Message from our Chairwoman

ITEA aims to create impactful economic and societal results to enable growth through innovation by collaboration. This is only possible by building on futuristic ideas and needs that are aligned with realistic environmental conditions, just as in natural evolution. ITEA 4 has been designed on the basis of the same principle, with continuous support and feedback from its stakeholders: the ITEA Community and ITEA Public Authorities. Thanks to this support, ITEA 4 (as a Eureka Cluster on software innovation) was born in 2021 within the concept of the new innovation instrument of Eureka, the Eureka Clusters Programme (ECP).

In 2021, ITEA mainly focused on three topics:
> Continuing the firm focus on creating impact through ITEA projects.
> Preparing and delivering the first actions of ITEA 4.
> Supporting the design, preparation and delivery of the first actions of the ECP.

In 2021, four new Impact stories were published by ITEA and these projects had impressive outcomes that prove the impact of ITEA and its Community:
> The Reflexion project had exceptional results on how to valorise big data to propagate new, meaningful knowledge to be used in operations, services and new developments.
> The FUSE-IT project focused on the protection of smart infrastructures against combined cyber and physical threats as a pioneer project to enable its partners to be strategic leaders on this topic.
> The ASSUME project provided a set of tools for multi-core technologies and increased the performance of activities by between 40% and 100% for its partners and software developers across all industries.
> The Flex4Apps project focused on creating a full loop that allows companies to offer more complex services while advancing the Digital Transition.

The preparations for the application for ITEA 4 were the most challenging activity of the first half of 2021. With the strong industrial backing of the ITEA Board companies and the continuous support from Public Authorities, ITEA 4 has been labelled by the Eureka High Level Group in the concept of the ECP. ITEA Call 2021, the first Call of ITEA 4, was subsequently launched in September. Additionally, the ITEA Smart City Advisory Board (SCAB) and Cyber Security Advisory Board (CySAB) were established and meetings for both were held online in the first half of 2021 and in a hybrid way in the final quarter of the year. Furthermore, ITEA was part of two customer-oriented events: the Smart City Business Forum in Barcelona and the Cyber Security & Cloud Expo in Amsterdam.

The concept of the new Eureka Clusters Programme was created in 2020. But the rules and regulations for Joint Calls and management structures in this ECP were established in 2021. ITEA, with the collaboration of the Eureka Clusters and Public Authorities, contributed to the preparation of the first Multi-Annual Plan (MAP) and Annual Operational Plan (AOP) of the ECP. In addition to these activities, ITEA has taken a co-leadership role in preparing a common portal for Public Authorities as a main ECP activity with CELTIC-NEXT. The Joint Eureka Clusters AI Call 2021 was also co-led by ITEA and CELTIC-NEXT.

Alongside the positive developments in ITEA, there have also been some challenges. The size of ITEA 3 Call 6 and the hit rate of the projects were the lowest in its history. Furthermore, the time from idea to project has again increased to 19 months. The ECP is designed to improve interest in the Clusters and the process for the Clusters, such as better and faster funding decisions and stronger Calls with higher hit rates. This should be applicable for the Joint Calls as well as the ITEA bottom-up Calls. In 2022, ITEA will also continue to create impact with bottom-up ITEA projects and Joint Call projects, by building activities to strengthen ITEA 4 (e.g. the international customer workshop on Smart Health) and by supporting and reinforcing the ECP with collaboration between its stakeholders.
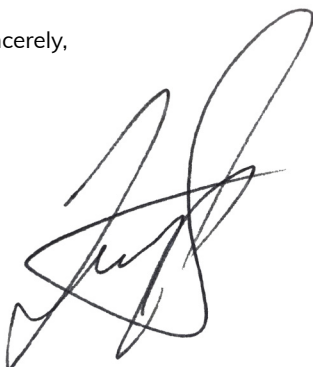
While undergoing these activities, ITEA has the ambition to create happiness, be sustainable in and out and provide high-quality support to all parties as a flexible and agile organisation. Over the next year, 2022, ITEA will continue to track improvement activities by:

> Participating in ECP group meetings to contribute to future and ongoing activities of the ECP.
> Actively participating in Joint Calls and monitoring the Return on Investment of Joint Calls.
> Supporting the ECP Call infrastructure by developing ICT platforms and designing rules and regulations when needed.
> Focusing on ITEA bottom-up Calls in the ECP environment.
> Participating in and/or contributing to customer-oriented events in order to understand market needs in the best possible way to create impact.
> Continuing our efforts to bring the Call size back to at least €110 m, to decrease the time from idea to project start and to keep customer satisfaction at a high level.

We hope that 2022 will be a more balanced year for the ITEA Community and Public Authorities, also in view of physical and online meetings and events. In any case, I am sure that ITEA will continue to build its impact with the dedicated support of industry and Public Authorities.

Have a nice read.

Sincerely,

Zeynep Sarılar
ITEA Chairwoman