

ECS Brokerage Event 2021

Looking to opportunities in a year of new funding programmes

Although online this year, the ECS Brokerage Event 2021, 12-13 January, retained much of its familiar format. This annual get-together for the ECS community to explore partnership opportunities began with plenary sessions, followed by project and SME pitches and the all-important breakout sessions to discuss projects with existing and potential partners. In place of the usual exhibition, the [ECS Collaboration Tool](#) website showcased posters and project profiles, as well as providing a partner search and messaging boards. (Note, the Tool is available year-round, not just at the event itself.)

Horizon Europe, ECSEL and EUREKA – a time of change

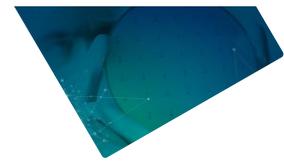
The event format may have been familiar, but this is a year of new beginnings in the European ECS Research, Development & Innovation (RD&I) funding landscape, explained Caroline Bedran, Director General of AENEAS, in her opening presentation.

The ECSEL Joint Undertaking, 2014-2020, has seen its final calls. Its successor the Key Digital Technologies (KDT) Joint Undertaking, part of Horizon Europe (HE) the EU's next 7-year R&I funding programme, is still being finalised. However, first calls should be launched in Q3 of this year, said Ms Bedran. She noted that the final PENTA and EURIPIDES² call also falls this year. A new EUREKA Cluster Programme (ECP) will start on 1st July 2021, including a new ECS Cluster currently being prepared by AENEAS, AETEMIS-IA and EPoSS.

Horizon Europe targets impact linked to policy goals

Introducing Horizon Europe (HE), Francisco Ibanez of DG Connect, highlighted a number of 'novelties' including a European Innovation Council (EIC), which will support breakthrough innovation with a focus on SMEs, covering early technology through to scaling up. Another HE novelty is five 'R&I Missions': portfolios of actions based on societal and citizen's needs with measurable goals, set timeframes and clear impact.

'Impact' is central to HE, said Mr Ibanez, noting that the public-private partnership model had proven its value, and ECSEL's tri-partite was 'clearly a winning approach'. HE will seek to make such partnership even more effective. It aims to extend participation and make Europe more innovative and competitive backed by the ambition of increasing European R&I spending to levels similar to the USA, Japan and China.



New partnership clusters and interlinkage

Based on learning from Horizon 2020, HE will focus on fewer and better-defined partnerships based on common coherent criteria, said Mr Ibanez. They will involve more actors, support EU policies and deliver higher impact, as well as being time-limited and phased out when the impact is achieved.

Within the new HE partnership clusters, 'Digital, Industry and Space' will be key for the ECS Community, especially Key Digital Technologies (KDT). However, "this is not ECSEL 2," stressed Mr Ibanez. Instead, it will expand on ECSEL's achievements and extend to include integrated photonics and higher layer software. The Commission will also encourage 'interlinkage' with other areas such as High Performance Computing, Smart Networks and Services, and AI, data and robotics. In addition, HE work programmes will be designed around 'Destinations' that link R&I to policy, so calls and topics will reflect Europe's drive to competitiveness and long-term socio-economic needs.

In closing, Mr Ibanez encouraged participants to explore the Commission's [Funding & Tender Opportunities](#) website and the [Horizon Dashboard](#). And he stressed the importance of partnership: "Industry, Member States and the European Commission each have their own ways of working, but we share a common interest – to make Europe a global player in digital technologies."

PENTA and EURIPIDES2

Next, Peter Connock of AENEAS, presented the final 2021 [PENTA and EURIPIDES²](#) Call (deadline for Project Outline submission 26th February). He insisted on the importance of demonstrating a 'clear route to impact and growth' and noted that projects must now indicate how they contribute to 'sustainability'. He also added that the EUREKA Clusters will jointly launch two new thematic calls in Q1 2021: Technology Driven Green Transition and AI 2 (following on from AI 1 in 2020).

ECS SRIA 2021

Elizabeth Steinmetz of EPoSS, Patrick Pype of ARTEMIS-IA and Patrick Cogez of AENEAS, introduced the final version of the [ECS SRIA](#), published that morning. The ECS SRIA is a bottom-up R&I agenda, developed jointly by the three Industry Associations, which provides the basis for the new KDT SRIA and EUREKA Clusters such as EURIPIDES² and PENTA.

Successful submissions: push state-of-the-art forward!

Day two was largely devoted to SME pitches and breakout sessions. However, it began with an entertaining presentation on how to submit a successful PENTA/EURIPIDES² project proposal. Besides ensuring the project meets national authority and EUREKA criteria, the team recommended grabbing the technical experts' attention with a short, clear story of how your project will make a real difference beyond current state-of-the-art – make it 'a thriller' they urged.

With this upbeat outlook, the ECS Brokerage Event 2021 showed that ECS community is eager to support Europe in reaching its social and economic goals, even in these truly challenging times.



About AENEAS: <https://aeneas-office.org>

AENEAS is an Industry Association, established in 2006. The purpose of the association is to promote Research, Development and Innovation (RD&I) in order to strengthen the competitiveness of European industry across the complete Electronics Components and Systems (ECS) value chain. AENEAS provides unparalleled networking opportunities, policy influence & supported access to funding to all types of RD&I participants in the field of micro and nanoelectronics enabled components and systems, and its applications. Partner in ECSEL JU, AENEAS is also operating the EUREKA funded Clusters PENTA and EURIPIDES².