Community Talk with:
Juhani Latvakoski

In this second of the community talk series, Juhani Latvakoski picks up from where Frans-Josef Stewing left off. Juhani is working as a principal scientist and senior project manager at VTT in Finland. He graduated from University of Oulu some 25 years ago and started his career at Nokia at the end of 1980s before moving to his current employer, VTT, where he has worked in a variety of roles, from research scientist and research team leader to principal scientist and senior project manager.

"I have been involved in challenging exercises related to research, development, creation of intellectual properties, business initiation and related R&D operations with many industrial companies and research organisations. Some highlights are my contributions to the world's first GSM base stations in the early 1990s and work as a co-founder and CTO of a spin-off company, experiences from entrepreneurship and exit processes. All these have, in fact, been a very valuable basis for R&D work within VTT and industry-driven research such as that within the ITEA framework involving collaboration with SMEs, larger enterprises and academia.

"While I had some light experience of ITEA projects at the end of 1990s, I first really became involved in ITEA when I took part in the Project Outline days in Toulouse 2002. It was an interesting experience to get involved in a successful project preparation process and to meet some people there who had been involved in ITEA from its early stages. Afterwards I took a big step by initiating my own proposal in 2005, the Usenet project, which was focused on M2M service networks. Later, the Usenet project received a 'Silver Achievement Award' at the ITEA 2 Co-summit 2011. Subsequently, I initiated and led the A2Nets project, which recently had its final review and has now finished. The A2Nets project focused on the challenges of applying autonomic computing and communication paradigms to exploit the real power of such M2M networks. The way in which the A2Nets project has contributed to M2M business aspects can be regarded

help projects improve their results. As for the results, it seems that ITEA projects have really created added value and have had impact on the economy.

"I'm not sure exactly what ITEA means when it speaks of 'seizing the high ground' but for me I think of high quality in the projects, the results, and the supporting framework. I think this is also important for the future of ITEA if it wants to achieve the impact to which it aspires, such as getting innovation quickly into industry and society. And to achieve this, ITEA has to be attractive on a pan-European scale to attract the investment of companies and public authorities throughout Europe and further afield. The ITEA projects can complement EU and national R&D programmes because they are quite close to the industries and markets and have a nice combination of contributions from big industrial companies, SMEs and RTOs.

"I would say that the excellent collaboration that exists within the projects is an expression of 'happiness' because when the partners of a project are happy, they are motivated to contribute to the project – and when the partners are happy, the project is happy. This means that flexibility and freedom to innovate are created and that is ultimately visible in the high quality results achieved in the projects. And the results boost the creation of innovations in the form of products and services, which creates happiness in society. Just think about being able to monitor physical health – it can boost our quality of life, and that makes us happy. As far as I'm concerned, being involved in ITEA has given me a framework for work and collaboration with nice people from different backgrounds … and that's something I'm happy doing.

"Now all that rests for me to do is to hand over to the next in line. There are nice people from industrial companies and SMEs, and colleagues from various research institutes who have been collaborating within ITEA for a shorter or longer time. However, perhaps it is interesting for readers and also for me to have a view more from an industrial perspective and also from ITEA framework level perspective. Therefore, I'd like to invite Medur Sridharan from Bull to be next because I think he has a view on both of these aspects."

as having created a powerful springboard for European industry to take a leading position in this very crucial area. Under the ITEA framework, I'm now working on initiating a new ITEA project, M2MGrids, focusing on dynamic cyber-physical systems. Let's find out whether we see the third step in this project chain focusing on M2M/IoT/CPS systems.

"Given my involvement as a project leader, I have had more a bottom-up view of ITEA, experiencing the organisation from the individual and project perspectives. When thinking about ITEA as a community, it seems that the scale of events has increased over the past decade or so, and it is better organised today than previously. Certainly that's the feeling if I compare the first PO day I attended in Toulouse and the PO days of more recent years. That's a change for the good and shows that things are heading in the right direction.

"I must admit that in the beginning my first impression of ITEA projects was that they were not particularly efficient but having gained experience from real project participation and leadership, I realise that ITEA framework is indeed a very effective way of getting innovation into the world through the products and services of the companies and organisations that participate. The projects are very flexible and highly market oriented. Flexibility is very important because the world is constantly changing and you have to be continuously adaptive. ITEA has created a framework that enables the flexibility for projects, and this has been especially important for SMEs. The length of the projects – normally from two to three years – is too long a planning period for SMEs. This is because they need continuously to be adaptive to changes in the market and to get innovative products launched quickly to stay alive. ITEA has created an excellent framework for playing a strong mentoring and supporting role. This is evident, for instance, in the project reviews that are very constructive and try to