



ACE CALL LAUNCH

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the ACE Cooperation Summit

The overall objective of the ACE Project is to deliver targeted internationalisation and cross border venturing support to up to 120 ICT start-ups and SMEs in Europe with the highest potential to grow internationally. In order to attract and identify the best potential candidates, an Open Call was launched in December 2013 with a first cut-off date of 28 February 2014.

The first 100 companies selected on the basis of this Open Call were invited to participate in and gain early exposure to international partners and investors at the ACE International Cooperation Summit (the Summit) in Brussels on 29 April 2014 (month 8 of the project). In advance of the Summit companies worked with their local ACE mentor to define their internationalisation strengths, weaknesses and objectives and on the basis of this, an internationalisation action plan was put together for each company leveraging the support of ACE partners in other markets. At the Summit companies were able to meet with their potential international mentors and review and refine with them the support sought and offered. Companies looking for access to finance also received investment readiness training in advance of the Summit and had the opportunity to pitch to international investors and representatives of international investor networks at this event.

1.2 Scope of the Deliverable

This deliverable aims to give the reader a flavour of the Summit and an insight into the preparation it entailed so that it may serve as a reference document for the organisation of similar events in the future. To do so it describes the strategic partnerships considered and entered into, the work carried out with participating companies in advance of the Summit to ensure they benefited from it to a maximum and the promotional campaign implemented to raise awareness among and engage external stakeholders, in particular policymakers and business support intermediaries.

2. Preparing for the Summit

2.1 Strategic Partnerships

Preparations for the Summit began at the first face-to-face all partner meeting in October 2013 (month 2). As one of the eligibility criteria for the ACE Open Call (D2.1) was ‘availability to attend the Summit’, partners recognised early on the importance of including details of the Summit dates and location in the application form and call promotional materials.

The options of partnering with other established events targeting ICT entrepreneurs and investors, such as The Next Web in Amsterdam, Republica in Berlin or Futur en Seine in Paris, versus organising an event from scratch in Brussels and handpicking relevant initiatives to partner with were considered. The advantages of partnering with an established event included outreach and engagement to a larger audience than could be attracted to a once-off (or at least first edition) event to be organised within six months and taking into account the logistics coordination this would entail. The disadvantages of partnering with another event were the potential for a smaller ACE event to get ‘lost’ in the promotion and activities of a larger event. It would be easier for companies, investors and possibly even partners to lose focus on the ACE event. Another consideration was that ACE targets a niche audience of Europe’s top ICT entrepreneurs with the ambition and capacity to internationalise and investors committed to cross border venturing. Following lengthy and lively discussions between partners, when finally polled partners voted firmly in favour of a once-off dedicated ACE event to be organised in partnership with selected and relevant initiatives that would add value for the community of ACE entrepreneurs, investors and mentors. The Summit was also intended to be of interest for other business support intermediaries, policymakers and entrepreneurs likely to be in attendance. This decision taken, the dates of 10-11 April and 29-30 April were tentatively blocked for the Summit and Brussels settled on as an ideal location easily accessible from across Europe.

Invitations to partner with the Summit as part of an umbrella “New Frontiers for European Entrepreneurs” event (<http://newfrontiersforeuentrepreneurs.eu/>) were then issued to and accepted by the following strategically relevant initiatives, also working to foster and grow ICT entrepreneurship in Europe:

1. The Watify Campaign to stimulate digital entrepreneurship: <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/dem/watify>
2. The iLINC legal advice service for ICT SMEs: <http://lincup.eu/>
3. The S2G2M2 innovation voucher scheme for innovative mobile service providers: <http://www.mobilise-europe.mobi/s2g2m2>
4. The extended suite of Startup Europe Hub services to support ICT SMEs access finance, accelerate their growth and internationalise: <http://www.startupeuropehub.eu/>
5. The Europeana Creative Challenges to support the re-use of digital cultural heritage objects by ICT and creative entrepreneurs: <http://www.europeanacreative.eu/web/europeana-creative/challenges>
6. The TESLA Internationalisation Training Workshops for ICT SMEs: www.teslaproject.eu
7. The Cluster 2020 European Creative Industries Alliance (ECIA) initiative focused on delivering practical support to ICT and digital entrepreneurs: <http://www.cluster2020live.eu/>

2.2 Refining the Format

Decisions about the location and tentative dates of the Summit fixed, as leader of Task 2.5, ACE Cooperation Summit, EBN proposed a draft programme to all partners in early January 2014. This first draft programme is appended here as Annex 1. As it shows the format first considered was spread over 2 days, featuring 3 common plenaries with parallel training sessions and free networking time in between.

Partners all agreed that the main objectives of the Summit should be to:

- introduce the companies to investors, mentors and potential partners in other European markets;
- identify opportunities for cross-border investment in Europe, and;
- connect Europe's most promising technology companies with each other.

With these goals in mind, feedback on the draft programme was that the Summit would better serve the needs of the companies, who are its primary beneficiaries if:

- it could be condensed into a single day;
- each partner could have a stand at which to: (i) promote the participating companies from their region, and; (ii) promote their services to international ICT SMEs;

- the emphasis for ACE companies participating would be on meeting with their potential mentors from other countries, and;
- parallel training and pitching sessions featured as an optional extra.

Taking this feedback into account the programme for the Summit went through several iterations between the first draft shown in Annex 1 to this document and the final programme appended as Annex 2 to this deliverable.

2.3 Preparing the Companies

On the basis of the Open Call, 107 companies were shortlisted and invited to participate in the ACE Programme as detailed in D2.2, ACE Company Selection. Each of the selected companies was assigned a local mentor who worked with them to identify and refine their internationalisation objectives, strengths and weaknesses. ACE partners then shared their local companies support requests with each other. All partners reviewed the requests they received and shortlisted the companies they wished to support. In some cases partners also took the initiative to offer support to companies who had not selected their country as a target market because of a very specific match between a mentor's skills or other service offering and a company's needs.

Partners then set up, in advance, meetings between mentors and entrepreneurs at the Summit. As access to finance was one of the key services requested by applicant companies, as can be seen in the final Summit programme (Annex 2) a strong emphasis was placed on this on the day, with Investment Readiness Training Roundtables open to all ACE entrepreneurs and the opportunity for all pre-selected companies to pitch to an audience of international investors. Companies pre-selected to pitch received pitching guidelines (see Annex 3) as part of their preparation for the Summit and where their local mentor had the appropriate expertise, the companies worked with their local mentor to refine their pitch for an international audience.

2.4 Promotional Campaign

An extensive online and social media promotion at the European level was made prior and during the event. The results of the social media campaign accounted for over 100 mentions and circa 5% more followers at the end of the day. The ACE website had 549 page views between 28 and 30 April with 65.79% of new users and a bounce rate of 45.79%.

Other platforms such as the StartUp Europe Hub have been used to promote the Summit. Partners have also been highly active in disseminating the ACE Summit and the overall event at the local level as per the examples of promotion presented below.

The screenshot shows the Coventry University website with a blue header. The main navigation bar includes links for Home, Study, Life on Campus, Graduation and Beyond, Research, and Business, along with a search bar. A secondary navigation bar contains links for Campus Map, Social Media Directory, Jobs, Contact Us, and Portals. The main content area features a news article titled "Summit in Brussels marks the launch of the ACE Acceleration Programme" dated 30/04/2014. The article includes social media sharing options (Facebook Like, Twitter Tweet, and a generic share icon), a list of UK-based ACE companies, and a "Related news" sidebar with a link to "Coventry University crowned 'Entrepreneurial University of the Year' 25/11/2011". The footer contains navigation buttons for "EXPLORE THE SITE", "LATEST / FEATURED", and "NEWS".

Coventry University

Campus Map Social Media Directory Jobs Contact Us Portals

Home Study Life on Campus Graduation and Beyond Research Business Search

You are here: [Home](#) / Summit in Brussels marks the launch of the ACE Acceleration Programme

[Back to News Results](#)

Summit in Brussels marks the launch of the ACE Acceleration Programme

Like 5 Tweet 1 +1

Date: 30/04/2014
News Category: [Business environment and society](#) [Business facing news](#) [International news](#)

On 29 April over 85 companies from across Europe met with 22 mentors and 18 investors at the Accelerating Cross-border (ACE) programme Summit in Brussels for the 'New Frontiers for European Entrepreneurs' event.

The ACE programme, which is funded by the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), was launched in September 2013 with partners from Belgium, Italy, Czech Republic, Ireland, Finland, Luxembourg, France, Portugal, Germany and Sweden with Coventry University Enterprises Ltd representing the UK. The programme aims to support the top 100 ICT companies across Europe identified with international growth potential.

The ACE Summit marked the formal launch of the ACE acceleration programme. Companies had been selected through an open application process with over 300 applications whittled down to just 100 companies that are now being supported with 1-2-1 business mentoring support and other services.

The ACE Companies from the UK were:

- Agewell Biometrics
- I'm Not A Machine Music
- Imobisoft
- Incyte International
- My Campus Ride
- Netshield Enterprise Services
- Ortelio
- RNF Digital Innovation
- Smarterkey

During the ACE Summit in Brussels, companies were provided with the opportunity to complete investor readiness training and pitch directly to a panel of cross-border investors. One to one meetings were organised for each company in

Related news

Coventry University crowned 'Entrepreneurial University of the Year' 25/11/2011

EXPLORE THE SITE LATEST / FEATURED NEWS

Figure 1- CUE promoting the Summit on their website

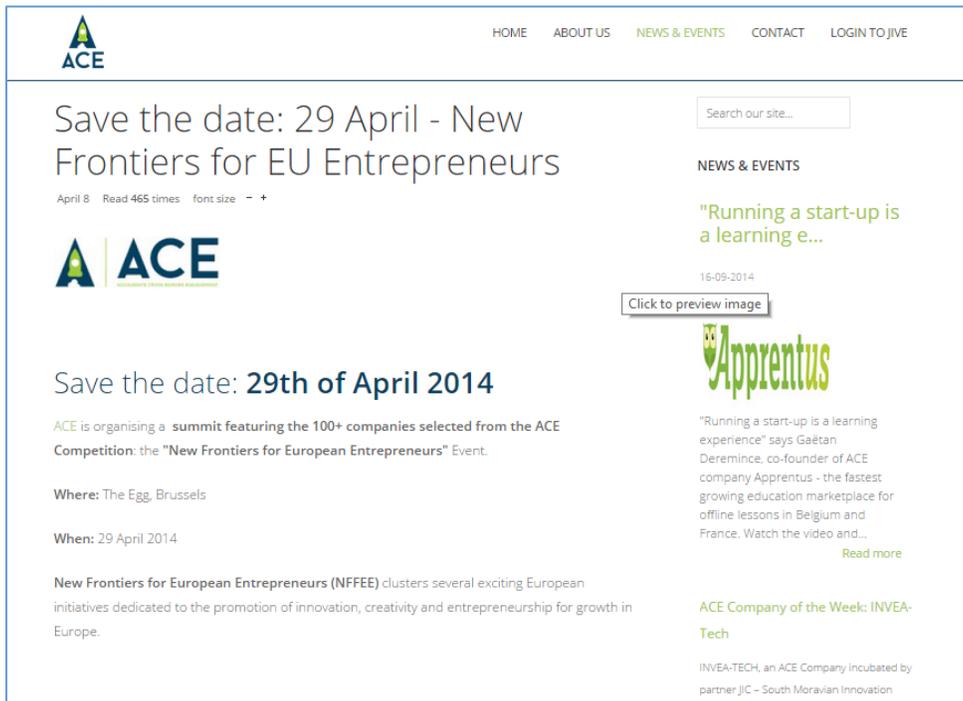


Figure 2 - Save the date for the Summit on the ACE website



Figure 3 - Promotion of the ACE Summit on StartUp Europe Hub platform

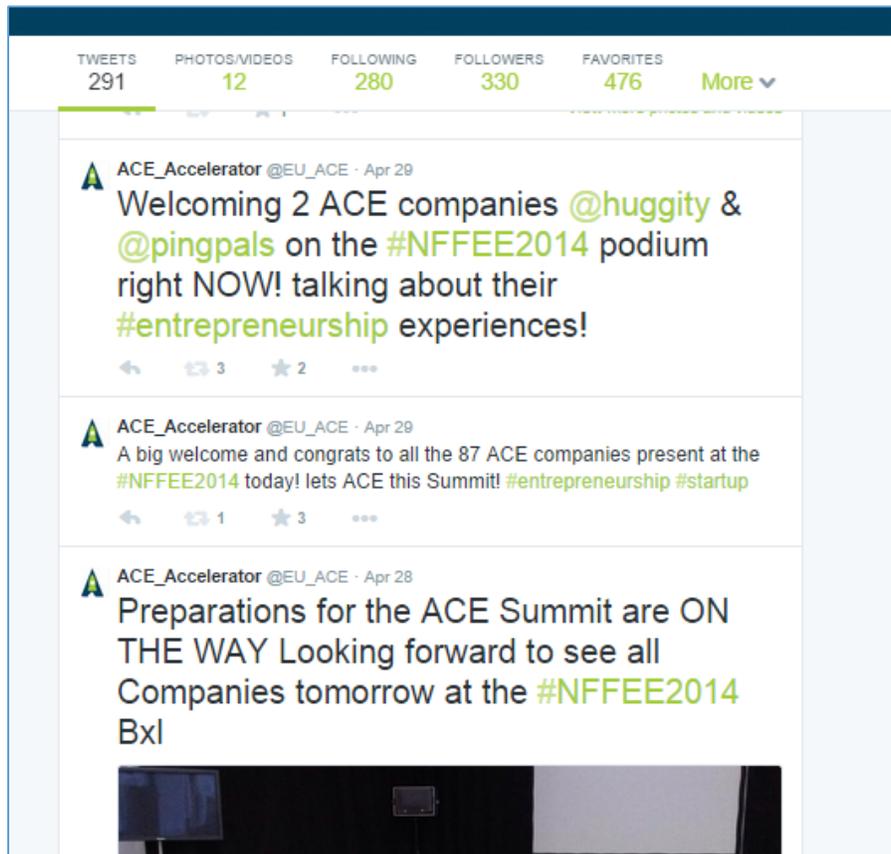


Figure 4 - Example of promotion of the Summit via the ACE Twitter

A full gallery of professional pictures of the ACE Summit is available [here](#).

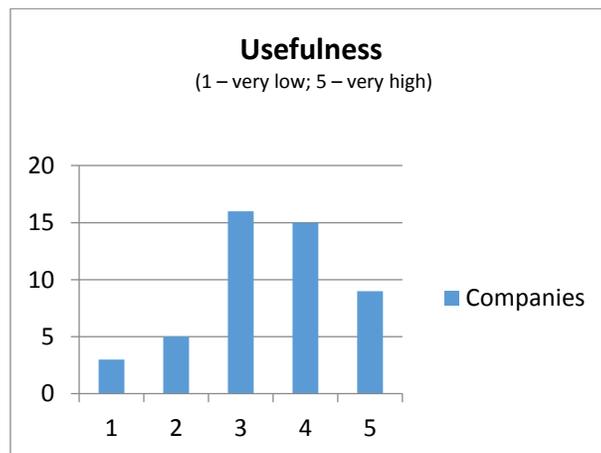
3. The Summit: Facts, figures and highlights

To give readers a flavour of the Summit, a selection of photographs from the day at the end of this section. Further images from the Summit are available on the coordinator's website at: <http://www.ebn.eu/?p=imagegallery&g=6>

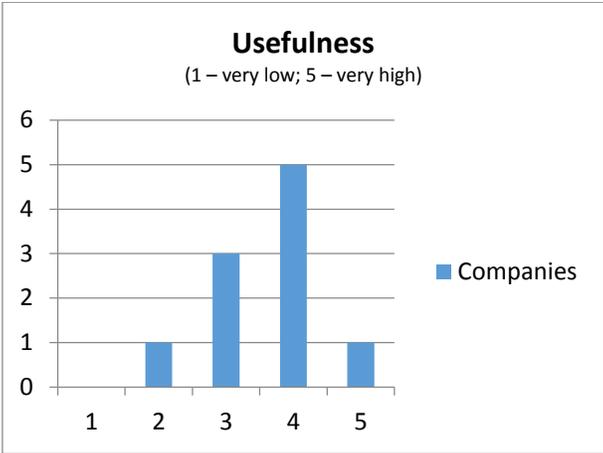
Out of the 107 companies selected, 87 companies (or over 80% of selected companies) from 12 countries finally met together with 22 mentors and 18 investors at the ACE Summit. The Summit marked the launch of the ACE acceleration programme for these, the top ICT companies in Europe with the potential to grow internationally.

At the Summit, companies had the opportunity to complete investor readiness training and pitch directly to a panel of cross border investors. One to one meetings were organised for each company in advance with mentors from other countries who will provide practical advice on entering new markets from introductions to potential clients to 'soft landing' supports. Companies also had the opportunity to meet with other companies and potential collaborators from among the total of over 400 participants at the umbrella 'New Frontiers for European Entrepreneurs' event.

Seventy-five of the 87 companies that attended the Summit are currently working towards achieving their internationalisation goals with support from their international support teams through the ACE acceleration programme. A short survey gathering their feedback on the value of the Summit sent immediately after the event found that it was generally well received. Fifty-six of the 87 companies completed the survey, representing a response rate of 65%. Of these the majority found the Summit moderately to very useful as indicated in Figure 1 below



The Investment Readiness Training, attended by only 10 of the 56 companies that responded to the survey was rated as particularly useful as indicated in Figure 2 below.



A more in-depth critique of the Summit will be carried out as part of the mid-term review of the ACE programme, due in November 2014. Meanwhile, initial feedback received from ACE partners and members of the High Level Advisory Board at the partner meeting on 30 April, immediately after the Summit, is included at the end of this document as [Annex 3](#).



Figure 5 - Networking at the ACE stands during the Summit



Figure 6 -

Networking at the ACE stands during the Summit II



Figure 7- iMinds partner meeting with participating companies

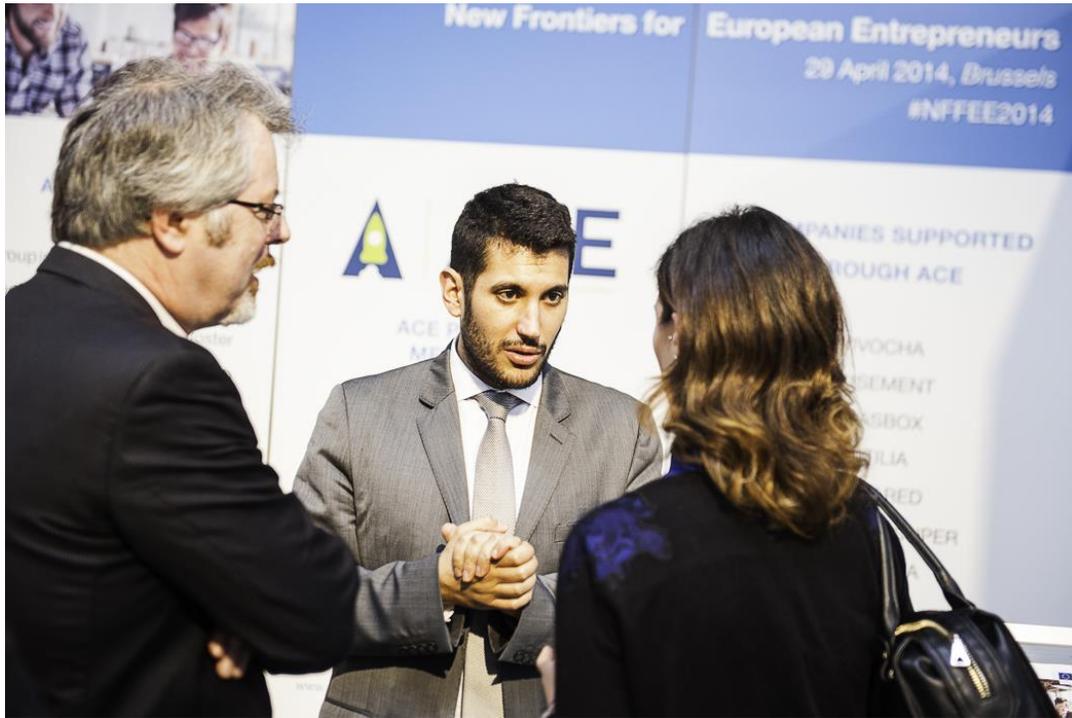


Figure 8 - ACE companies networking



Figure 9 - Inside the pitching sessions



Figure 10 - Inside the pitching sessions II



Figure 11 - ACE entrepreneur pitching



Figure 12 - Investment readiness training for ACE companies



Figure 13 - Networking



Figure 14 - Partners meeting at the EBN stand



Figure 15 - Portuguese company Artica meeting with other ACE companies

Annex 1 – ACE Summit Programme Outline

ACE Summit Outline - Draft, 13 Jan 2014	
Time	Day 1
09:00-10:00	Registration and Exhibition
10:00-12:00	<p><i>Opening Plenary</i></p> <p>Keynote from Commissioner Kroes</p> <p>Start-ups Panel (Growing Business in Europe)</p> <p>Q+A session</p>
12:00-14:00	<i>Networking Lunch and Exhibition</i>
14:00-15:30	<p><i>Parallel 2</i></p> <p>Creative Industries and ICT</p> <p><i>Parallel 1</i></p> <p>Investor Readiness Training Part 1</p> <p><i>Parallel 3</i></p> <p>Internationalisation: best practices and policy challenges</p> <p>Clusters: what's in it for your business?</p>
15:30-16:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
16:00-17:30	<p><i>Parallel 2</i></p> <p>Digital Heritage: a growing resource for ICT and creative companies</p> <p><i>Parallel 1</i></p> <p>Investor Readiness Training Part 2</p> <p><i>Parallel 3</i></p> <p>Acceleration: why, when and how?</p>
17:30-18:00	<p><i>Closing of Day 1</i></p> <p><i>Summary of Day 1, setting scene for Day 2</i></p>

18:00-19:30	<i>Networking Cocktail</i>
Time	Day 2
09:00-10:00	Exhibition and Networking Coffee
10:00-11:30	<i>Parallel Pitching Sessions for ACE companies (divided by theme/stage?)</i> (10 companies per session, themes TBC)
11:30-12:00	Coffee Break
12:00-13:00	<i>Closing Plenary</i> Keynote TBC
13:00-15:00	Networking Lunch and Exhibition

Time	Sessions		
09:00-10:00	Registration and Exhibition		
10:00-12:00	Common Opening Plenary: The challenges in Europe today of becoming an entrepreneur <i>This session shows the current picture of entrepreneurship in Europe.</i>		
12:00-14:00	Networking Lunch and Exhibition		
	Internationalisation and Investment Strand	Creative Industries Strand	Intermediaries & Policy Strand
13:30-14:00		What's up in Europe's Creative Industries? <i>Details coming soon</i>	
14:00-14:30	EUHub Summit by ACE: What are investors looking for? <i>This session features an overview to ACE companies</i>	Europeana Creative Pilots <i>Pilots Presentation</i>	Boosting Digital Entrepreneurship in Europe <i>This session will look at different European initiatives from the public and private sector which support digital entrepreneurship at local, regional and national level.</i>
14:30-15:30	EUHub Summit – Investor Readiness Training by ACE & EIG <i>This Workshop will provide investor readiness training to early stage highly innovative ICT Start-ups and. Session delivered by ACE & European Investor Gate</i>	EUHub Summit – iLINC Clinic – Legal Workshop for Companies <i>This Clinic will analyse the main challenges faced by early stage companies in the ICT sector and provide legal advice.</i>	
15:30-16:00	Coffee Break		
16:00-16:30	EUHub Summit – ACE Company Pitches <i>Selected ACE Companies will have the opportunity to pitch to an Investor audience</i>	TESLA Internationalisation Workshop for Companies <i>This Workshop will investigate the main obstacles to internationalisation for the cultural and creative industries.</i>	Mentorship in digital entrepreneurship <i>The objective of this session is to bring together different role models with incubators to demonstrate the importance of mentorship in developing/transforming into successful business.</i>
16:30-17:00		Connecting Creative Districts and Clusters <i>Details coming soon</i>	
17:15-17:30		'Takeaways' and Europeana Creative Award <i>Details coming soon</i>	
17:30-18:00	Common Closing Plenary - What's next? <i>Summarising the core message of the conference, identifying where we are today and where we need to get to by highlighting the contributions from existing entrepreneurs and representatives of all sectors. With European elections just a few weeks away, what are the challenges new representatives will have to rise to?</i>		
18:00-20:00	Networking Cocktail		

Annex 2 – ACE Summit pitching guidelines



Pitching Guidelines for ACE Entrepreneurs

ACING YOUR PITCH

- Time is of the essence! Pitches are strictly limited to 5 minutes so practice your timing in advance .
- Use this 5 minutes to tell **investors** all they want to about your company, in particular:
 - i. What market need(s) does it address?
 - ii. What solution do you provide?
 - iii. What is the market potential – size, trends, etc.?
 - iv. Who are your competitors?
 - v. Who is the team behind it?
 - vi. What is your development strategy?
 - vii. What is the financial forecast / need for capital?
- If you are preparing a PPT presentation we suggest one introductory slide followed by a single slide for each of the 7 points above
- **If you are using a PPT presentation please save it to a USB key in advance!**
- As time is limited, videos are not recommended in case of technical problems
- There will be some time, either immediately after your pitch or at the end of the

Dear ACE Entrepreneur,

Congratulations on being selected to pitch at the EUHub Summit by ACE next week. The pitching schedule is enclosed overleaf and below are some pointers to help you make the most of this opportunity. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact your local ACE mentor.

We look forward to welcoming you to the EUHub Summit by ACE at the New Frontiers for European Entrepreneurs event on 29 April.

Best wishes and good luck!

Your ACE Team



Annex 3 – Feedback immediately after summit

The 12 partners that are working directly with companies provided feedback on the Summit, in particular the number of their outgoing companies that attended, the initial impressions from these companies and the number of incoming companies they met with. This is summarised in the table overleaf. More detailed feedback from the HLAB and EC follows below.

Jérôme Roche, European Commission

The feedback from the EC is very positive. They liked the aspect of clustering several projects together at the event and will circulate a press release about the event in the next weeks.

Didier Moret, HLAB

Didier Moret (iSource, ACE HLAB) provided detailed feedback on the summit as follows:

- Good level of companies pitching in terms of CEO level (lots of serial entrepreneurs), many companies already profitable despite being young (not the norm), tech level, lots of potential for internationalisation.
- Level of pitching not so good.
- Some companies didn't produce any revenue figures either current or projected.
- Most companies didn't talk about business model. Very important for internet companies. Difficult issue to address in particular for young companies. Need to show evolution of business model from beginning of company to further growth.
- Need to be better prepared to pitch.
- Content of preparation but also manner of presenter. If they're not interesting, the investor won't be either.
- Out of 31 companies who pitched, would have been interested to invest in 13.
- Very few companies had patents – difficult in software sector but from an investor perspective it's always more attractive.
- Start-ups afraid of legal costs so role of ACE mentor maybe advisors could raise awareness of importance of addressing these issues.
- Mixing events a good idea but better signage.

Jim Ward, HLAB

Jim Ward (NUIG, ACE HLAB) provided detailed feedback on the summit as follows

- Type of venue was good, large room lots of networking opportunities, different activities running simultaneously. Good buzz!
- Plenary sessions – varied in terms of level of interest to companies.
- Investor pitches – saw 15. Variation in quality of presentation. Need better preparation and training in advance.
- Personal presentation of pitchers matters to investors – dress appropriately.
- Company feedback – very happy. Made connections.
- Good idea to pitch for partners as well as companies

Company-facing partners' feedback

Partner	Feedback	Outgoing	Incoming
WestBIC (contribution towards travel)	Companies left event positive – happy to meet international investors in particular. One definitely left with investor details (John Quigley, Clevermiles). Tweeting about event.	6 companies attended event 3-4 companies who couldn't attend	3 companies met, 1 companies couldn't attend but had Skype call. 3 others in discussion via partners.
CUE (used own travel budget for companies)	Good feedback on plenary. Most attended investor workshops and found it useful. Found pitching useful. Offered companies pitching advice but only few took it up. More time in future to prepare companies and partner has weakness in training for pitches so more training for partners on preparation for pitching good	10 companies 1 left programme 1 no show to be followed up All companies offered support happy with offers Those who didn't receive offers made good contact at events e.g. Verity (not a music machine) met investor after pitch	10 of 11 companies who were offered support have accepted 4 awaiting confirmation (Mentoring main offer)
Technoport	Good feedback from company. Valuable feedback from pitches to improve presentation for future	8 companies confirmed 2 have left programme (1 left due to received funding from US and other left for specialised accelerator programme) 6 attended summit	Catherine met 18 companies! Interesting
JIC	For companies networking was good – good opportunities, positive feedback. Idea to have pitching to general audience for networking purposes in parallel with finance	6 attended summit out of 8 4 accepted offers of support	Met 3 companies at summit. Next steps agreed.
IPN	Companies very happy with outcome and in particular for meetings with other companies. Happy with offers of support. 3 Investors – very happy with level of companies. Very interested in specific companies but sometimes level of investment required too high. Very interested in meeting investors from other countries. Disappointed not enough investors	10 companies very well prepared in advance. Knew exactly what they wanted. Also arranged meeting with companies as well as mentors	Met 14 companies looking for lighter support.

	Needed more help preparing pitches.		
Cap Digital	Booths should have used external panels and company logos would have been better than names. Some questions from VCs – more information than F6s beforehand. In particular more financial information required. 1 success story French VC & Italian SME Risparmio Super	8 companies.	25 meetings. A lot not organised in advance.
Lund	Too much emphasis on investor programme. Could have been more emphasis on B2B meetings.	Brought 6 companies 1 other participating in ACE didn't attend as not seeking investment	Lot of light support required. Need to follow up to confirm.
Bwcon (used travel budget for company travel)	Liked emphasis on meeting with mentors/project partners. Investors – no show. Difficult to raise interest in other European countries. When they're ready to go international they go global. Access to finance & VC investment might be interesting	Brought 1 company. Really liked it.	Talked to 20+ companies. Most interested in contacts. Light support so can provide introductions. 15 offers of support all interested but needs to be confirmed.
Forum Virium	High cost of travel prohibitive for attending meeting.	6 interested but only 1 came to Summit	4 meetings. 1 UK company interested in living lab support
Meta Group	Investor feedback: too many pitches, SME feedback from pitches – 4 pitches, didn't have time to prepare all but several got results. Happy with investor readiness session. Several other companies interested in participating in ACE.	6 out of 9 companies could attend due to Italian airport problems. Have 10 companies	Met 9 companies and confirmed interest. Some just interested in meeting investors, others want market informe
iMinds	4 companies pitched. Didn't prepare them. 2 VCs no shows.	9 companies attended - all interested in supports offered although some still vague	14 company meetings. 7 offers of support can be provided. 3 companies interested in living lab support.

