



Interreg Central Europe - CE1569 ProsperAMnet  
Progressing Service Performance and Export Results of Advanced Manufacturers Networks

## D.T3.3.2 Report on Reviews and benchmarking - Round Table SUMMARY

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### Overall Roundtable Summary

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<b>Organiser:</b>	Project Partners of ProsperAMnet
<b>Project partners involved:</b>	LP FHOÖ and PP6 Biz-Up PP3 INNOSKART Nonprofit Ltd. PP4 CCIS PP5 JHK PP7 FINN PP8 TGZ Bautzen Innovation Centre PP10 EUBA
<b>Location of the round table:</b>	University of Szeged (29 <sup>th</sup> June 2021) Upper Austria (online 16 <sup>th</sup> November 2021) Slovakia (online 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2021) Italy (online 27 <sup>th</sup> October 2021) Germany (online 23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2021) Ceske Bodejovice, Czech Republic (20 <sup>th</sup> October 2021) Slovenia (online 13 <sup>th</sup> October 2021)
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The following summary shall give an overview on the main topics which occurred during the round tables which were organized in the target markets of ProsperAMnet by the respective project partners. At the individual “reports on reviews and benchmarking” several issues, opportunities and country specific uniqueness’s in regard to the tools offered by ProsperAMnet and general Artificial Intelligent issues as well as government strategies and topics in regard to the internationalization efforts of companies were discussed.

The Lead Partner and PP6 (FHOOE and Biz-up) held their round table, and the company participants were overwhelmingly excited about the tools and were keen on utilizing the tools in their companies.

The Hungarian PP3, Innoskart conducted a round table and found out that Hungarian Advanced Manufacturers are actively seeking partners and companies abroad to start a business but do have their limitations in regard to export due to the low foreign language skills of their company owners and employees. In conclusion this means that tools like the company search and service export radar hold great potential for the companies in this country.

Therefore, it is according to the information provided by PP3 important to the participants that information on how to conduct export activities is provided to them in Hungarian which is already done in several projects. In general digitalization in this country is only introduced at a very slow speed. Also, in regard to AI applications companies are still in the developing stage and those who engage in AI related activities are mostly innovative and large companies. Support for service export is given in Hungary by several initiatives also on the regional level. Examples of institutions would be for example the “Hungarian Investment Promotion” agency. Ideas emerged from the roundtable are that ProsperAMnet should expand the Radar’s visibility to increase the building of international relationships and one should build relationships with organizations in order to promote the radar and to add credibility to the tool.

The PP4 CCIS held their roundtable on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 2021 and the PP presented the tools of ProsperAMnet to the participants and furthermore discussed how companies can enable themselves to compete in an international environment. Further the issues of digital transformation and AI for business applications were discussed and presented to the audience.

The Czech PP5 JHK conducted their round table, and this event was mostly a starters course in “how to export” in general. An introduction into the conditions, laws and duties companies need to fulfill when going abroad was provided to the participants. Czech companies are according to the report of JHK prone to make mistakes when exporting as they are unaware of certain legislative issues.

The Italian PP7, FINN conducted their round table and found out that the radar was found to be particularly suitable for the traditional sectors of advanced manufacturing in Italy. The artificial intelligence of the radar is not yet sufficiently trained for the sectors which are considered to be more of a “niche”. In addition, the results are more accurate for some countries than others. In consideration of future upgrades, the radar was considered to be of interest by most of the companies participating in the test. The service analysis function was especially appreciated. Furthermore, Italian initiatives for digitalization and export were introduced to the participants including the Italian Strategic Program for AI 2022-2024 which aims to expand the applications of AI in industries.

The Bautzen Innovative Centre (TGZ) which is the PP8 of ProsperAMnet found out while conducting their round table that the companies participating in the round tables were hugely interested in the tools offered by ProsperAMnet. Furthermore, digitalization initiatives of the German state of Saxony were introduced and funding guidelines for innovations were presented to the participants. Also, the



state of Saxony will soon found an Agency for Digitalization, as in Saxony AI is one of the main drivers of innovation and the strategy was approved in 2021 by lawmakers. Saxony is in general very export oriented and 1/3 of its GDP comes from foreign trade and this share shall even be increased in the upcoming years. Main challenges for businesses when exporting services are posed by the search and selection of reliable partners, bureaucratic challenges and market foreclosure and problems in customs and export control laws. Furthermore, several issues where AI could play a role in the future were discussed with the ultimate conclusion that EU countries lag behind Asian countries in this regard and many of the main challenges would be solvable and are solvable in Asia with the use of AI (such as filling out customs forms automatically)

When PP10 EUBA held their round table, within the discussions and demonstrations of the tool with company representatives, the theme came up that the tool had an easier time analyzing English speaking websites than those in other languages especially in Slavic languages. This is a general hindrance for Slovakian companies and the companies were encouraged to have a frequently updated English website also in place not only for this specific tool but also for general exporting activities as an English website naturally attracts companies from abroad more than a website in the Slovakian language. The companies also criticized the time it takes to get the results with the tools, but the Service Export Radar was explicitly appreciated by participating organizations. When discussing hurdles for the implementation of AI solutions in Slovakia the biggest problem pose quantity and quality of data as those are mostly not analyzed in depth.

Also, there is a general absence of services which are offered with a product as the majority of Slovakian AMs exclusively focus on products. Slovakian companies mostly use classical market research tools to investigate business opportunities, but the utilization of AI tools is still uncommon. Innovative solutions are mostly sought after in larger organizations and to educate personnel on e.g., digital solutions such as artificial intelligence companies call for the aid of developers/providers to give them appropriate training. Also the participants call for a centralized information source for information on service export.

In the area of national support of AI solutions in export, the general conclusion could be summarized as mistrust and dissatisfaction, mainly due to lack of active support towards SMEs from the state. The participants discussed strategies of the Slovakian government, but those are mostly seen only as documents, not solutions by the companies, for not offering any practical help, just big ambitions and promises.

## **Conclusion**

To summarize all the round tables, one can spot differences between the Austrian and German members of ProsperAMnet and their counterparts in their general knowledge about export of services and accompanying factors such as export knowledge and language savviness in comparison to the other members in this project. Furthermore, the geographically more eastern located members of ProsperAMnet had a lower digitalization implementation rate in their organizations and novel solutions are in a slower fashion adopted than in the more western located ProsperAMnet project partners. One can spot that Austrian and German companies in general have more experiences with export and digital tools than the other members.

Nevertheless, also with the members of ProsperAMnet who are located in a region which are more advanced in this regard, the theme occurred that they are still lacking behind other nations such as China in their utilization of artificial intelligent solutions and digitalization in general. Also, in regard to service exports, especially the Eastern PPs (especially the Czech Republic, Hungary and



Slovakia) claimed frequently to rather export products without accompanying services than their western peers and as well had issues with foreign languages and less.

In general, the tools of ProsperAMnet were well received across all countries. Digitalization strategies on the country/region level were described in all roundtables but for example the Slovakian PPs round table participants do not see an impact from those initiatives on them while Italian, German and Austrian counterparts were more receptive towards government (state or national level) initiatives. Overall larger companies were deemed more innovative also in the tools they use for export than SMEs across all roundtables.