



Facilitating international collaborations beyond academia

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A quick introduction

- Cross-sector network with mission to build partnerships
- Members are all actors; large and small co.s, universities, RDAs, networks and associations, consultancies....
- Individual members free – Corporates pay from €500
- Why were we founded?
 - Significant barriers to biotech cooperation
 - THE route to successful exploitation
 - Between organisation types is THE challenge

What do we do?

- Practical approach to building collaborations
- Use a mechanism that focuses the mind on the opportunities rather than the barriers
- Money and deadlines the most effective!
- Biotechnology Funding Hub:
 - Track international R&D funding opportunities open to SMEs
 - Build international partnerships around market-facing technologies
 - Universities, large co.s, small co.s

Where do we look?

- FP7/Horizon 2020
- Innovative Medicines Initiative
- EraNets
- EuroTransBio
- Eurostars
- NIH (US)
- Department of Defense (US)

We will look at ANYTHING which is a tool to build a partnership

What have we done?

- Last FP7 deadline in health
 - 8 international collaborations created (50 organisations, almost 50% SMEs)
 - All partnerships had SMEs and universities as equal partners
 - SMEs drove the market pathway with their own technology
 - Universities created the innovative science to accelerate SME technology
 - Both winners – both engaged with process

Why does it work?

- Start with the science and business
- Engage the researchers directly
- Once talking around science – all cultural barriers dropped; amazing common ground
- Not about licensing or channelling through TTOs – about great scientific partnerships that create a genuinely ‘useable’ result
- Partnerships continue, whether proposal funded or not

How do we facilitate?

- My job is to be the neutral platform – a critical position
- Long experience of project and proposal development
- Know where the pitfalls are and avoid from the start
- Know and manage cultural differences
- Know when a partner is likely to be productive
- Build an environment of trust
- Give them a structure of work so they reach the deadline with a good proposal
- Give impartial and constructive advice – don't let the egos rule the day or you fail
- If you have a productive team – you have a great partnership

Where do we find partners?

- Start with our Corporate Members – they are proactive and joined because they want to create partnerships
- Find opportunities that suit their strategy or technology
- Go to the rest of the network to find the partners that they need
 - Directly - through partner calls, personal recommendations
 - Indirectly – through funding hub partners, LinkedIn

Universities in building partnerships

When we start with universities:

- Lack of awareness of non-academic organisations
- Fear of different cultures – boogie men of business
- No common ground – conferences, networks
- Lack of incentive or pressure to collaborate outside comfort zone

After proposal development:

- Know where to look
- Know their value to external organisations
- Driven by the researcher and supported by the university

Recommendations to Rectors

- Don't start with the 'structures' that might hinder collaborations
- Start with the researchers – they MUST be the driver
- Get them into new networks and environments
- Start with the opportunities – reward and incentivise their participation in new environments

For the facilitators – TTOs, business liaison offices:

- The best ones are those that come and find me, are enthusiastic, see the opportunities, not the contracts, connected with their researchers, will drive a process – hard to find but worth their weight in gold. They don't need industry experience but it helps.