the park.

Media: They are essential in the image perceived by the general public. Sometimes, the mere fact of being part of the critical information agenda, the political contest, and the expanded echo of real problems, have shown good signs of the erosion that can lead to a bad position in the media.

- **Are we happy with the present tenant profile?**

Among the goals of Malaga TechPark is to attract more global companies.

- **What is our ideal client?**

The ideal client for Malaga TechPark can be described as follows:

- Active Collaborators
- Involve in the design and implementation of activities in the park and the regional innovation ecosystem (events, hackathons, projects, etc.)

Although the park has various profiles of public objective (employees, companies, citizenship and a 4th: means) the ideal client could be double: on the one hand, international entrepreneurs between 30-40 years who runs a global ICT company that bases its growth from the PTA, on the other hand, local professionals between 25-35 years with high specialization in ICT.

- **What are the specific needs of the potential clients?**

The specific needs of the potential clients are:

- Lack of specific professional profiles in certain technologies such as AI, ML, Big Data or Blockchain in our region
- Needs of specific funds to invest on the creation of new projects

Among the needs of the potential customers of the park, we can include something closely related to the projection of the new brand: the need for the park to be revealed as an inspiring benchmark of innovative momentum, a talent attraction factor, an asset of value to the public.

- **How do we know about the needs of our clients?**

Primary sources

Interviews
Questionnaires
Phocused group research

Secondary sources

Reports
Media
Blogs & websites
Browsers
Competition sources

[MalagaTechPark] Target SME Workshop | 35

- **In search of new marketing (communication) tools to attract customers - list of ideas – the most innovative ones**
  - ➢ Existing synergies with the innovation ecosystem of Malaga and the region
  - ➢ Which make easier the establishment of new companies
  - ➢ Possibility of collaboration with R&D groups of the University and creation of new ideas,
  - ➢ Adaptation of the courses and masters of the University according to the human resource needs of the companies
  - ➢ Availability of high qualified talent from the University of Málaga
  - ➢ Organization of trade missions and international cooperation events that support the participation of companies
  - ➢ Available spaces, infrastructures, and specific tools machines
  - ➢ European projects
  - ➢ P2B: benefits for companies of using Blockchain to be more competitive
  - ➢ RBM: Design of new business models based of circular economy to promote the creation of new companies and start-up, creation of new business models
  - ➢ The PTA has learnt and improved from these projects
  - ➢ Available capabilities of the University
  - ➢ Our audience needs to see us as a benchmark in terms of technological leadership in the region.

c) GOOD PRACTICES TECHNOPOL

- **What is our identity**

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The core of Tehnopol brand is to unlock the potential of technology companies through empowerment, consultancy and physical space.

- **Vision/ ambition**

The purpose of Tehnopol is to support state-of-art technology entrepreneurship in Estonia and help its expansion to the world.

The vision of Tehnopol is to make Estonian economy sustainable through technology.

- **Clients – who are they**

Tehnopol's clients can be divided into two groups: real estate tenants and business support service's clients. The main focus for this project is the technology SMEs, that are active either in greentech, smart city, health tech and have the need for Tehnopol's business services. They want to experience fast growth, development and find new ways for adapting innovation in their company.

The segment has up to 100 employees and revenue of more than 100 00 euros. They are active in at least one export market and they are able to grow up to 20%.

- **Are we happy with the present client profile?**

Present profile of the customers is not perfect. In ideal the profile would combine real estate tenants and business services clients at the extent of 80% at least. Currently it is around 20%.

- **What is our ideal client?**

Ideal client is located in our Business park, uses our business services, takes part in community events and tests it's innovation services or products at Tehnopol. It was a very clear growth ambition, but at the same time the client does not have to know how to achieve that and needs external advice (from Tehnopol and it's mentors). The client is active in one of the following focus fields: green tech, health tech, smart city. The client values the community in the Tehnopol Business park and is open to innovation and cooperation projects with other companies there.

- **What are the specific needs of the potential clients?**

The primary need of the potential clients is to get practical advice that helps them to grow and achieve the goals they have in mind. Another need is the office space that meets the current needs of the company (size, price level, interior design) and a place for testing new solutions, garage/lab for prototyping. The ideal would be to get a holistic solution for meeting all the described needs

- **How do we know about the needs of our clients?**

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Tehnopol runs every year client satisfaction survey, where clients describe their needs and give feedback how well Tehnopol is meeting those needs. In addition to that each time Tehnopol gets a new business service customer, the client's goal and roadmap with the timeline is agreed. During that usually the needs are also listed.

- **In search of new marketing (communication) tools to attract customers**

The key to get new clients is to raise brand awareness and create the image that attracts the clients. Terhnopol's brand awareness among the target audience is around 70%. The main problem with Tehnopol brand is the perceived brand image – companies do not know about its business services and its value. Therefore it is important mainly to concentrate on raising the knowledge about Tehnopol business service's value proposition.

One idea is to generate the series of clips that introduce the challenges and solutions companies are facing when they want to grow.

Another idea is to create a cover of some famous pop song, that helps to raise awareness about Tehnopol's services and their practical value.

The solution Tehnopol is already using is vide podcasts and videos in its communication.

d) GOOD PRACTICES POZNAN PPNT

- **What is our identity**

PPNT's mission is knowledge and technology commercialisation, especially in the field of chemistry, physics, biotechnology and IT, employing highly educated experts and using unique and specialised infrastructure. PPNT is the only park classified as a top A scientific institution By Ministry of Science

Self financing by offering specialised services for the SME sector. PPNT has a strong connection with Adam Mickiewicz University.

Main values:

- Relationships and collaboration – creating confidence, friendship, respect and understanding the foundation for partner relationship with the clients, stakeholders and employees.
- Innovation and creativity: striving for development for ourselves and our client, we are open to change, flexible and creative, we inspire each other , and make space for individual independence.
- Professionalism: high level competences, engaging all our knowledge and energy for everything we do, we are accountable, reliable and responsible. We value clear rules.

- Prestige: we care for our credibility, value our over 20-year history and experience, we want to be appreciated and recognized among the scientist, entrepreneur and local communities. We are open for constructive criticism.

- **Vision/ambition**

The ambition of PPNT till 2025:

- The Park is the key knowledge and technology hub in the region and one of the most important actors in the national innovation system,
- sets new trends for the business support institutions,
- clients who search for support of their innovation project preferably use our offer,
- thanks to attractive service portfolio and internal synergies PPNT enables international expansion of companies and enhance their capacity to generate innovation,
- in the finances structure the income from services prevails over public grants generates profit ensuring own infrastructure and capital investments.

- **Clients – who are they**

PPNT's main target group is the SME sector with technology problems in the field of chemistry or biotechnology to solve and deep tech startups.

The ideal client is a production enterprise with a R&D department employing up to 200 people from various sectors; a company which creates new product / technology / business; a growing company launching new products to the international market.

Clients' needs should be monitored on a regular basis. PPNT uses the tools as follows:

- Annual tenants questionnaire.
- Meetings during the events.
- Innovation Coach project.
- Face to face interviews.
- Online questionnaire after the service is completed.

SME sector preferences regarding communication and marketing activities based on face to face interview with clients:

- Online activities - the vast majority of customers are in favor of online marketing especially during pandemic times (newsletter, webinars, live streaming) The point is that communication should contain targeted messages.
- 82% of clients and 71% of potential clients declare their willingness to contact a person dedicated to business contacts directly. Customers indicate that the form and quality of contact is very important to them.

Comparing the ideal client profile to present client profile it's not the perfect match. That's why PPNT needs to look for new tools for marketing and communication activities in order to attract different clients.

- **What needs to be communicated?**

PPNT main communication/branding challenge is the big amount of services and projects and too strong connections with Adam Mickiewicz University. Entrepreneurs get confused and are not sure whether the PPNT is either part of the university or business support institution. In order to change such perception different values need to be communicated:

- We solve all technological problems in the field of chemistry, biotechnology.
- High qualified, experienced experts with a scientific background.
- Quick, flexible answers and reports.
- **We have the capabilities of the university but we work like business.**
- We find sources of financing for your innovation.

How are things communicated to the target audience?

- During workshops, events, meetings
- During presentations given by our experts
- B2B meeting
- Clear style, friendly language
- Case studies (examples)
- Blogging
- Publications and comments from experts in media

The main challenge is to establish a diversified **service portfol**io for tenants and external customers and to **sell more** research services, especially in chemistry, physics, biotechnology and IT fields. The problem with communication and marketing activities of innovation agencies is too many activities oriented on many target groups. As the result IA reputation is blurring and the SME sector is quite confused in understanding the offer. In search of new marketing tools to attract customers PPNT decided to implement rebranding and choose the priority activities. Here are the main conclusions:

- Increasing the emphasis on communicating the research and scientific activities of the PPNT.
- Intensifying cooperation with teams providing research and analytical services.
- More conscious branding creation of the PPNT, through more careful filtering of content provided by individual departments.
- Creating content for the main audience, which is the SME sector.
- Continuation of image creation based on expertise, reliability and comprehensiveness.

- **In search of new marketing (communication) tools to attract customers (list of ideas)**

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The key to get new clients is to raise brand awareness and create the image (PPNT strategic goal), that attracts the clients who want to develop new technologies in the field of chemistry or seek consultancy in innovation implementation. The main problem with PPNT brand is the perceived brand image – companies do not know about its business services and its value. Therefore it is important mainly to concentrate on raising the knowledge about PPNT business service's value proposition.

- One idea is to generate case studies of successful PPNT- company cooperation.
- Organising the webinars with tailored made agenda adjusted the clients needs.
- Simplifying the communication and language.
- Emphasising business competencies and professionalism.

e) GOOD PRACTICES KAUNAS STP

- **What is our identity?**

Kaunas Science and Technology Park (Kaunas STP) helps startups and already growing tech companies to increase transnational competitiveness, consults companies on business development issues, provides innovation support services, develops innovation community and fosters innovation culture in Kaunas region. As a member of Integrated Science, Studies and Business Centre (Valley) "Santaka" Kaunas STP stimulates science and business collaboration. The Park runs business pre-acceleration program "Evolut 4.0", designed for early stage startups to develop an innovative product, increase sales and prepare for the investment phase. At present, it hosts more than 100 companies operating in the fields of IT, engineering, health technologies, social innovation, future energy, and sustainable chemistry. More than 100 professionals from Kaunas STP ICT cluster "Digital Rocket LT" are providing cutting-edge ICT services for local and international customers. Since 2019 Kaunas STP is a part of CERN Business Incubation Centre in Lithuania and supports development and application of innovative ideas outside the field of high energy physics.

Kaunas STP is a constantly growing and learning organization. Development and its effectiveness depend on communication, i. the success of any organization depends in large part on how its actions are perceived by the outside world. The vision of Kaunas STP is to reveal how the park sees itself in the context of Lithuanian and European economic development.

Kaunas STP is the Innovation Community.

The values:

- cooperation with science
- access to talents
- broad expertise range

- ➢ community spirit: team support, joint initiatives, joint leisure + learning, positive emotions while being together.

- **Vision/ambition**

To be the disseminator of the latest business knowledge and business development leader of regional and national significance and to become a strategic partner in the innovation ecosystem of Lithuania and Europe, especially in the Nordic and Baltic region.

To become a center of attraction for knowledge-intensive technological business of national significance, a development leader and a strategic partner for the participants of the Baltic Sea Region and the European innovation ecosystem.

- **Kaunas STP mission**

Kaunas STP is one of the parts of the innovation ecosystem and as an organization is ready to meet the needs of other parts of the ecosystem, as well as society. This is defined in Kaunas STP mission:

- ➢ To provide innovation support consulting services to innovative and technology-intensive economic entities in order to commercialize research results and enable them to compete successfully in global markets.
- ➢ To increase the international competitiveness of technological business by providing innovation support services of the highest competence, efficient use of innovation ecosystem resources, development of innovative business communities and development of innovation culture in Kaunas region.

- **Ambition/motto**

- ➢ We Navigate Business Globally
- ➢ We are a leader of forward-thinking, entrepreneurial teams
- ➢ The strongest deep-tech business pre-accelerator in the Baltic Sea region (from the idea to the investment)

- **Clients**

Kaunas STP main target group is **tech startups** and already growing tech companies willing to increase their transnational competitiveness, to get consultations on business development and internationalization issues.

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The **ideal client** is a deep tech startup seeking new knowledge in product and business development, active innovators community members, openly sharing ideas and opinion, communicative, open-minded and optimistic.
The community of Kaunas STP innovators is numerous, but the goal of the park is to expand the services availability and attract more external customers, therefore new means of communication and change of attitude by applying marketing tools are very necessary. A leader is one whose services and their quality speak for themselves.

- **Are we happy with the present tenant profile?**

Among the goals of Kaunas STP is to attract more external tech companies and even international ones.

- **What are the specific needs of the potential clients?**

The specific needs of the potential clients are: offices under favorable conditions, innovation services (consultations, meetings, networking, mentoring, training sessions, contacts), investment readiness programs and meetings with investors, pre-acceleration programs.

- **How do we know about the needs of our clients?**

The primary sources: online registration forms, phone calls, warm contacts, talking during coffee breaks, surveys, needs analysis, form of official complaints.
The secondary sources: media, forums, reports.

- **What needs to be communicated?**

The main communication/branding challenge of Kaunas STP is very inconsistent, congested and often inconsistent communication of the target audience. The team in the communications department is constantly thinking about how to address these challenges:

- Consistency: Go with the flow
- Channel differentiation
- Languages (LT and ENG)
- GDPR and photo/video issues
- Project communication

Information that is relevant to Kaunas STP tenants and external clients often overlaps with publicity information for various projects, which is not always relevant to technology start-ups. Such an abundance of information makes the park companies accustomed to ignoring the information both on the institution's website and on social networks, therefore they get lost, they do not have access to very important and valuable information. Accordingly, communication tools need to be reviewed, segmented and / or new ways to improve internal and external communication of the science park need to be found.

- **How are things communicated to the target audience?**

  - Email pool (newsletters)
  - Website
  - Articles (not blogging, introduction of startups' highlights, general information about national and international innovation support initiative)
  - Events
  - New section alumni quotes
  - Social media
  - Social media content issues (Posts about people and teams working in the community; Posts about
  - emerging innovation; Records of events; Advertising of relevant events organized by other partners / institutions)
  - Public media outlets: Communication via emails + press releases; new market debuts + products/services (B2C); releases + investments + connections with global corporate giants
  - Expert comments / the track of science and technology sector
  - Interviews with stakeholders

- **In search of new marketing (communication) tools to attract customers**

In order to attract new customers, it is very important to increase the awareness of Kaunas STP, to create a strong brand that would reflect leadership, quality in business support and growth services. We want the main motto we communicate, i.e. "We navigate business globally" - to be clear, understandable and recognizable not only in Lithuania, but also in the Baltic Sea region.

In order to attract new customers, we need to know very clearly who we are, why we are and what we offer to the customer. Because the current situation of awareness of Kaunas STP services is not satisfactory. We are recognized, but the package of existing services is not clear enough, communicated without strategic view. The external communication itself is multi-layered, congested, and often loses its essence, reaching the target audience to an insufficient extent. So the first step before laying down new communication steps and applying, integrating new tools is to review and prioritize the existing package of the services we provide to tech companies.

Testing the presented MarCom methodology Kaunas STP team has dropped a list of potential marketing communications' tools ideas on how to reach and attract new clients. Below we have listed the most innovative ones:

- Podcast creation. Have a podcast series „Start it up!“ – once per week update the latest issues on national startup ecosystems and international initiatives that matter.

- Press releases. The importance of networking and startup communities – Why being in a group of ambitious young businesses may kick off your own idea.
- Intensified activities in global startup platforms such as Startup Includer and F6S.
- Open day to Science Park (one day per month full day visitors).
- Launch the YouTube channel of Kaunas STP: “Transform the innovation from idea to the real money”.
- Short Start-up Manual / instruction (developed by Kaunas STP).
- Kids book (one age group: 7-10 years old, the other for youth: 12-18 years old). To write a story about a “small start-up: a boy named Ben” who had an idea, but did not know how to realize it. The story should be about the braveness to do something new and invent something. It should be edited and published in the bookstores, at schools (in school libraries) as a Kaunas Science and Technology Park book line for kids and youth.
- Technology demonstration center B to B evenings (events): “Show me what you created & where you struggle”. Gather the start-ups from the Science park from different clusters and make the thematically expositions of the products (med tech, robotics....).
- Yearbook/calendar for public bookstores – anyone interested could buy it and apart from the primary usage as a planner, it provides information about Kaunas STP innovation community.
- Free postcards in touristic spots and coffee shops – the one that look great and express the visual identity of Kaunas STP and the vibe of the startup community.

III. New communication and marketing TOOLS

1. Need to better target SME support actions. Canvas Value Proposition and communication strategy

New communication and marketing tools enable agencies to do effective and meaningful communication and achieve the specific marketing and communication related goals.

Value Proposition Canva is one of the tools, that helps to understand better target audience’s profile (gains, pains and jobs) and on other hand gives insight that is useful designing the service in a way that it is really useful to the target audience. In addition, it gives understanding what really matters to them and therefore helps to address it through the marketing and communication activities.

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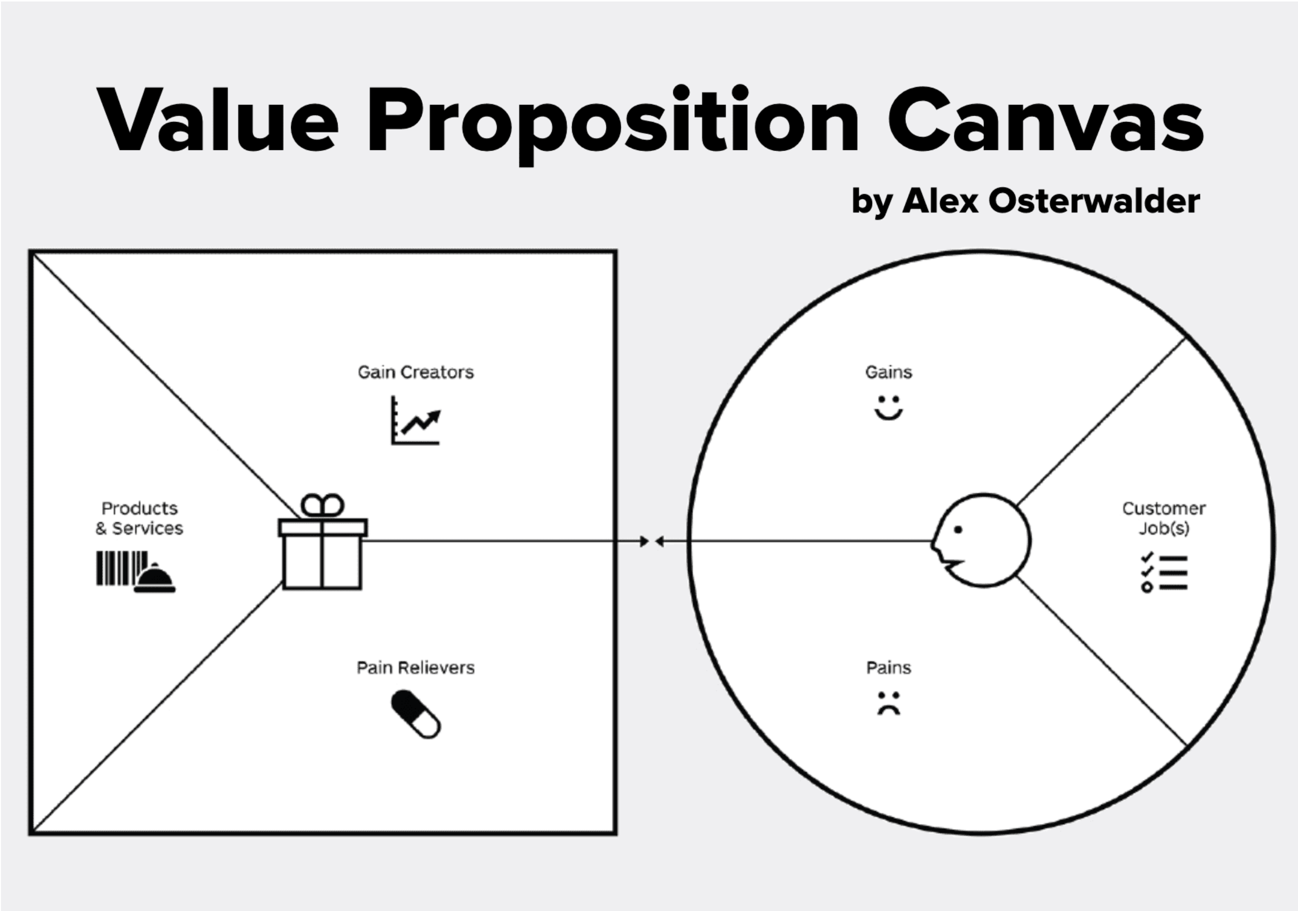


The main aim of the TargetSME European project is to increase the agencies' capacity and efficiency in the field of seeking new ways to attract innovative SMEs by using emerging communication and marketing tools and facilitating interaction and partnerships with various actors of the innovation ecosystem.

Marketing communication is a process in which numerous integrated tools are used to communicate with the target audiences. Marketing communication is indeed a combination of diversified programs and various communication tools to increase the sales cycle.

A strategic planning workflow has been defined for Innovation Agencies, to help them to map the activities necessary for the design and execution of their communication strategy toward their public objectives. These fives steps are described next:

PPNT Poznan Science and Technology Park
Málaga TechPark; Parque Tecnológico de Andalucía
Kaunas Science and Technology Park
Tehnopol

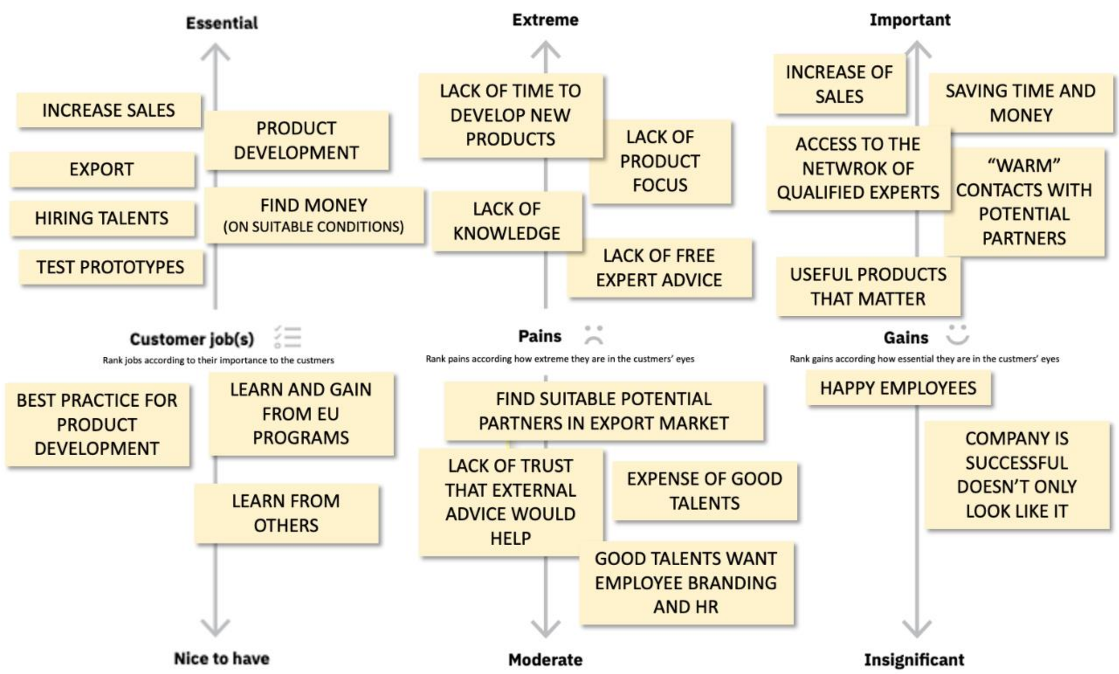
a) The example of Tehnopol

- **Finding customer's jobs, pains and gains.**

Customer jobs: As Estonian market is rather small, the success requires typically to come out with outstanding product or service, that is improved regularly and is sold in several other markets as well. Export is difficult, but it is needed for succeeding. Another challenge is to find good talents, as Estonia is an e-country and there is huge competition over tech experts, companies invest into their employee branding and offices and work conditions. Another challenge is to find money for service design.

Customer pains: Estonians have problem with trust and therefore it is difficult to ask for external advice and as often the knowledge is low how to scale the business, launch new services and products and grow or enter to the export market. Therefore the first obstacle is to admit, that external help is needed. Then second step is finding as cheap as possible ways to solve the problem. Another challenge is keeping the focus on product and improve it in regular basis. It is often challenging to find suitable business partners on export markets.

Customer gains: the best thing that comes out from solving the pains and getting the jobs done is the increase in sales, saving time and money and finding right contacts from export markets. And also as a result the customer gains a really useful product or service that is meaningful to their customers. Company is really successful and it builds an attractive brand that employees love.



Drawing from Tallinn workshop, Tehnopol's SME client profile.

2. Designing product around customers' profile

After analysing customers profile, Tehnopol's business consulting service was taken into pieces and reassembled around the clients' jobs, gains and pains.

Gain creators

The main gains SMEs desire is advice from trustful source, contacts with potential partners, efficiency in time management and optimising costs. Tehnopol will organize a set of practical and inspiring events, that enable the customers to create contacts with potential partners, exchange experiences with each other. In addition, clients will get the understanding, who are the experts in the field of business development and get some free consultation sessions from mentors.

Pain relievers

The main pains that needs to be addressed are lack of knowledge, product focus and time for product development. Also, the high expense of useful expert advice. Tehnopol has large network of experts and through that the mentoring sessions will be provided, also useful EU projects, that generate opportunities to Estonian companies will be delivered to relieve the pains of SME-s. Tehnopol will also organize free trainings and events, where trustful atmosphere enables to exchange true experiences.

Product and Services

For running a successful SME, the company needs to increase sales, have useful, desired and working products or services, bigger market (than Estonia can offer), they need good talents and funding for their activities. To achieve all that Tehnopol has designed holistic "SME empowering program". After closing the contract, key mentor will audit SME to agree on the current situation, challenges and set the goals for the upcoming co-operation period (it may differ from launching a new product, growing the company's revenue up to entering a new export market). They will agree on the plan how to achieve the set goal. In addition to that company will have access to Tehnopol's free community and matchmaking events as well as trainings. They can use Tehnopol's communication channels (on agreed extent) and get the access to specific contacts they need for achieving the agreed goal.

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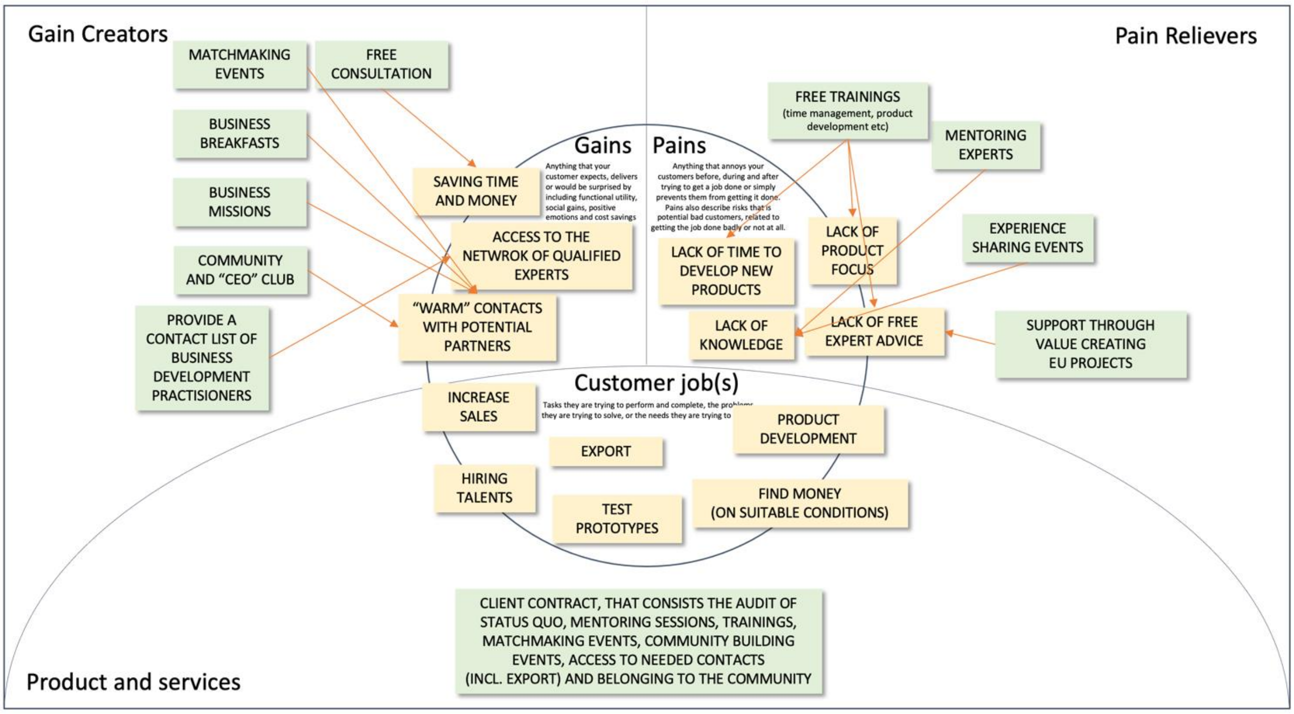
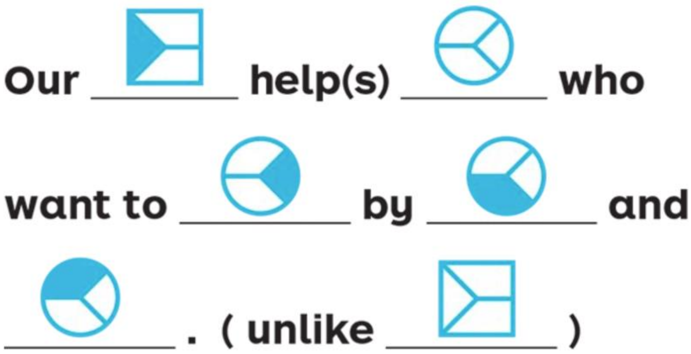


Drawing from Tallinn workshop, Tehnopol's Value Proposition Canvas for SMEs.

- **Phrasing Value Proposition Template**

Addition tool that the agencies learned was Value Proposition Template, that sums all the above into one "pitchable" sentence. It's a great way to quickly shape alternative directions to the value proposition. It forces to pinpoint how exactly the value is created.



- **Tehnopol's example**

Our **business empowering program** helps **technology SMEs** who want to **increase sales** by **giving advice through mentors** and **increasing the know-how** and **enlarge network contacts through practical events.**

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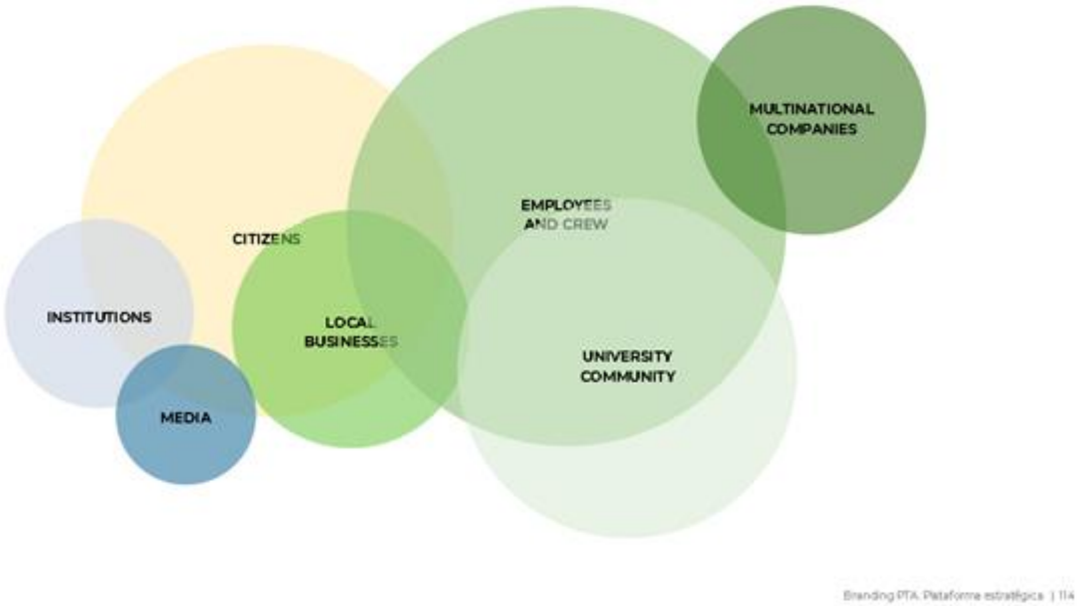
The Value Proposition Canvas as a tool is very practical and forces to analyse not only what the agency can offer, but instead puts the client in the middle and forces to build the service around the client. The tool is not too complicated, and it is possible to understand it and find the answers during half-day workshop.

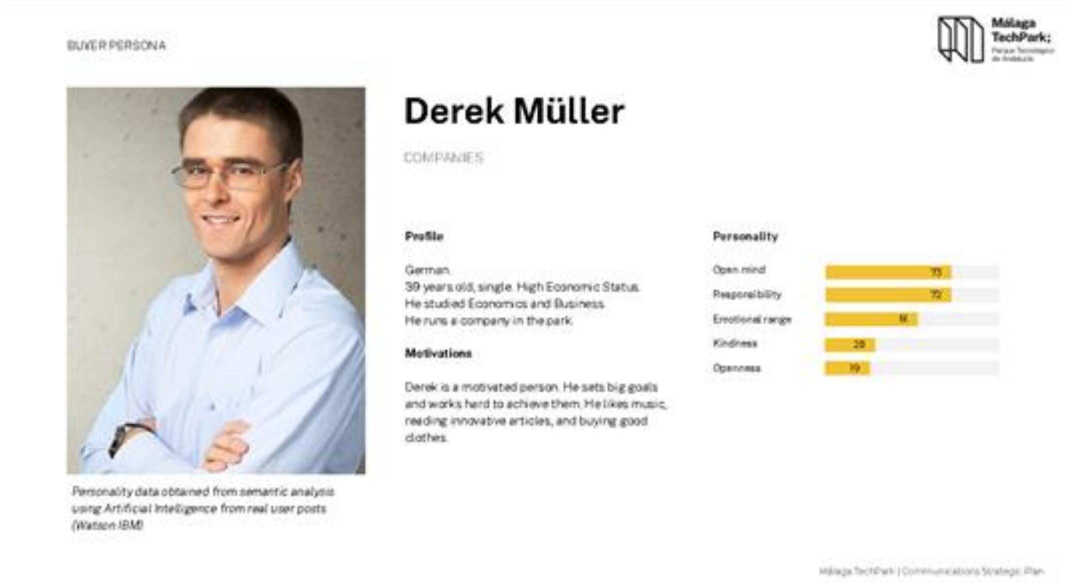
a) The example of Malaga TechPark and PPNT Poznan

- **TARGET AUDIENCE**



- **BUYER PERSONA**

A buyer persona is a fictional characterization of the ideal customer that is based on the customer data and market research. Each buyer persona represents a specific customer segment of the Innovation Agency. Buyer persona are created from data on the customer demographics, goals, fears, motivations, behaviour, preferences…. See some examples next of buyer personas defined for the Malaga TechPark:



For more information on the definition of the target groups, you may have a look at the section 2 of the present document: “The way of precise defining target groups. Design process – personas and needs”.

- Topics

The **main trends** on the ecosystem where the Innovation Agency is located should be analysed and defined. Some proposals of subjects are available below:

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- Economic Information
- Social Data
- Relevant information about the city where the Innovation Agency is located
- Business Activities
- R&D&i Initiatives
- Good practices and relevant use cases
- Ecosystem and networking
- Investment
- Financing tools and programs
- International Cooperation

See next some examples of topics from the Malaga TechPark:

Topics we talk about of the Innovation Agency should be defined as well, such as:

- ➢ Members of the Innovation Agency
- ➢ Values of the Innovation Agency
- ➢ Strategy of the Innovation Agency
- ➢ Activities of the Innovation Agency
- ➢ Grant and Financing Programs of the Innovation Agency

- **Channels**

Social media platforms are means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. These channels help to raise brand awareness, engage people, acquire new customers, and increase conversions. The ecosystem scheme and the section next show to the Innovation Agencies some advice to make an efficient use of these platforms.

- **Ecosystem scheme**

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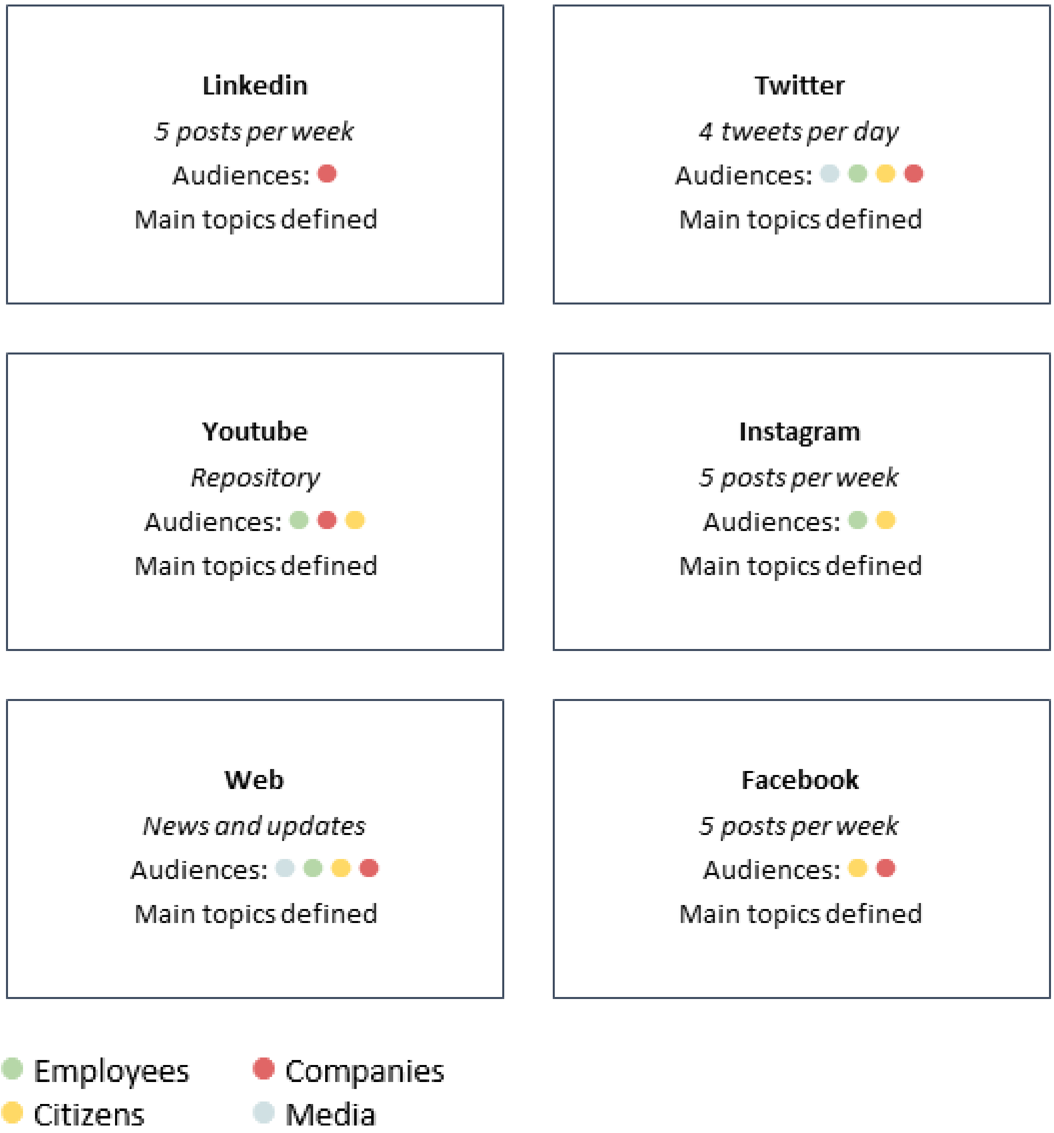

TWITTER: Twitter is a service for friends, family, and coworkers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent messages. People post Tweets, which may contain photos, videos, links, and text.

- **News**
- **Conversation and participation**
- **Lists**. Very useful tool for search for interaction

- Synergies with other institutions's profiles, media and companies
- **Information sources**: internal and external
- **Posting frequency**: 4 tweets per day
- Use conversation threads for coverage
- Use the **topics** defined by the Innovation Agency
- Use of Hashtags

FACEBOOK: Facebook is a social networking site that makes it easy for you to connect and share with family and friends online.

- **Audience:** Borad local audience
- **Posting frequency**: 5 posts per week
- **Sources**: internal
- Use the **topics** defined by the Innovation Agency

LINKEDIN: LinkedIn is an online platform that connects the world's professionals. ... A complete LinkedIn profile will summarize your professional experience to your connections, current and future employers, and recruiters. Through your profile, you can showcase your professional life, milestones, skills and interests.

- **Posting frequency**: 5 posts per week
- **Sources**: internal source in a broad sense. Prioritise internal and corporate content whenever possible
- Use the **topics** defined by the Innovation Agency
- Creation of groups on strategic technological issues / clusters

YOUTUBE: YouTube is an online video-sharing platform that allows users to upload, view, rate, share, add to playlists, report, comment on videos, and subscribe to other users.

- Repository of videos
- Playlists based on the topics defined by the Innovation Agency

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INSTAGRAM: Instagram is a free photo and video sharing app available on iPhone and Android. People can upload photos or videos to our service and share them with their followers or with a select group of friends. They can also view, comment and like posts shared by their friends on Instagram.

INNOVATION AGENCY WEBSITE: Having a website and online presence strategy allows the Innovation Agencies to market their activities online, and it's also important because it helps to establish credibility.

- **Brand style**

Brand guidelines, also known as a brand style guide, govern the composition, design, and general look-and-feel of a company's branding. Brand guidelines can dictate the content of a logo, blog, website, advertisement, and similar marketing collateral. It is important for the Innovation Agencies to consider the following aspects of the brand style:

- **Brand voice**

The brand voice of the Innovation Agency must inspire:

- Security/Authority
- Relevance/Credibility
- Positivity/Optimism
- Closeness/Freshness

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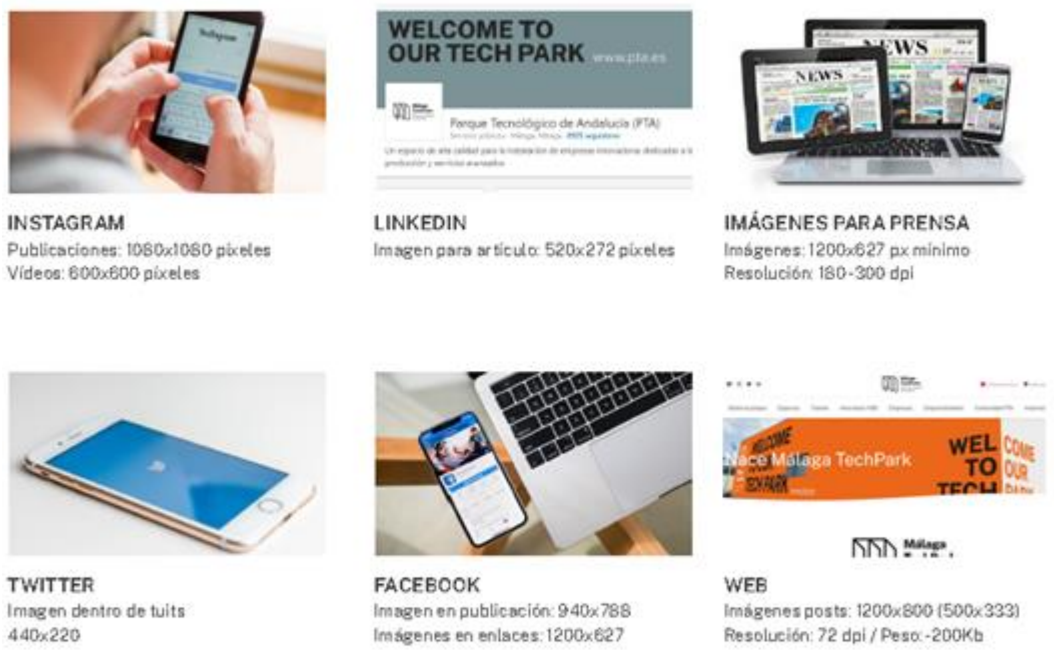
- **Style guideline**

Linkedin	**Twitter**
- "We talk about us to you" - 2-3 lines per post - Always mentions naturally - Hashtags of they are good	- "We talk about us to you" - About 140 characters - Always with optimized image - From 1 to 3 hashtags - Mentions naturally whenever possible

Instagram	**Facebook**
- "We talk about us to you" - About 300 - 500 characters - Always with optimized image - 3 to 5 hashtags at least - Mentions naturally whenever possible - Diversity of formats offered by Instagram (instagram stories, IGTV, highlights)	- "We talk about us to you" - 3-5 lines per post - Always mentions naturally

- **Pictures guidelines**

Social media marketing is constantly evolving, and images and videos continue to be the driver for brand identity and engagement, and with this, comes a continuous shift in the way marketers and consumers alike form their relationship with social media. From new platform guidelines to new capabilities, changes in influencer marketing and of course the COVID 19 pandemic, the ways in which content on social media is produced and marketed, as well as the ways in which the audience consumes the content is adjusting to the signs of the time. Indeed, the visual content of the Innovation Agencies should do so. Next you will find some tips about each social media.



- **Brand style**

It's important for the Innovation Agency to prepare a detailed chronogram of communication activities for each day of the week, and for several months.

EXAMPLE MONTH 1:

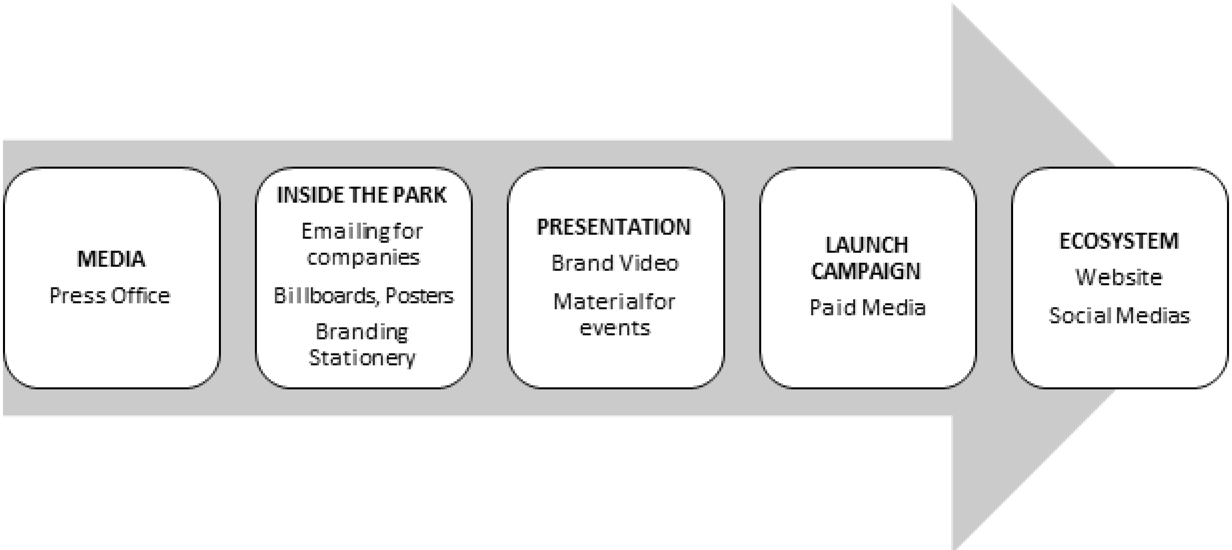
WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1-6	Investment	Innovation Agency X	Companies	Good practices	Lifestyle		
7-13	International Networks	RRHH Tendencies	Talent Focus	Companies	Financing programs		
14-20	Innovation Agency Members	Entrepreneurship-Startups	Technological services	International Cooperation	Industrial Property		

21-27	Financing Program	RRHH Tendencies	Lifestyle: green areas	Cybersecurit y	Companies		

- **ACTIONS FOR A NEW BRAND**

In the framework of the implementation of the TargetSME project, two partners, the Malaga TechPark and Poznan Science and Technology Park, have applied the results of the project for the analysis and design of a new brand for these parks, which has been launched in October 2020.

Indeed, the present section focuses on the road map the Innovation Agencies that decide to change their brand should follow to officially launch their brand.



- **Press /Media**

Press and Media are powerful means to share relevant information with others. For the official launch of the new brand, the Innovation agencies should take into account the following procedure:

PRESS OFFICE

- Press Call
- Press Conference/Presentation
- Photo coverage
- Press release
- Send to media (news, photos, video)

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MATERIAL FOR EVENTS

- 2 photocalls
- 4 rollups
- Brand dossier
- Video for presentation

- Within the innovation agency community

Frequently, the members of an ecosystem are not aware of the achievements of their participants. It is indeed crucial for the Innovation Agencies to inform them and make them feel part of the system. Next some suggestions of dissemination within the innovation community:

- Emails to members
  - Presentation of the new brand
  - Opinion Surveys
  - Brand material for easy use
  - Next: to be defined
- Billboards, posters
- Branding stationary
  - Cards
  - Folders
  - Envelops
  - Bags
  - Rollups
- Launch campaigns

External marketing efforts are essential components of revenue growth and brand awareness. Meanwhile owned media is a website, blog or other web entity that the Innovation Agency control, Paid media, on the other hand, is closer to traditional marketing, whereby the Innovation Agency pay a third party to broadcast its message to other individuals.

PAID MEDIA

- Channels
  - Google Ads (Search and display)
  - Facebooks Ads
  - Twitter Ads

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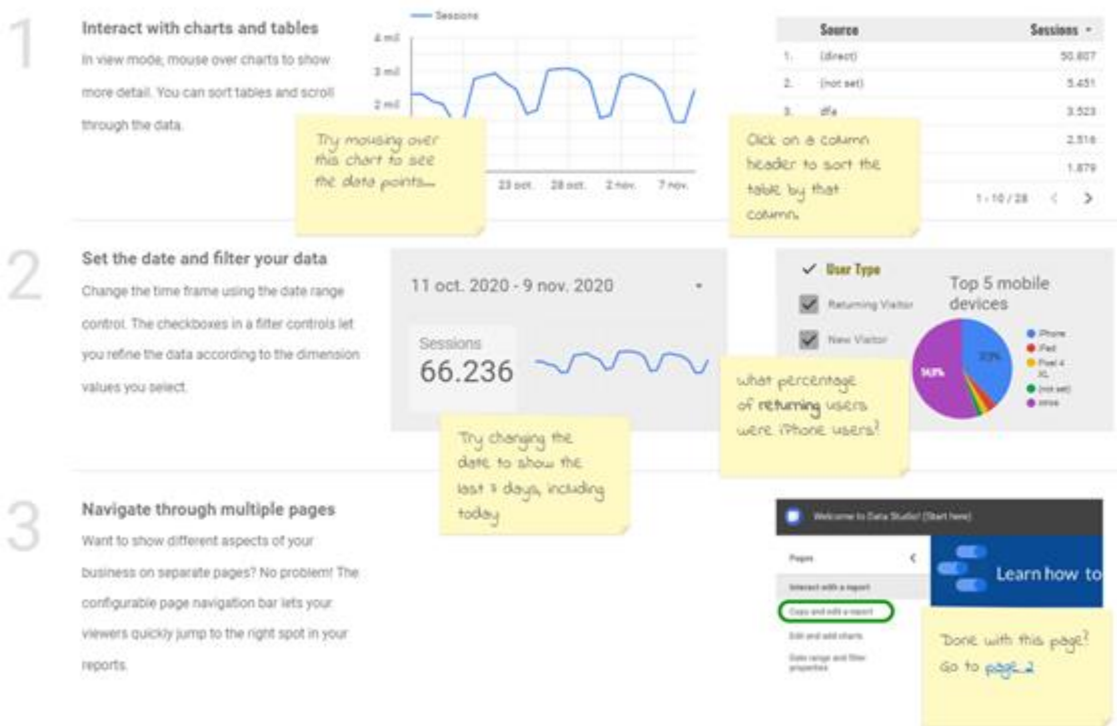
- Objective
    - Visibility

- Target
    - Local companies
    - Employees
    - Geographic segmentation
    - Age
    - Professional profile : Entrepreneurs, Directors, Managers…
    - Interest : Technology, Innovation, ICT

- **Reporting**

The use of a dynamic dashboard such as **Google Data Studio** that updates automatically daily allows the Innovation Agencies to measure in real time **KPI's** such as impressions, interactions, engagement rate and likes.

Google Data Studio (GDS) is a great, free data visualization tool that lets the Innovation Agency build interactive dashboards, and customized, beautiful reporting.



Poznan Science and Technology Park
Málaga TechPark; Parque Tecnológico de Andalucía
Kaunas Science and Technology Park
Tehnopol

From [tutorial Data Studio]

Similar platforms and dashboards such as Klipfolio, Databox or Kibana are also available online to perform the report activity.

3. How to facilitate interaction and partnerships between the innovation ecosystem actors

One of the expected impacts of the peer learning foreseen within the Innosup-5 call (H2020) is that the results obtained in the project are taken up by national and regional innovation support programmes, including those co-financed by European Structural and Investment Funds.

The support of a wide range of actors (including technical, financial and political support from local, national and international entities) across the value chain is essential to successfully progress. To do so, interaction and partnerships with various actors of the innovation ecosystem must be facilitated. Several methodologies can be designed and implemented to reach this objective, which are going to be described next:

MODELS OF INNOVATION INTERACTION AND PARTNERSHIPS :

Several models of interaction are proposed next based on the experiences gathered in the different regions participating in the project and the simple acknowledgement that what most is needed is the human abilities to collaborate. We could call them innovation communities, working groups of innovation, the possibilities are broad, what is important is the concept, to work jointly to add values and reach concrete results.

Living labs and Open Innovation: as defined by the European Commission, living Labs operate as intermediaries among cities, regions, firms, third sector and research organisations as well as citizens for joint value co-creation, rapid prototyping or validation to scale up and speed up innovation and businesses. One of the most significant characteristics of living labs is that they are open-innovation networks. Living labs offer a research “think-tank” and innovation platform, which can help their members to apply user-driven innovation practices.

Local and regional Innovation Clusters: Innovation clusters are geographically localized groups of collaborating companies and organizations, which enjoy a highly developed pattern of collaboration, associated with a triple-helix model, a collaboration between different types of networked institutional actors, namely companies, research centers and authorities. Innovation clusters constitute a special

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variety of innovation ecosystems, in which triple helix interactions enable unique economic effects of innovation synergy, or co-creation of innovative goods and services on a continual basis.

ACTORS TO CONNECT:

You will find next a open list of the different potential stakeholders in an effective innovation ecosystem:

- Research Institutions
- Coworking spaces, incubators and accelerators
- Angel Investors and Venture Capitals
- local, regional, national and european Governments
- Civil Society Organizations
- Development Agencies
- Startups and companies
- Chambers of Commerce
- Economic development bodies
- Education and support organisations
- Industry / technology communities
- Industry associations and peak bodies
- Innovation hubs
- Large corporations and multinationals
- Media
- NGOs and Community Groups

ACTIVITIES TO BE PERFORMED:

- **Knowledge transfer** - linking innovative solutions and economic actors searching for solutions, linking start-up companies and large companies, providing a neutral space for interaction between various parties to create innovations, delivering scientific knowledge to end users;
- **Organization of cooperation between science and industry** - supporting and coordinating cooperation between economic actors in the innovation system; providing opportunities for partners search to implement joint projects, as well as for search of necessary resources;
- **Coordination of demand** - providing the interaction between end users and enterprises;
- Specification of supply and providing more detailed information about the needs and requirements of users of innovations;
- **Knowledge production and collaboration** - uniting knowledge of all interested parties in the innovation market; creating internal knowledge; transferring specialized knowledge;
- **Mobilization of scientific research**;
- **Forecasting** - establishing consistency between the ongoing research and the needs of the real economy; analyzing foreseeable technological trends and developments;

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IV. Recommendations for Innovation Agencies and strategic actors

Innovation agencies are an important part of the ecosystem supporting entrepreneurs development. Demanding policies for growth and expansion require great recognition to attract new business partners, employees, economic and financial resources. They are institutions with different activities with very specific needs and public relationships. Crisis periods, decreasing public sector support of innovation agencies and new market challenges are creating a constant incentive for the STP managers to look for the new funding mechanisms and operational models, including effective communication and marketing activities. Therefore, the actions of communication and marketing are the key to attracting new clients and retaining existing ones with the special focus on the SME sector. Here are the recommendations after peer learning within the TargetSME project:

- Innovation agencies should prepare and manage effective programme oriented towards their professionalization/ raising competences and at the same time avoid over-loading IA staff with training courses, finding balance between fulfilling their daily operations (mainly providing to companies services which are already part of their portfolio) and gaining new competences, developing new services.
- Innovation agencies should continue to convince businesses and academia that they are not just another bureaucratic institution, which function as simply as the acquisition of budget funds for some projects which are not necessarily aimed at the stimulation of innovation processes and the creation of entrepreneurial relationships in the cooperative system (clusters and networks).
- Innovation agencies should keep using effective ways of promoting their services among target groups. The new ideas on how to stimulate/organise a pro-active approach of innovation agencies towards their clients should be generated on a regular basis. Any solutions relating to definition of the target group and identification of potentially innovative companies as well as start-ups are of interest.
- Policy makers should cooperate with innovation agencies on a regular basis as they know the needs of the entrepreneurs, their gains, pains and barriers of development. The policy changes and new tools should be based on all the information from IA experts and conducted researches and then implemented.
- All the innovation agencies should pay more attention to building brand awareness. The main problem is the reputation among SME enterprises. The IAs are not perceived as business institutions with specialised services supporting business development. They are more associated with public administration or universities whose values proposition is completely different from business values. That's why communication strategy is extremely important in a proactive approach towards the business sector, including SMEs.

- In professional innovation agency, communication strategy is developed, goals are defined and based on this marketing campaigns are organized. The efforts to promote a specific goal, such as raising awareness of the brand or specific services capturing positive customer feedback or beneficiary acquisition. AI aims to reach clients in a variety of ways and involve a combination of different available channels and tools such as: media, newsletters, print materials, online marketing, social media, event marketing, influencer marketing. Successful campaigns tend to be carefully planned, focused on details, good quality visuals, and execution, rather than ad hoc activities. Planning a marketing campaign starts with understanding clients' needs and ends with details such as tailor made messages.
- The constant communication of the innovation agencies activities and success stories to the key stakeholders group is very crucial. It will be important for this action to identify the individual stakeholders' needs and most desired effects of the IA activities. Then the value proposition for each stakeholder (both internal as well as external ones) should be built. The next point is the focus on enhancing customer relationship management in order to be more perceived as the professionals, not only non-commercial or EU project oriented institution. It will be important as well as to acquire new customers through non-profit activities and encouraging commercial clients to use the non-profit services. To achieve the expected results, this action needs to be analysed on a regular basis. The important tool of this action is CRM, that lets for monitoring of the process and effects of cooperation with customers.
- Different cases of innovation agencies' branding strategies share the idea that a well-structured and consistent communication strategy definitely helps them to perform better. IAs should be recognized for their uniqueness and they also should be able to attract external interest and resources such as skilled people and capital, and to mobilise local actors and potential clients. A good example of effective promotion for a park is joint activities with the stakeholders (events organised together, social media, press and television). Joint promotion of the agency and the other innovation ecosystem actors results in synergy for the parties, enhances communication and the ability to compete on the market.
- There are many tools and elements for branding such as: name, logo advertising PR, internal communication, the value of brand, employees' motivation, knowledge management, relations with clients, leadership, trainings, HR management, environment. Brand should clearly define, especially in innovation agency, what makes you different, what you offer, why you're doing it and how you're going to present it. Very interesting about IAs is their sophisticated "personality". There are different target groups - students, startups, SMEs, scientists, corporations, local authorities. The management board might be confused with the way how to present communication – the tone, language and design. For sure it should be "smart." Communication strategy should focus on creating compelling content on their communication channels in order to increase the satisfaction of existing customers and attract new ones.

Effective communication does not happen by accident. The key to effective communications is planning. Though communication often have had an important function to play in being in a responsive or reactive posture, proactive communication generates more impact at less cost and less risk to the extent that it is planned.

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