3.1 Publishable summary

Through EU-funded research projects, many outstanding new technologies and knowledge are developed. However, these are rarely applied in the digital media and internet industries. Furthermore, SMEs currently benefit to a relatively lower extent from the new knowledge and research efforts when compared to larger companies. Besides, those smaller companies still experience difficulties in accessing EU funding.

One consequence of the above situation is that the transfer of these new technologies and knowledge between research institutions and creative enterprises is delayed or does not happen at all. This prevents the integration of new technologies into next generation products and services.

Therefore, the SMARD project aims at providing support and input on two of these main issues:

- to increase participation in EU-funded research programmes, especially from SMEs,
- to support technology commercialisation by providing best practices in technology transfer and commercialisation.

During the first reporting period the consortium has advanced in identifying and specifying R&D needs and requirements of SMEs in the Digital Media Sector as we ll as in providing guidelines for successful networked media commercialisation. Based on that, a draft of the European strategy for SME-driven research on networked media R&D has been developed. The working process is described in the graph below.
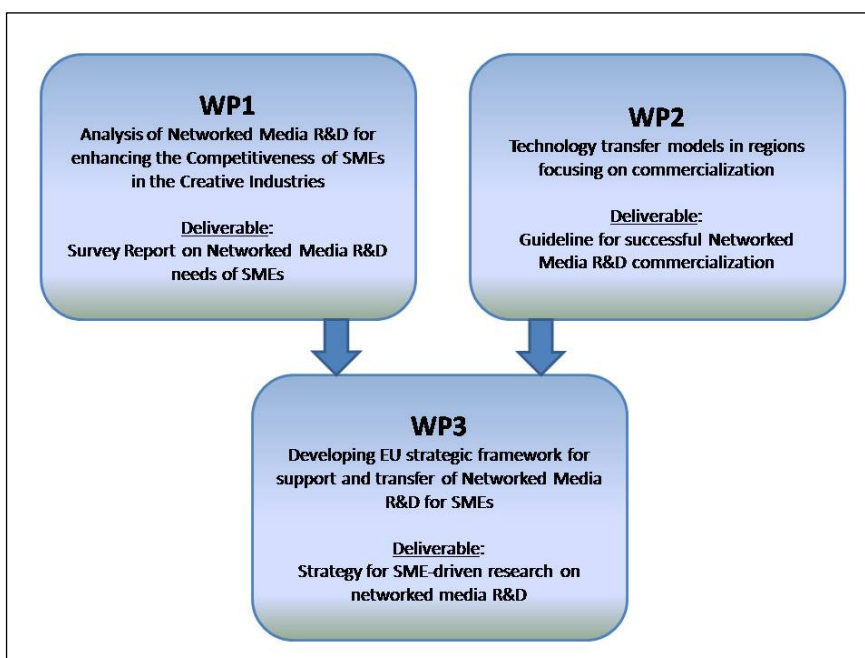

Figure 1: Dependency of work packages / Process of drafting the European Strategy on NM R&D

In WP 1 "Analysis of Networked Media (NM) R&D for enhancing the Competitiveness of SMEs in the Digital Media Industries", state-of-the-art in current business and research trends as well as relevant FP7 initiatives regarding their responsiveness to SME needs

and requirements have been analysed in face-to-face interviews. These analyses served as a basis for developing the survey on NM R&D needs.

In the survey, SMEs of the digital media industries and the web economy were asked to quantify specific RDI (Research, Development & Innovation) needs statements in terms of a) the degree of their importance, as well as b) the degree to which these are currently satisfied. Using these two metrics enabled the consortium to identify those RDI needs that have the highest potential for action and that should be especially taken into consideration by decision makers, i.e. those that were rated as highly important but being addressed in EU research projects only with low satisfaction. As a result, the survey allows the SMARD project to identify diverse categories of RDI needs in terms of technological needs, networking and learning needs, organisational or commercialisation needs (see graph below).
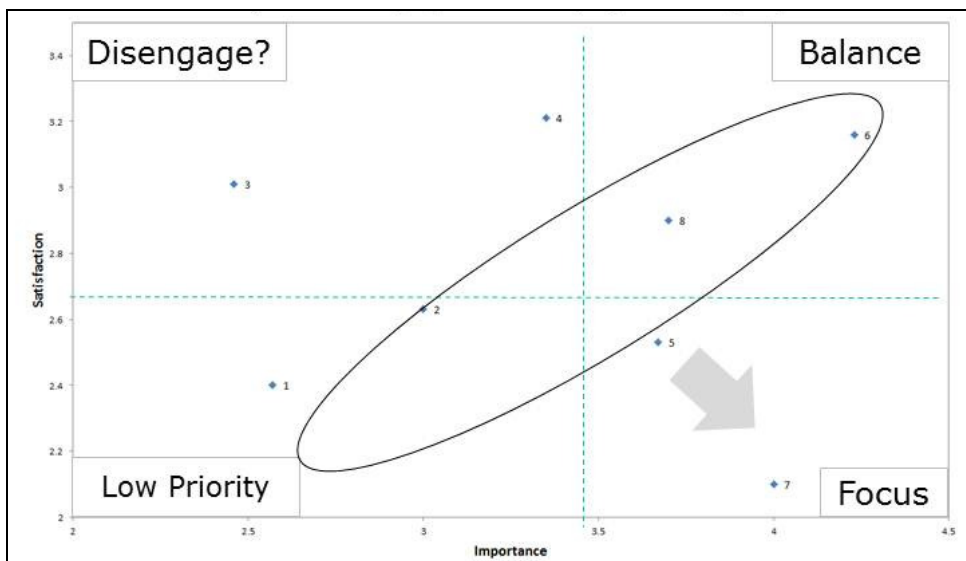

Figure 2 Importance Satisfaction Graph

The main finding of the survey was that technological needs are less important for the SMEs that responded to the survey (603 respondents) while organisational needs were evaluated most important. The three main needs identified were:

• Minimising the effort to apply for RDI funding
• Minimising the administrative effort to manage RDI projects
• Minimising the financial risks of participating in RDI projects

In parallel to the conducting of the survey, Guidelines for successful Networked Media R&D commercialization (WP 2) have been produced based on the Best Practices reported by each partner.

The guidelines help researchers and SMEs involved in (EU funded) research projects in their efforts to translate their research results into economic and/or social value and applying the most appropriate technology transfer and commercialisation methods. This should result in an enhanced translation of new technologies and knowledge obtained through these research projects into new products and services commercialised by the projects partners or other (European) SMEs. The guidelines focus on the three most relevant and visible technology transfer and commercialisation mechanisms, being by creating a new spin-off or start-up, by commercializing within an existing SME or existing

organisation or through licensing towards a third party. The complete Guidelines can be downloaded on the SMARD Website

Based on first results of the survey as well as based on the guidelines, a first draft of the European strategy for SME-driven research on networked media R&D (WP 3) has been developed including a suggestion for a European NM Research and Innovation Roadmap. (see graph below). This roadmap as well as single statements being part of that roadmap will be validated with the SMARD Advisory Board as well as with regional and European stakeholders from research, business and the policy level.
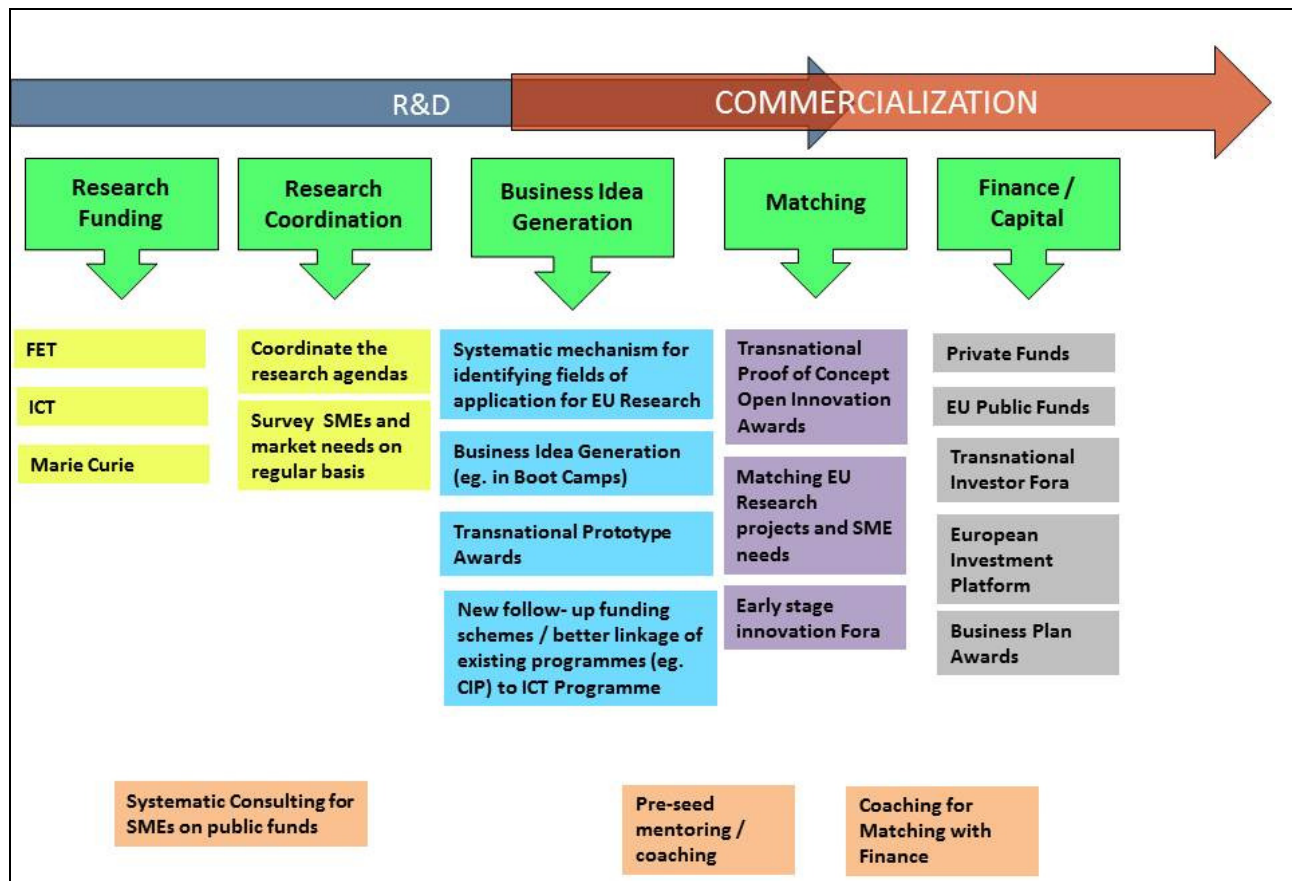

Figure 3 Draft Resarch and Innovation Roadmap for Networked Media

The finalized strategy will provide:
• suggestions as for an innovation policy approach, addressed to policy makers at different levels (EU, national, local)
• suggestions as for innovation policy tools contributing to the Horizon2020 drafting.

By doing so, the strategy will contribute to tackle the following open issues and challenges:
1. the full and effective transfer of the "fortune" of innovation to the enterprises, above all the SMEs, and the market: this refers to the relative small amount of new knowledge and research results of EU projects that have been translated into new technologies, products and services delivered to customers,
2. the fully beneficial involvement of SMEs in the research programs, their access to funds and to the innovation potential of R&D results,
3. the large application of this innovation to the digital media and Internet sector and the transfer of this innovation from research institutions to digital creative enterprises with consequent effects on EU Digital Media sector competitiveness.

Besides the validation process with the SMARD Advisory Board and with regional stakeholders, some of the tools suggested by the SMARD draft strategy will be tested during the SMARD Final Conference. The latter will be held as a conference including a pitching session in the framework of the already established Heidelberg Innovation Forum (www.heidelberger-innovationsforum.de). The consortium aims to motivate FP7 projects to apply for presenting a business idea on the occasion of the SMARD Final Conference. This shall provide a best practice for raising awareness for commercialization questions in (European) research projects.

SMARD - European Support Framework on Networked Media R&D for SMEs
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