Publishable summary

Over the past two and a half years Apps for Europe - *turning Data into Business* has become a thematic network of competition and hackathon organisers, using open data as a key recourse to stimulate participants to create social and economic value an support them in their efforts to create a sustainable business as a result. Through the developed Business Lounge concept we enable local competition organizers to increase the business knowledge and potential for success of participants in open data competition.

During the course of the project partners have organized 15 local competitions and hack events. The winners fed into an annual pan-European competition that brought together the best of the local events and the online competition that was open to all businesses using open data from Europe. All winners were invited to the International Business Lounge, held twice at FutureEverything in Manchester; an international innovation event attracting over 7.000 visitors each year.

The project has brought together not only the original nineteen partners, but has connected to a larger community in Europe supporting the same goals. We have setup collaborations with both Finodex and ODINE, European open data accelerator programs that can help the participants from Apps for Europe take their next step. Creating joint events, cross promoting each others calls and

opportunities and working on a joint vision for nurturing a healthy open data startup ecosystem in Europe.

Additionally, the project has worked on 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. Key information has been made available in the *Resource* section of the website, helping contest organizers, developers, startups and social investors in this area have access to more in-depth information and be referred to relevant portal and projects doing extensive work in these areas.

Having followed up with 39 of the participants in the local and International Business lounges we see the businesses expanding on multiple levels, be it through growing of the teams, the cities and countries that the application is able to reach, receiving new awards and prizes or getting capital funding under or over 100K. Supporting these businesses in their endeavours, whether this is in the beginning stages in local events, through international acknowledgements like in the International Business Lounge or through incubation as offered by projects like Finodex and ODINE, is helping the number of viable business increase.

The Business Lounge model offers a strong framework for business skill building for participants in open data competitions and events. Different type of support is needed for different maturity levels of the participants and each Business Lounge needs to be tailored to their specific needs. However the Business Lounges has become a transferrable format that helps developers and startups in taking the next steps.

Apps for Europe has brought the incubator and social investor community into the focus of local competition and event organizers. By giving insight into these networks in their local area and promoting European opportunities like Finodex and ODINE we give them the possibility to support their local developers, startups, entrepreneurs and students.

Building on the recommendations from the first International Business Lounge and the Advisory Board we were able to create a successful event, attracting a large audience and hosting an interesting and diverse group of developers and startups in the open data field. The success of the format lies in leveraging the European open data and startup acceleration network to help emerging businesses creating value out of open data find funding, clients and users in new cities and countries.

The partners in the network want to continue with the Business Lounge and IBL format as it offers local event organizers and international perspective and the opportunity for their participants to potentially scale their business to new markets in the EU. We are creating an offer for new cities to be the next Apps for Europe host and bring the top European open data network to their local community.