

VIEWPOINT

European and Global Engagement – opportunities abound

An interview with David Golding, Deputy Chair for the UK Chairmanship of EUREKA

This year the EUREKA Global Innovation Summit takes place in May in Manchester, the UK. This EUREKA flagship event is being organised in cooperation with Innovate UK, which is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), a non-departmental public body funded by the UK government. As Head of European and Global Engagement for Innovate UK, which involves building relationships and looking at future global opportunities for the organisation, David Golding is currently Deputy Chair for the UK Chairmanship of EUREKA. So he is perfectly placed to consider what can be gained from nourishing the collaborative links across and between the organisations, and especially in terms of ITEA.

David begins with a brief word about UKRI, a new body that brings together the seven Research Councils, Innovate UK and Research England with the aim of partnering with universities, research organisations, businesses, charities and government to create the best possible environment for research and innovation to flourish. “I’ve been with Innovate UK since it was established in 2007. Before that I had been working on innovation and policy for the government. So for the past 15 to 20 years this has been the core of my day job.”

Strong voice for research and innovation

UKRI has a combined budget of more than £7 billion to support and help connect the best researchers and innovators with customers, users and the public, invest taxpayers’ money wisely to maximise impact for citizens, in the UK and across the world. “We are an independent organisation,” David points out, “with a strong voice for research and innovation, both to government and internationally. Since 2007, when I started, Innovate UK has invested around £2.5 billion to help businesses across



the country to innovate. Match funding from industry pushed the total value of projects above £4.3 billion. We have helped 8,500 organisations create around 70,000 jobs and added an estimated £18 billion of value to the UK economy.”

Power and value of EUREKA Clusters

There are three pillars on which the work of UKRI is founded and by which it is judged: pushing the frontiers of human knowledge and understanding; delivering economic impact and social prosperity; creating social and cultural impact by supporting society and others to become enriched, healthier, more resilient and sustainable. Innovate UK, as an organisation of almost 450 staff, drawn mainly from business, Innovate UK is headquartered in Swindon and works across the UK. “But of course,” David says, “innovation and businesses transcend borders and so do we. Hence the importance of building and extending our networks beyond the UK. I found it a very positive experience last September when I attended the ITEA event in

Stockholm. It coincided with the celebration of twenty years as a Cluster for software innovation. Not only did this event bring to light the power and value of EUREKA Clusters but it also underlined that it does take time to grow into a valuable and impactful community. It’s only when you actually experience such events first-hand that you get a real sense of how important this Community is and how effective it can be in bringing people together. It’s often the sharing of knowledge and collaboration between such diverse players that can be more important than the funding in producing the innovation and commercialising the results generated by collaborative projects. So it was fascinating for me to watch from the side lines, as it were, and see this process in action for a few days. By the end you can really see project consortia coming around and project proposals starting to form.”

Going it alone is not an option

As coordinator for Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), David explores the opportunities for enabling businesses to find partners and collaborative networks globally. “EEN has 17 sector groups, like automotive and transport, agrifood and ICT and organises brokerage and matchmaking events across Europe and beyond. I think that this provides a good opportunity, too, for ITEA to work alongside EEN to broaden the access businesses can get to the wider tapestry of support. The more we can link up, the better it is for companies all round at the end of the day. Given the complexities of the global marketplace and changing political landscapes, companies are reaching out either by desire or need, or both, to find partners with whom they can collaborate to create impact. Going it alone is not an option.”

Opportunity to showcase and find partners

And speaking of the power of collaboration, the flagship EUREKA Global Innovation Summit is an event that will showcase a world of collaboration and funding opportunity by a network of public innovation agencies that fund and support businesses carrying out close-to-market R&D and innovation. “We’re expecting around 2000 people to attend, from the UK, Europe and further afield,” David explains. “Part of the event is a major matchmaking brokerage event so this will give companies and organisations from the ITEA Community an opportunity to meet

not only UK companies but also companies from across the globe. I think that one of the barriers to organisations working together is often down to a lack of awareness of each other. This is an event that can help break down those barriers and help companies, research institutes, universities and others to find each other. So, a great opportunity for the ITEA Community to both showcase its work and to find partners.”

Why attend the EUREKA Global Innovation Summit?

The EUREKA Global Innovation Summit welcomes businesses from all sectors to benefit from unique insights into international funding, collaboration and investment. You’ll receive practical advice on scale-up and pitching and valuable forecasting across topics ranging from the identity of the next disruptors to the locations of the new centres of manufacturing.

You’ll also discover the latest developments in AI & Data, Clean Growth, Healthy Ageing and the Future of Mobility, which could impact your business and influence future global funding opportunities.

The EUREKA Global Innovation Summit is full of features, stages and showcases with over 50 sessions to choose from and most importantly, plenty of places to network and make valuable new connections.

The event is free to attend with an application process that ensures the 2000 international delegates are the best companies and contacts to help you progress your business goals.