



NEXT GENERATION INTERNET

INNOVATORS ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY - WHITE PAPER -

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Authors: Bartosz Belter (PSNC), Piet Demeester (IMEC), Roman Łapacz (PSNC), Robert Szuman (PSNC), Steve Taylor (IT Innovation)

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INTRODUCTION

“The Next Generation Internet should offer more to people and to our society, providing better services and greater involvement and participation. It should be designed for humans, so that it can meet its full potential for society and economy and reflect the social and ethical values that we enjoy in our societies.”

Roberto Viola, Director General of the DG Connect

The Internet is changing and this has an impact on people. New technological domains like the Internet of Things or Artificial Intelligence are rapidly growing and take place in everyday life. They are still in the first stages of their development, so there is still time to have an influence on how they will look like in the future, and thus what influence they are going to have on people. The NGI Initiative gives all the interested entities in Europe the opportunity to actively participate in this process of changes. Because many questions regarding technology in the future are still open and investments in those specific technologies are risky, small and medium business entities are hesitating to take on new directions of development while others who want to take risks still need support. The HUB4NGI project has been established to facilitate access to information, knowledge and experience. It is determined to promote the NGI Initiative and involve a large number of innovative SMEs and start-ups in the Member States. The engagement strategy presented in this document is a way to achieve this objective.



ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY: THE CHANNELS TO LEVERAGE

The main goal of the HUB4NGI is to support the bootstrap, launch and growth of the NGI Initiative as a vibrant, inclusive and far-reaching R&D initiative that can grow within the Horizon 2020 and move beyond into the next Framework Programme as an ambitious flagship initiative. To achieve that it is extremely important to engage all relevant players in the efforts defining, explaining and implementing the NGI vision. This document focuses on a subset of those players, which are SMEs and start-ups. The NGI initiatives must encourage them to interact, share their opinions and experience and efficiently use the instruments offered by the EC to develop and create new innovative solutions in Europe. The following points constitute the engagement strategy that is proposed based on experiences and thoughts collected from the past activity of HUB4NGI.

Building strong NGI brand on national and international levels

European stakeholders, especially SMEs and start-ups, should recognise and trust NGI as a vision, actions and instruments. The mission of NGI should be clear and understandable. Technology innovators should be interested in attending various initiatives with the NGI label. The past events organised by the HUB4NGI project showed a great potential. The forums and workshops with discussion sessions proved that these kinds of meeting unleash a great deal of positive energy and a desire for open creative discussion. The participants are involved in the exchange of experiences and presenting their opinions and interesting ideas. They are informed that the EC wants to support them through different activities and funding capabilities. Face-to-face meetings, like the NGI workshops in Member States are very important for spreading the knowledge about NGI and increasing the engagement of stakeholders, but other activities, for example webinars and whitepapers presenting attractive research and related societal topics, are also valuable.

Incentives and success stories

The NGI network of partners - NGI map, is an important instrument to reach out to the SME and start-up community in Europe. It will provide a growing list of interesting contacts (triple helix: industry, research institutes and government) that should allow to capture the NGI roadmap and to establish fruitful collaborations at all levels. This easy way of getting information will be a strong enabler in the future development and adoption of NGI technology. A very important instrument, that is well established in recent European projects and implemented by national initiatives, is the use of open calls. In general an open call has the



goal to attract international institutes (universities, research centres, etc.) and companies and provides them with in-kind and financial support in order to support their research and innovation activities. In the area of NGI experimentation, a broad spectrum of advanced and unique test facilities is opened-up towards these open call partners. This allows them to test their innovative products (from the early design stage up to the pre-deployment testing). Towards SMEs and start-ups the major incentives are: (1) access to a wide variety of NGI infrastructures in Europe and beyond that are otherwise not affordable for them, (2) provide technological support in order to define the best testing strategy and to help in setting-up the experiments, (3) provide financial support to execute the testing of their innovation.

Light feedback collection and observation to assess the results of activities

In order to work efficiently and to have the expected results of NGI activities, HUB4NGI needs to receive feedback from stakeholders. The project must know what kind of information and support are expected by SMEs and start-ups. Which technological and societal topics are the most promising and interesting for their business plans and future development. Which problem and threats they perceive for their activity and their business environment. HUB4NGI already used surveys as a tool to collect such information. Although it is not easy to motivate people to fill in questionnaires the knowledge from this source is worth the effort. A good example is the survey executed immediately after the NGI Poznań workshop (the 8th of June 2017). The participants were still motivated and satisfied with the course of the meeting and provided valuable responses. The acquired knowledge allows us to tailor planned events to the needs of stakeholders and to familiarize ourselves with opinions on various topics, for example those expressed by representatives of SMEs and start-ups. At the same time, it should be remembered that the surveys must be properly prepared. Too many of them and unsuitable questions may discourage people from using them. It is also essential that Coordination and Support Action projects do not duplicate the surveys and therefore coordinate their creation.

Consultations

The objective for the consultations conducted by HUB4NGI is to elicit consensus from world-level experts regarding what research and innovation is needed for specific targeted themes within the NGI, so as to inform upcoming work programmes.

Given the specific nature of the subject areas, it was considered that targeted consultations were preferred over surveys open to the general public, because experts in relevant fields could be selected based on their reputations and consulted in a managed way. This provided reassurance about the validity of the opinions expressed, through the experts' track records



and reputations in their respective fields. The chosen methodology for the consultations was the Delphi Method, a well-established pattern that aims to determine consensus or highlight differences from a panel of selected consultees. These properties make the Delphi Method ideally suited for the purposes of targeted consultations with experts, with the intention of identifying consensus for recommendations.

It is important to note that all stakeholders interested and active in the NGI-related initiatives have been given a strong tool for open, public, well-organised consultation. SpeakNGI.eu, one of the NGI CSA projects as explained later, has launched the Consultation Platform - the space for an open and broad conversation with those people who are drivers of the next generation Internet. It is a knowledge base for analyses of what is being discussed and synthesis views of the outcomes of such discussions. Moreover the platform allows running a series of short, spotlight surveys on various topics. This is the chance for people from all walks of life to have their say on developments and values shaping the Next Generation Internet. The HUB4NGI project will be convincing all the partners and people attending the events organised by the project to use this platform as a source of knowledge and an efficient communication channel.

Leaders to promote NGI

People usually listen to experts, who can convince them to trust and implement solutions. Their experience and knowledge leads to a higher level of attraction and engagement. NGI needs such people who can demonstrate the benefits of EC actions and the NGI vision. A suitable example was the presence of one of the Internet pioneers, the inventor of the data-frame Louis Pouzin, in the NGI Forum in Barcelona (13th of September 2017). Mr Pouzin enriched the event contributing with his enthusiasm and lifelong experience to the working groups and the open discussion. He also gave an interesting speech on the future of the Internet talking about the increasing need of having smaller and more controllable networks and reminding the audience of the principles for building scalable and secure systems. This example shows a man who advocates modern, smart and innovative technologies for the Internet of the future. Recognized companies (especially SMEs and start-ups), whose successes are related to the latest IT technologies, can also take on the role of leaders.



Customised messages to stakeholder groups

In the process of involving SMEs and start-ups in the NGI initiatives, it is important to know who the message is addressed to, in which environment the recipient lives and what the expectations are. What are the preferences, etc. Content and initiatives should be targeted with such knowledge. Meetings at national level, which bring together companies operating in similar conditions, play an important role. NGI is a general concept for Europe and its societies but better and faster adoption of it may be achieved if selected initiatives are profiled. Such distinctions may relate to countries, industries, age structures, etc. Definition of targets may be considered not only with respect to meetings, like workshops or forums, but also white papers, webinars and the HUB4NGI communication channels.

Collaboration with Coordination and Support Action projects

The EC decided that the work of CSA projects, which are HUB4NGI, SpeakNGI, NGI MOVE and ENGINEERROOM, will be coordinated not to repeat or overlap their initiatives. At this moment, a group of representatives of each project has been established to plan and consult joint stakeholder engagement efforts. An example of close collaboration is the support by all other projects the Consultation Platform created by SpeakNGI.eu.



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Next Generation Internet the Emerging Research Challenges

Key Issues Arising from Multiple Consultations Concerning the Next Generation of the Internet

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NGI Consultation Platform

<https://consultation.ngi.eu/>

