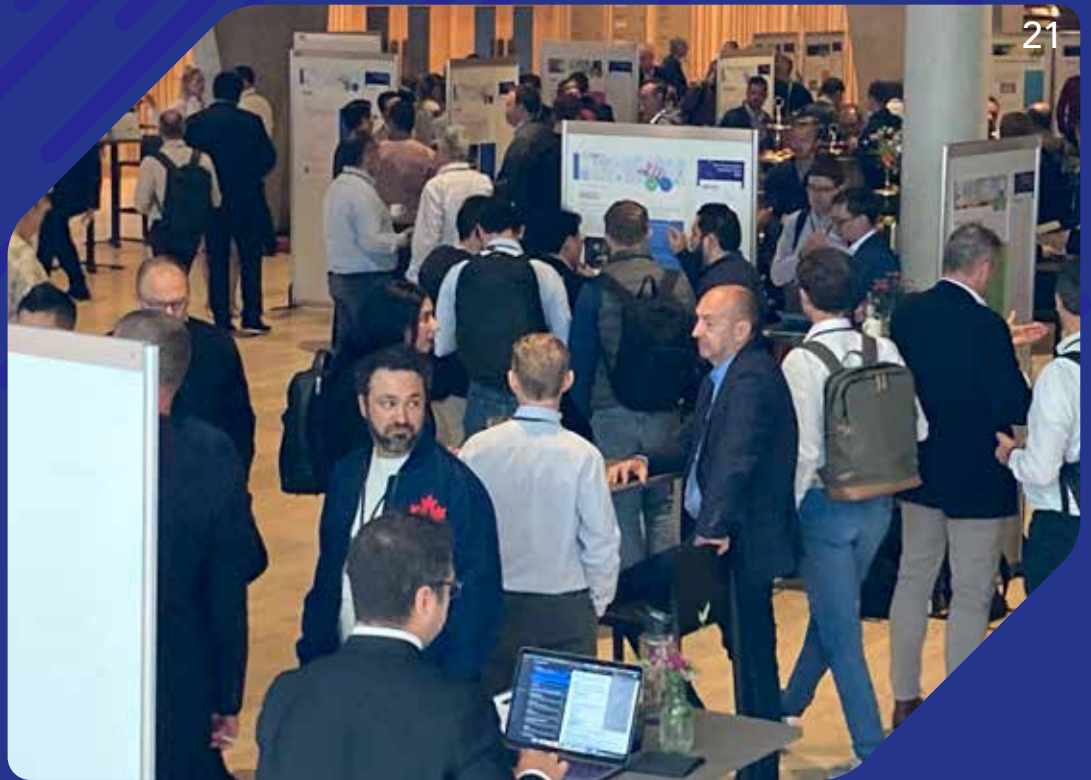


ITEA PO Days 2024 and exhibition in Antwerp



Active ITEA Community delivers
a record number of ideas

ITEA Call 2024 for project proposals was launched on 10 September 2024 in parallel with the ITEA Project Outline Preparation Days (ITEA PO Days) in Antwerp on 10-12 September. This dynamic event brought together over 320 participants from organisations across 19 countries, eager to collaborate and spark the next ground-breaking innovations! The PO Days once again proved to be an ideal platform for creativity and partnership as it reached impressive milestones, with a record-breaking 92 project ideas submitted and 65 posters and pitches presented. The ITEA PO Days 2024 were supported by VLAIO, for which we are very grateful.



Proven concept fuelled with new elements

This year's ITEA PO Days combined familiar programme elements with exciting new opportunities. The introduction of B2B sessions was actively utilised and allowed participants to connect one-on-one with potential future partners and explore collaborations. Additionally, the Newcomers workshop saw strong engagement, providing essential guidance for first-time attendees on key topics like project proposals and the PO submission tool, along with valuable tips from experienced project leaders.

Gary Bauer, Founder & CEO of Mobile Innovations Corporation (Canada) and a first-time participant, shared his positive impressions of the 2024 ITEA PO Days in Antwerp.

"In a word, our first ITEA PO Days were exceptional. Mobile Innovations' experience in Antwerp exceeded our expectations as we gained a tremendous amount of useful knowledge about funding and growing AI projects like ours. We benefited from the start – seeing the awards for last year's participants, meeting peers and experts, and learning how to work with consortia for successful project funding. We accrued tremendous benefits by meeting many other passionate fellow ITEA Community AI members – researchers, educators, entrepreneurs, and trade experts – in this very well-organised (and picturesque!) setting. I look forward to our next ITEA experience!"

Marius Arras, CEO of PROCESSA (Estonia), is pleased with his first ITEA PO Days as part of the Estonian delegation.

"The ITEA PO Days exceeded our expectations! It was a remarkably well-organised event that promoted European innovation and offered outstanding opportunities for SMEs. The B2B sessions were well-organised, providing extremely valuable connections with large industry and research institutions from across the world. I am sure we will work together with many of our new partners beyond the ITEA format. Also, the Newcomers workshop is a must-attend for all ITEA newbies. It provides detailed insights and focuses the attention on what really matters in order to be successful at ITEA. We are excited about the valuable partnerships we've established with industry leaders and research institutions worldwide. As we face the immense challenge of an aging population, we are committed to tackling the issues of social isolation among the elderly and rising care costs through cutting-edge technologies together with our newly formed consortium at ITEA4."

Olivier Biot from Sirris shares his thoughts, having been to several PO Days over the years. *"I'm always looking forward to the ITEA PO Days. It's a unique place to interact with so many fine and innovation-minded people eager to make the world a better place through meaningful collaborative R&D projects. Witnessing the enthusiasm and*

commitment of so many people to create the next round of ITEA projects really makes me happy. It is no small feat to transform a plethora of seemingly unrelated project ideas into successful innovation projects. Yet every year, this 'magic' takes place thanks to the hard work of the participants and with the relentless support of the ITEA Office."

Welcoming newcomers and delegations

During this year's ITEA PO Days, the Public Authorities (PAs) demonstrated their dedication once again. PAs from Belgium, Canada, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, South Korea, Spain, Türkiye, and the United Kingdom attended the event, highlighting their strong commitment to ITEA. For the first time, we welcomed large, organised delegations from Estonia and South Korea, which opened up even more opportunities for collaboration within ITEA.

Ms. Sandra Kaljumäe, NPC of the Estonian Business and Innovation Agency, shared her reflections on the country's involvement in the event.

"Returning to the ITEA PO Preparation Days for the second time was an exciting opportunity for Estonia. This year, we brought ten carefully selected software companies to evaluate the event's value and the ITEA Cluster programme for our sector. We were delighted to find the event exceptionally well-organised, with participants eager to collaborate and share ideas. Our companies established valuable connections and were warmly embraced as strategic partners. We are hopeful that these new partnerships will soon lead to impactful projects."

Having attended the ITEA PO Days for the first time with a delegation from South Korea, Youngji Tak, Director of the Europe Office at the Korea Institute for Advancement of Technology (KIAT), is pleased with the outcome of his debut participation at the ITEA PO Days. "I recently attended the ITEA PO Days for the first time and I was impressed with how well-organised the event was. It provided a valuable opportunity for our Korean participants to engage with the ITEA Community, have face-to-face meetings with potential R&D partners, present their innovative solutions, and build strong consortia."

'Highlights of the ITEA Impact' exhibition

Like last year, the PO Days 2024 not only sparked new innovative ideas but also showcased the remarkable accomplishments of ongoing and recently completed ITEA projects at the 'Highlights of the ITEA Impact' exhibition on 10 September. Guided tours were organised to allow people to explore and be inspired by the featured projects during the exhibition.

More proposals than ever before were presented and are a sign of how much the Community is engaged in ITEA.

Yanqing Zhang, PhD, Senior Scientist and User Researcher at Corporate Research, ABB Sweden, was one of the participants showcasing a project at the exhibition. Reflecting on the experience, Dr. Zhang shared:

"The ITEA event was an incredible experience for me, offering a perfect platform to showcase our work in the EXPLAIN project during the 'Highlights of the ITEA Impact' exhibition and exchange ideas with a diverse range of researchers and industry experts. The networking opportunities were invaluable, particularly gaining insights from the ITEA Office regarding our project. I was truly inspired by the technology trends presented by the ITEA Chairman and the bottom-up approach that helps researchers to quickly pitch ideas and find partners in an efficient way. It was a very well-organised event and I enjoyed the whole experience!"

ITEA Chairman Dirk Elias comments: "The 2024 ITEA PO Days in Antwerp have been absolutely incredible and vibrant for me. A gathering of a 'family' with over 300 members to celebrate innovation and future advances in the domain of digitalisation and software. More proposals than ever before were presented and are a sign of how engaged the community is in ITEA. We also saw great results from running and concluded projects that could all demonstrate the impact and the difference that the projects are making. Industry's investments, supported by public funding, really are achieving the desired socio-economic impact, which has been at the heart of ITEA for more than 25 years now. I am therefore very much looking forward to the outcome of this year's ITEA Call!"

Celebrating excellence

This year, the PO Days also offered the stage to showcase the impressive achievements of recently completed ITEA projects. On Tuesday 10 September, during the ITEA Awards of Excellence ceremony, we celebrated the exceptional outcomes of ITEA's three most outstanding software innovation projects that finished between mid-2023 and mid-2024. This year's award winners are:





› **AIToC – Using AI to improve manufacturing**

Manufacturing engineers face significant challenges in creating digital models for production systems due to the complexity of product variants, the need for customised tools, and the manual efforts required to overcome deficiencies in current product and production definitions. Using advanced AI, the ITEA project AIToC has created a set of tools that overcome these challenges. These tools help with planning processes, the creation of models of factories, and the design of better layouts for assembly stations, all of which make manufacturing more efficient and effective. The AIToC project received the 2024 ITEA Award of Excellence in the category 'Business impact'.

› **Inno4Health - Continuous, unobtrusive monitoring for patients and athletes**

The rise in surgeries among the aging population and the need for precise athletic training both ask for continuous, data-driven monitoring. The ITEA project Inno4Health developed wearable sensors and AI technology to monitor patients' readiness for surgery, to optimise how athletes prepare for competitions, and to help professionals remotely manage patients' health after hospital discharge and identify risks of adverse events. For these achievements, the project was awarded the 2024 ITEA Award of Excellence for Innovation.

› **SMART - Monitoring and reducing congestion in Smart Cities**

Urban congestion affects citizens and the environment, causing pollution and accidents and reducing a city's general liveability. However, real-time traffic awareness, adaptive traffic management, and efficient algorithms and actuators for real-time traffic control have so far proved hard to achieve. By using advanced 4D spatial technology and real-time vehicle

data analysis, the ITEA project SMART, which stands for Spatial Modelling Analytics and Real-time Tracking, enhances traffic efficiency and commuting in cities. These innovations in dynamic traffic control and geospatial visualisation reduce emissions and congestion by up to 15% and enhance urban quality of life. SMART is the winner of the ITEA Award 2024 for Exceptional Excellence as they excelled in Innovation, Business impact and Standardisation.

The active collaborative spirit of ITEA

One of the highlights of the PO Days was undoubtedly the collaborative spirit. We once again witnessed a very active ITEA Community, showcasing a record-breaking number of project ideas that reflect their commitment to collaboration and creativity. This active participation highlights the ongoing relevance of ITEA in today's rapidly evolving landscape.

ITEA looks back on yet another successful PO Days. Good luck to all consortia with the submission of their project proposals!

With Antwerp now behind us, the countdown to the next PO Days has already begun! We are already looking forward to the 2025 edition (which will take place in Portugal). Stay tuned for more information in the next edition of the magazine!

More information and recordings & presentations

<https://itea4.org/podays2024/podays2024.html>