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EUROPEAN COMMISSION – HORIZON 2020



Accelerating European CPS Solutions to Market

Deliverable D2.1

WP2

Report on Community Engagement Strategy


Contract Number:	761708
Project Acronym:	FED4SAE
Project Title:	Federated CPS Digital Innovation Hubs for the Smart Anything Everywhere Initiative

Document Identifier:	D2.1 – v1.0
Status:	Final

Title of Document:	Report on Community Engagement Strategy
Dissemination Level:	Public

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Reviewed by:	Fraunhofer Ges., CEA

Created on:	2017-10-30
Last update:	2018-03-31

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Abstract

In this document, we describe the community engagement strategy of FED4SAE, which has the goal to ensure that innovative European Start-ups, SMEs, and Midcaps from any business sector become aware of the offerings made by the FED4SAE project, and in particular of the benefits and opportunities presented by the project's Open Calls for Application Experiments. The elements of the strategy comprises material and services to inform about the FED4SAE project, the offered industrial platforms and advanced technologies, and the Open Call process. This relates to various communication activities via the project website, information webinars, print and online promotion material, and announcements of the Open Calls in appropriate channels. The strategy also describes activities to identify innovative businesses as potential applicants for the Open Calls and support them to submit high-quality proposals in response to the Open Calls. This will be achieved by presence at relevant community events and conferences, organisation of local information events hosted at the FED4SAE Digital Innovation Hubs, and direct interaction with interested parties.

While the community engagement activities are part of the more general dissemination efforts and ecosystem-building activities of the project, this document specifically focuses on those activities that contribute to raising awareness about the Open Calls and to achieving high numbers of high-quality submissions of proposal for Application Experiments.



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1 Introduction

The overall ambition of FED4SAE is to boost and sustain the digitization of the European industry by strengthening competitiveness in Cyber Physical Systems (CPS) and embedded systems markets.

In alignment with the “Smart Anything Everywhere” initiative goals, FED4SAE aims to:

- Create a pan-European network of Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH) by leveraging existing regional ecosystems across value chains and a range of CPS competencies. These DIHs will enable both tech and non-tech innovative businesses (Start-ups SMEs, Midcaps) from any sector to build new products and services with “digital inside”.
- Act as a European added-value one-stop shop to facilitate cross-border partnerships between innovators and suppliers to accelerate innovation in products and processes of European businesses. This is enabled by providing technical, industrial and innovation management expertise to businesses for increases in market shares, productivity, and a broader adoption of CPS and embedded systems solutions.
- Facilitate links between innovators and investors associated with DIHs to reach out to further funding opportunities and accelerate commercialisation.
- Ensure the self-sustainability of the DIH network by developing cooperation with regional organizations and key stakeholders engaging public and private investment to fund further activities after project completion.


One of the major pillars of the FED4SAE activities to work towards this ambition are the Application Experiments, which are selected through three rounds of Open Calls, and which are designed and executed by innovative companies, be it Start-Ups, SMEs, or Mid-Caps. The purpose of the community engagement strategy presented in this document is to ensure that such businesses become aware of the FED4SAE programme and its offerings, and to support potential applicants to submit proposals for Application Experiments in response to the Open Calls.

1.1 Task objectives

Overall, the community engagement strategy has the following goals:

- Raise awareness among innovative businesses about the opportunities offered by the FED4SAE project through the technical, financial, and innovation support within the Open Call experiments.
- Activate and support potential applicants to submit high-quality proposals in response to the Open Calls.

The key target group for the community engagement activities are innovative businesses of various sizes, from Start-Ups to SMEs to Mid-Caps, in the six major application domains addressed by FED4SAE: smart city, smart energy, smart health and wellbeing, smart manufacturing, smart mobility, smart transportation. Moreover, these activities will address companies from various sectors, including both tech companies that have existing activities and expertise in ICT and digital technologies, and businesses from more non-tech fields where traditionally ICT is not dominating.


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1.2 Purpose of this document

The elements of the FED4SAE community engagement strategy are detailed in this document. The strategy mainly relies on two types of components:

- Material and services to inform about the FED4SAE project, the offered industrial platforms, advanced technologies and testbeds, and the Open Call process.
- Activities to identify innovative businesses as potential applicants for the Open Calls and help them develop proposals for Application Experiments, and to activate the local ecosystems of the FED4SAE project consortium partners to support the engagement.

It should be noted that to a large extent the community engagement is part of the more general dissemination efforts and ecosystem-building activities of the project, and as such also relies on tasks in other work packages (e.g., WP4 “Technology Enablement”, and WP6 “DIH, Dissemination and Exploitation”) that are described in other project reports. As the focus of the community engagement is about the Open Calls, the scope of this document is restricted to that aspect. Consequently, and in order to avoid overlap, some elements of the strategy such as the project website or partner ecosystems will be described only briefly, and references to other project deliverables are made wherever necessary.

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2 Elements of the Community Engagement Strategy

2.1 Project Website

The FED4SAE project website (at www.fed4sae.eu) is the main communication tool and informs about every aspect of the project. Regarding the Open Calls, the website will provide all relevant information to potential applicants, including:

- Scope, objectives, and ambition of the FED4SAE project.
- Descriptions of the offered industrial platforms, advanced technologies, and testbeds.
- Announcement of the Open Calls.
- Explanation of the Open Call process, including timeline, conditions to apply, financial constraints, eligibility and evaluation criteria, and legal and IP aspects.
- Links to download the relevant Open Call documents, including a proposal template and a Guide for Applicants
- Frequently Asked Questions and answers.
- Information about how to contact the project in case of further questions or problems.

The website also includes the proposal submission system. For the second and third round of the Open Calls descriptions of previously selected and executed Application Experiments will be added to the website, to provide examples of successful proposals and their results.

More general information about the project website can be found in the project deliverable D6.1 “Public Project Website”.

2.2 Dedicated Communication on Open Calls

In order to successfully promote the Open Calls of FED4SAE and make interested companies aware of the opportunities, various material is developed and distributed via a number of dissemination channels.


General project and Open Call promotion material

In addition to the online promotion of the project and the Open Calls on the project website, material for print promotion is produced, including:

- Project brochures and leaflets to attract attention and to generate interests.
- Project posters and banners for presentations within relevant local, national or European events.
- A project slide deck to communicate about the FED4SAE aims and mission, open calls, and introduction to project partners at various events.

Information material about offered technologies

To communicate to the European companies the compelling benefits of innovating on the industrial platforms, advanced technologies, and testbeds offered by FED4SAE, a compelling communications pack and supporting collateral that describes the key features of each of Core Platforms and complementary technologies is designed and developed. This will not only include an overview of technical features but also sample use cases, white papers, videos, or other collateral that showcase how these technologies can be exploited so that the potential applicants can quickly understand and internalise the value proposition and be enthused and excited about the opportunities to innovate on these platforms and technologies. This material is mainly presented on the project website.

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Webinar

Webinars complement local workshops and information events to more broadly support applicants from all European regions to prepare submissions to open calls. General webinars will be used to provide an overview on the FED4SAE project and the Open Call process, while more specific webinars may be offered to inform about the individual CPS technologies and platforms that companies can use in their Application Experiments. Announcements of live webinars will be broadly communicated through email lists and social media channels, while recordings of the webinars will be made available on the project website for later use.

Call announcements

The opening of each Open Call round will not only be announced on the project website, but also through various other channels:

- Participant Portal of the European Commission: announcements of the Open Calls will be published in the “Funding Opportunities” section of the Participant Portal, under “Open Competitive calls and calls for third parties”.
- FED4SAE project consortium partners will announce the Open Calls on their organisation’s website.
- The Call announcements will also be shared via the website of the Smart Anything Everywhere initiative (www.smartanythingeverywhere.eu) and the SAE newsletter.
- Press releases and press notes will be used to communicate about the opening of the Calls.

In addition to the development of communication material, activities will be carried out to inform companies about the offerings of FED4SAE and the opportunities enabled by the Open Calls.

Social media and other online promotion

Social media channels will be utilised to promote CPS and Embedded System technologies, promote open calls, and establish and attract local user communities and new users from across Europe. FED4SAE will be present on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.


The project partners will use their local networks to inform a large number of potentially interested parties about the Open Calls. These channels include the communities of related projects in which FED4SAE partners participate.

Furthermore, we will also reach out to broader, relevant communities to disseminate the Open Call, for instance addressing industry publications such as “Embedded Computing”, “IoT Business”, “Connected World” and others.

Presence at events

Online promotion of the project and the Open Calls will be complemented by the presence of FED4SAE partners at various types of events, including conferences (e.g., the HiPEAC conference), fairs and exhibitions (such as the Hannover Messe), and brokerage events (e.g., as organised by the EC, or Artemis, ECSEL, or EPoSS). Where possible, the FED4SAE project will participate with an information booth. Alternatively, FED4SAE participants will promote the project through short presentations, distribution of leaflets, or individual communication.

Organisation of local events

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In addition to participating at events organised elsewhere, FED4SAE partners will support the promotion of the project and the engagement of the local communities through hosting dedicated information events at the FED4SAE Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs), and participation in relevant meet-up groups in the wider local networks.


As stated earlier, the communication material and activities described in this subsection are part of the more general project communication and dissemination efforts, which are described in more detail in the project deliverables D6.2 “Dissemination Plan”.

2.3 Support to Third Parties for Submission of Proposals

To complement the broad communication about the project and the Open Calls, FED4SAE partners will also engage in individual consultation for companies interested in submitting a proposal to the Open Call. Such efforts will look to help

- Explain the details of the Open Call process, its conditions and limitations, to interested companies, also in their own language.
- Understand the needs of the interested companies in terms of technology, targeted application, foreseen business case, etc.
- Define and build a consortium for successful execution of an Application Experiment.
- Engage and trigger discussion between all the potential partners, i.e. interested companies and FED4SAE partners that will provide technical or coaching support during an Application Experiment.
- Provide feedback to draft version of proposals in order to achieve high quality of the submission.
- Provide assistance during the submission process if needed.

Furthermore, an information & help desk will be set up that can be contacted by interested companies to ask questions and request individual support. Initially, the point of contact will be provided through a general email address, which will relay messages to the FED4SAE project coordinator, and who will involve other FED4SAE project partners on a case-by-case basis if needed.

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3 Conclusions

The FED4SAE partners have defined a detailed and comprehensive strategy to achieve a high engagement of the European CPS community of innovative businesses – SMEs, Start-Ups, or Mid-Caps – in the activities offered by FED4SAE. The goal of the strategy is to ensure that such businesses become aware of the FED4SAE programme and its offerings, and to support potential applicants to submit proposals for Application Experiments in response to the Open Calls. This will be achieved in two ways. First, by providing material and services to inform about the FED4SAE project, the offered industrial platforms and advanced technologies, and the Open Call process. Second, through activities to identify innovative businesses as potential applicants for the Open Calls and help them develop proposals for Application Experiments, and to activate the local ecosystems of the FED4SAE project consortium partners to support the engagement. Elements of the strategy may be refined for later Open Call rounds based on experiences made and lessons learned.