

TETRAMAX, GOALS AND RESULTS OF AN H2020 INNOVATION ACTION



After four years of joint efforts of all 22 partners, TETRAMAX will come to an end in December 2021. We had an interview with [Anna Puig-Centelles](#), project officer at the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA) and [Sandro D'Elia](#), programme officer in CNECT in the European Commission, to talk about the goals and results of innovation action projects funded by the European Commission, such as TETRAMAX.

WHY DID THE COMMISSION LAUNCH A CALL FOR THE H2020 INNOVATION ACTIONS SUCH AS TETRAMAX FIVE YEARS AGO?

[Sandro D'Elia](#): The need for the innovation actions became clear when we realized that most SMEs were not aware of the technological and funding opportunities in Europe. Previously, it was also difficult for SME to participate in a European digitization project because it takes time and knowhow to submit proposals for this innovation without a clear return on investment.

The EU invested in a EU-wide collaboration platform in 2013 with the ICT Innovation for Manufacturing SMEs (I4MS) an initiative followed by the Smart Anything Everywhere initiative (SAE) in 2015. These two initiatives aimed to help transfer technology from the research part to the SME and to ensure that the industry in Europe can fully benefit from digital innovations to upgrade its products, improve its processes and adapt its business models to the digital age. This was a complex construction, since Horizon 2020 was initially focused on specific research projects and was less adequate to stimulate transferring technology.

[Anna Puig-Centelles](#) : In April 2016 the European Commission presented the Digitizing European Industry Strategy (DEI). The importance of technology transfer for the digitization of Europe is obvious. It initiated Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH) that help companies to get in touch with technology providers and make it very easy to reach out. TETRAMAX, as a one-stop shop had a unique approach to help a single company with support and a network of experts in digitizing their specific business and be more competitive.

DO YOU THINK INNOVATION ACTIONS SUCH AS TETRAMAX PROJECT CONTRIBUTED TO TACKLE THESE ISSUES?

[Anna Puig-Centelles](#): The innovation actions really contributed to the digitization of Europe. Before, if you were a small entrepreneur it was really difficult to get information or help to find the right technology for your business. After the DIHs were created, it became a lot easier.

[Sandro D'Elia](#): It was successful, but limited. In Horizon 2020 we reached about 2000 SMEs. This is good, but we need many more! We need to reach out to every company, because even the small shop near your house may need specific technology. Initiatives such as TETRAMAX were successful, just because the threshold for SMEs to innovate became lower.

[Anna Puig-Centelles](#): TETRAMAX is an example of a successful innovation action project, because it really got in touch with the industry and especially with SMEs and technology providers in some European regions that were previously harder to reach out to, - And Europe is dedicating a lot of attention to involve all member states in these innovation actions, especially the ones that joined after 2004.

ON A GREATER SCALE, WHAT ARE THE OVERARCHING WIDER EC PRIORITIES IN THE NEW DIGITAL EUROPE PROGRAMME?

Sandro D'Elia: The new Digital Programme now is more than an excellence programme, it is a capacity building programme. This means we need to give the industry the tools in supercomputing, quantum computing, etc. and bring the technology to the masses. This will stimulate the development of digital and sustainable innovative products and knowhow, complementing the approach towards excellence in research and development of the Horizon Europe programme. A big change is that digitization of technology is now one of the two pillars of the Twin (green and digital) Transition.

WHAT COULD THE FUTURE BRING NOW FOR PROJECTS SUCH AS TETRAMAX?

Anna Puig-Centelles: TETRAMAX has an important network we would like to maintain in our digital innovation plans. For instance, a company in eastern Poland could get in touch with the supercomputer base in Barcelona to collaborate and exchange knowledge or technologies. TETRAMAX was one of the first projects in this shift of what is happening now in the New Digital Europe Programme. We expect that TETRAMAX will get involved in a new EDIH, so that the network can still be maintained.



MORE INFORMATION:

tetramax.eu

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Information on the experiments:

videos:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmX614EDBjFd2_2lfJoliQA

short description: tetramax.eu/ttx/funded-projects

Rainer Leupers, project coordinator

I'm very glad about the appreciation of TETRAMAX by the EC representatives. While the official EC language on digitizing European industries of often quite abstract, we made things very tangible during our day-to-day interaction with hundreds of academic technology providers and industrial adopters. This gave us a lot of insight into obstacles and showstoppers in academia-to-industry tech transfer. In my view, our key to success has been to lower the entry barriers as much as possible. This holds both for the academic clients, for whom our Technology Transfer Experiment (TTX) program certainly provided an incentive to take tech transfer more serious, and our industry clients, which often appreciated our lean and efficient TTX proposal procedures.

When I started dealing with EU-level tech transfer coordination, acronyms like DIH, EDIH, DEI, SAE etc. were not in use. It simply began with an informal workshop with colleagues and stakeholders that I organized in Brussels around 10 years ago. This laid the foundation of the TETRACOM project I coordinated during 2013-2016. I must admit I didn't care a lot about European digitization strategies at that time. My ambition was simply to boost European tech transfer based on the TTX model, that was in turn derived from my own transfer experiences at RWTH Aachen University. Afterwards, we used the momentum to scale it up into TETRAMAX, which is now well aligned with European digitization strategies and probably even helped a little to shape them.

We definitely plan to maintain the TETRAMAX network beyond the project duration. Just like in TETRACOM (www.tetracom.eu), we will later turn the TETRAMAX website (www.tetramax.eu) into an "evergreen" site that will preserve access to all public project results and findings. We also hope to continue our strategic collaboration with the HiPEAC network, which has been instrumental for our EU-wide dissemination and TTX acquisition. Last but not least, we are transferring best practices and know-how into successor projects such as some forthcoming European Digital Innovation Hubs.

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