

# 25 years of ITEA: PO Days through

## Celebrating 25 years of international collaboration

The ITEA Project Outline Preparation Days (PO Days) 2023 in Berlin marked not only another successful edition but also provided the perfect opportunity to celebrate ITEA's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary: 25 years of international collaboration. Over this period, the ITEA Community has grown to over 2000 unique project partners, creating huge impact and changing businesses and lives - but also leading to new long-lasting partnerships and friendships along the way. On 12 and 13 September, nearly 300 representatives from organisations from 18 different countries gathered to prepare new RD&I proposals for ITEA Call 2023 and to work together towards the next innovative solutions.

# time

The ITEA PO Days continued the legacy of success that has defined ITEA throughout its 25 years of history, bringing together a good mix of 'seasoned veterans' and newcomers experiencing the spirit and impact of the PO Days for the first time. This journey and what makes the PO Days special are best envisioned through their eyes.

## A quarter of a century of innovation through the eyes of the ITEA Community

Experienced ITEA members share their stories, giving us a glimpse into ITEA's past. Having attended numerous PO Days throughout the years, Frans-Jozef Stewing from MATERNA shares his perspective:

*"It is amazing to see that the spirit of ITEA's pioneering time 25 years ago, which I had the honor to take part in, has been maintained throughout these years regardless of the persons in charge of managing ITEA and the current ITEA family members attending these PO Days. Elements of this spirit have always been and still are voluntarism and the strong wish to deliver (the promises made) in implementing Eureka's bottom-up approach. This also has proven to be quite beneficial for the awarded I2PANEMA project following a strong end-user orientation."*

Andy De Mets of Barco echoes this sentiment:

*"It was good to see that attendance at the 2023 PO Days was once again high and many exciting project ideas were presented. We finally had the full ITEA family feeling again, where everyone shapes projects in an open, innovative, and trust-based spirit - as has been the case since the beginning of ITEA 25 years ago. There have been many different topics and highlights over the past 25 years, but the PO Days have always been the foundation of successful joint innovation projects, and I'm sure this year will be no exception."*

It is also insightful to hear directly from PO Days veterans about the evolution, structure, setup, and historical perspective of the event. Stefan van Baelen, a committed participant in ITEA's PO Days since 2009, representing IMEC, offers his historical perspective:

*"The ITEA PO Days started as a rather unstructured event but has grown into a well-oiled machine that clearly focuses on idea exchange and consortium building. A constant since the beginning is the added value for the participants. Most ITEA proposals are discussed and shaped at the ITEA PO Days, so attending this event is almost a must for parties that want to participate in an ITEA project. In addition, the PO Days are very open, so participants feel welcomed and embraced within the ITEA family. This ITEA family feeling makes the PO Days very enjoyable for the participants."*

Erik Rodenbach, ITEA Programme Coordinator since 2000, who has been part of ITEA almost since its establishment, provides comprehensive insights into the origins and early development of ITEA and the early PO Days.

*"My first experience with the ITEA PO Days was somewhere in 2001 for the ITEA 1 Call 4. In those days ITEA and the PO Days were focused mainly on the needs of the large industries. Since the large industries already had three successful ITEA Calls, they were not interested in having new projects in Call 4 and we had less than 10 registrations for the PO Days, resulting in a small Call. In order to balance the Calls we enlarged the focus for the PO Days to a larger audience, including SMEs and research centres. In the next two years we developed an approach of stepwise refinement for the ITEA PO Days. We started with a marketplace, the poster session, followed by the pitch sessions, brainstorming sessions and plenary feedback. This approach has been professionalised over the years and has led to a steady growth of ITEA with a strong Community."*

## Welcoming newcomers to the ITEA family

Having attended the ITEA PO Days for the first time, Manzoor Ahmed, CEO of HIGOE, is pleased with the outcome of his debut participation at the ITEA PO Days and looks forward to future engagements.

*"HIGOE, a UK-based SME, is dedicated to creating an integrated health and social care platform for the elderly. As newcomers to ITEA, our journey of ideation, pitching, and networking across ITEA members has been remarkably streamlined, thanks to the user-friendly ITEA website and the excellent support from the ITEA Office in the Netherlands. Attending the PO Days in Berlin was a valuable experience, offering well-organised interactions with numerous individuals and organisations within ITEA. We look forward to future collaborations that will drive software innovation in partnership with ITEA."*



^ PO Days through time: a timeless 25-year-old tradition.

Furthermore, Katelyn Petersen, COO at RUNWITHIT Synthetics, another first-time participant, shared her positive impressions of the 2023 ITEA PO Days in Berlin:

*"It was a real pleasure to attend the 2023 ITEA PO Days in Berlin. The organisation was stellar and the format of the two-day event allowed us to meet many potential collaborators and partners from across Europe and around the world. We were successful in joining a consortium and we've already begun working together to define a promising project outline that will not only benefit all countries involved but will provide new product and market opportunities for our company. It's remarkable to see how many exciting possibilities can come out of just a few days!"*

In this year's ITEA PO Days, Public Authorities (PAs) showed remarkable dedication once again. PAs from Austria, Belgium, Canada, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye and the United Kingdom attended the event, underscoring their unwavering commitment to the ITEA PO Days. Estonia's first presence added a fresh perspective. Tiiu Treier, head of international cooperation and funding office at Enterprise Estonia, shared her experience:

*"For Estonia it was the first time to visit the ITEA PO Preparation Days. We were on an exploration trip with five*

*selected software companies to find out if the event and the ITEA Cluster programme itself would be valuable for our companies. And we were positively surprised. The event was very well organised and participants eager to collaborate. All of our companies got valuable contacts and were accepted as partners in different project proposals. As we allocated funding to our companies to participate in Eureka ITEA Cluster Calls this year, we hope that these newly made collaborations will soon also turn into good projects."*

### Exploring and celebrating 25 years of impact

These PO Days were an excellent opportunity for the ITEA Community to celebrate ITEA's 25 years of groundbreaking innovation, which only has been possible through the strong international collaboration within the ITEA Community.

As ITEA would not have existed without its valuable Community and its strong projects, we invited our Community members to share consortia pictures, quotes and stories. A collage with photos demonstrating international collaboration and friendship was shown at the end of ITEA Chairwoman Zeynep Sarilar's '25 years of ITEA' speech at the end of day one. After that, we celebrated this unique international collaboration with the ITEA PO Days participants during a social gathering.

### Highlights of ITEA's impact

For many years, ITEA projects have resulted in cutting-edge innovations that have impact on society and the economy. In addition to sparking new innovative ideas, the ITEA PO Days 2023 also offered a glimpse into the remarkable accomplishments of running and recently finished ITEA



projects at the exhibition 'Highlights of the ITEA impact' taking place on 13 September. Guided tours were organised to let people explore the projects during the exhibition.

ITEA Chairwoman, Zeynep Sarilar, comments:

"It is a great pleasure to celebrate the 25 Years of ITEA with the ITEA Community in Berlin. I would like to thank you for the strong contribution of industrials and Public Authorities to the ITEA PO Days 2023. As well as experienced ITEA Community members, new partners like British and Estonian companies added a new colour to this event. Additionally, the ITEA project exhibition added as an extension to the PO Days was a successful showcase for Public Authorities and joyful gathering for the ITEA Community. Thank you for making this celebrative event together."

### Recognising excellence

The PO Days 2023 also provided the opportunity to have a look at the great achievements of ITEA projects that were recently completed. On Wednesday 13 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-2022 and mid-2023.

This year's award winners are:

- > **IVVES – Industrial-grade Verification and Validation of Evolving Systems**  
The use of artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly increasing and, in many domains, we are experiencing the strong benefits of AI, including reduction in human error, 24/7 availability, unbiased decisions and faster decision-making. On the other side, more and more questions are being raised concerning the use of AI and how to make sure it is safe and correct. This is especially the case for fields like transportation, finance, healthcare, industrial automation, and cyber security, which are strictly regulated domains as a mistake can have huge consequences. The ITEA



project IVVES has developed new verification and validation methods, ensuring the trustworthiness and reliability of AI and ML in these environments. IVVES received the ITEA Award of Excellence 2023 for Innovation.

- > **SAMUEL - An intelligent platform for additive manufacturing**

Additive manufacturing (AM), also known as 3D printing in industrial production, is a rapidly progressing technology through which digital designs are directly transformed into physical objects. AM opens the door to customised products, rapid prototyping and innovative production solutions. As demand for 3D printed parts grows, it is a challenge to balance certified manufacturing with cost reduction. Many actors in the field lack awareness of new advancements, whilst reconciling data collection and reuse with intellectual property protection is difficult. The ITEA project SAMUEL has created innovative solutions to help additive manufacturing users learn more and improve their work, thereby making the whole process more consistent, reliable and trustworthy. SAMUEL is also a winner of the ITEA Award of Excellence 2023 for Innovation.

- > **I<sup>2</sup>PANEMA - Bringing the value of IoT to the world of ports**

Ports around the world face numerous challenges, from managing increased cargo demand to ensuring

efficiency and sustainability in the face of urbanisation and labour management issues. The ITEA project I<sup>2</sup>PANEMA, comprising 17 partners from Germany, Spain and Türkiye, has integrated IoT solutions and new services for data handling in ports to enhance efficiency, sustainability and supply chain resilience in various port business cases. With a focus on data management and analysis, the project has achieved remarkable outcomes, including noise reduction, container localisation and logbook digitalisation. By leveraging IoT, I<sup>2</sup>PANEMA is revolutionising port operations. I<sup>2</sup>PANEMA is the winner of the ITEA Award 2023 for Exceptional Excellence as they excelled in all three categories: innovation, business impact and standardisation.

ITEA congratulates the ITEA Awards of Excellence winners for their remarkable contributions to a better society!

### A bright future for ITEA

Witnessing the ITEA Community come together once again was truly inspiring, reaffirming the continuous relevance and influence of the ITEA PO Days 25 years after its establishment.

ITEA looks forward to yet another successful chapter in its history. Good luck to all consortia with the submission of their proposals!