

## *Publishable summary*

### **Introduction: Apps for Europe - turning Data into Business**

Apps for Europe - turning Data into Business will create a thematic network to organise competitions for using open data, stimulate the winners to start business ventures, and maximise the socio-economic impact and overall benefits of open data. It will contribute to the open data policy of the Commission and stimulate the reuse of public sector information from governmental, scientific and cultural sources. It brings together 19 partners from ten countries that have a background in hosting and facilitating open data competitions, providing data and supporting business ventures. Together, we will build on and align 20 existing local and national open data competitions held over the next two years by the partners and stimulate the participants to turn their inventions into viable businesses. The last three years have seen much activity in the field of open data. Many public institutions and organisations have opened their data sources in various forms, and many developers have started to work on them, sometimes aided by local and national open data challenges and other incentives. However, most of these developments have been fragmented from the perspective of developers, data owners and the market. This has led to low quality apps, reinvented wheels, small and fragmented marketplaces, and most importantly, a lack of economic impact of the resulting applications and associated efforts. This project will overcome these problems substantially, using ICT to connect and mobilize people and contribute to a pan-European marketplace for Apps and App developers.

### *Activities and Outcomes*

The project will develop a new, transferable and tested programme that will increase the business knowledge and potential for success of participants in open data competitions: the Business Lounge. The Business Lounge educates developers in creating and commercialising apps with market potential. It helps them to set up businesses and gives them access to a network funders and incubators to increase their chances for sustainable ventures. Our aim is to increase the number innovative concepts or prototypes that turn into successful start-ups. The Business Lounges are integrated into 20 local and national competitions and hackathons scheduled during the two-year lifespan of the project. Participants enter their prototype app, including a business model into an annual EU Open Data Competition. We will organise two such pan-European competitions that bring the best of the local and national competitions into a European limelight and introduce them to a business

network that will increase their potential. The categories of this EU open data competition are: Government, Science and Culture. The best local and EU contestants are invited to pitch their plans during a Pitch & Prize event for investors, incubators, international companies, entrepreneurial nonprofits and social investors.

Additionally, the project spawns five support actions on themes that are identified as key areas of importance to organising successful open data competitions: Business and Policy; Data and Licensing; Media exposure for start-ups; Technical tooling and Community Building. The support actions wrap and document existing knowledge that will make the local, national and international App competitions more effective. Lastly, substantial efforts will be made to communicate and disseminate all aspects of the work, including the calls and results for the local, national and international competitions.

Taken together, these actions will stimulate the reuse of open data in the targeted areas, boost economic spin-off, and strengthen the case of open data policy in general.

## **Progress**

During the first project period project activities have successfully developed in conformance with the project Description of Work; these activities are detailed below. The remaining set of activities do not raise any major concerns and the project as a whole can thus be seen as on right tracks at its mid-term moment. The Apps for Europe project will continue developing its activities in line with its work plan, targeting the following outcomes and impacts expected for the project as a whole:

### *Outcomes*

- Local and national App competitions are aligned into one European framework;
- Business knowledge and related networks for App developers are increased on local, national and international level;
- Apps entered in the competitions will have higher quality and have a wider impact and use;
- The number of viable business concepts for products and services based on open data is increased;
- Knowledge, experience and best practices are shared all over Europe.

## *Impact*

- Motivate governments, cultural and science community to continue opening up data;
- Stimulate data owners to align and standardize their datasets and metadata;
- Help developers to expand the reach of their apps beyond their city and country;
- Help developers and entrepreneurs to learn from and connect with each other;
- Lead to better digital services for European citizens at reasonable prices;
- Contribute to the economic development of the EU by stimulating innovation and growth;
- Share the knowledge and best practices inside and outside the consortium.

## *Business Lounges*

Five Local Business Lounges were successfully implemented at Open Data Days. The format and requirements of the Business Lounges were developed by the parties in WP3 close collaboration with WP2. As set out in the workplan the format was being revised and adjusted based on feedback from challenge partners.

### **Implemented Business lounges in period\_1**

#	Organisation	Business lounge at	Place	Date
1	V-ICT-OR / OKFN Belgium	Open Data Day (Apps for Flanders)	Brussels	15 June 2013
2	OpenState	Hack de Overheid (The Amsterdam Hackathon)	Amsterdam	29 June 2013
3	V-ICT-OR / OKFN Belgium	Data Days	Ghent	17-19 February 2014
4	Norwegian Hackathon	Hackathon #HACK4NO	Norway	7-8 February 2014
5	Forum Virium	Apps4Finland After-event	Helsinki	7 February 2014

Next to these local Business Lounges we setup the pan-European online. With the annual online competition we find the best new apps across Europe that we can help scale into viable businesses.

We have seen that:

- The open data events & app challenges have collaborated with a variety of sections: Art & Culture, Government, Transportation, and Science, etc
- The open data apps & start-ups covered a wide range of themes and focusing areas
- The start-ups engaged with different types of technologies and platforms
- The start-ups developed different business ideas and plans
- The events offered good networking opportunities for the participants
- The publicity around the events provided good showcases for the Apps for Europe Business Lounge format
- The events tested several variations of the Business Lounge format and provided lessons learnt
- The entries are widely spread across the Europe, coming from 14 countries, including Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Spain, and UK, etc.
- The entries covered widely usage of Open Data in various industries and areas, to name some: transportation, environment, education, entertainment, and sharing economy, etc.
- The applications vary from web applications to mobile apps, services to algorithms, etc.
- Nice mixture of different levels of maturity, both in teams and apps

Both the local and the online Business Lounges fed into the International Business Lounge. The International Business Lounge brought ten of the brightest and best European Open Data start ups together to exhibit their ideas in the neo-gothic splendour of Manchester Town Hall as part of the internationally acclaimed FutureEverything Festival and Conference, 31st March - 1st April 2014. The finalists showcased their idea to a jury of experts, investors and other conference delegates. They had a chance to pitch their idea and make new contacts at networking events held throughout the two days with lots of fringe programs.

## *Resources*

Whether for developers, competition organisers or data publishers, the Apps for Europe partners in WP4 have gathered helpful resources that can support in creating open data events, stimulating the community and promoting success stories. We created a.o. the Apps for Europe wordpress plug-in for building one's own website for local app competitions, a technical toolset and also press handling recommendations. These resources can be found at the Apps for Europe website.

### *Thematic network and outreach*

The Apps for Europe consortium unites 19 partners from 10 countries. All have substantial experience in organising local, national and EU wide competitions, delivering data, being intermediaries, engaging communities and/or supporting businesses. Additionally, 15 local governments, nonprofits, EU projects, data owners and representatives of the investment community support the project. Collaborating on the project has proved to be a truly joint effort with active partners. Also we successfully connected to colleague projects (a.o. LOD2, Code for Europe, OKCON, several Europeana projects as Europeana Cloud, - Creative, - Sounds, - Space and Ambrosia) and local initiatives not in the consortium. Some of the latter approached us to connect to our thematic network and implement Business Lounges on their Data event. We did succeed in connecting to our three main target groups: app developers, investors and app competition organisers in many ways.

In June the Chair of Waag Society, Marleen Stikker, spoke with Eurocommissioner Neelie Kroes about Apps for Europe, open data, the new European legislation regarding this topic and opportunities that releasing information creates. Neelie Kroes wants everyone involved to be bolder, for example when it comes to opening administrative or political data. She says, "Risk avoiding behaviour should not be allowed. Let's make this a success and dare to take risks." The video of the interview can be watched at: <http://appsforeurope.eu//blog/neelie-kroes-highlights-need-apps-europe>

For further details visit <http://appsforeurope.eu> or contact the project coordinator:

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