# Press release

ITEA Event 2018 as part of the EUREKA Innovation Days
22-24 May, Helsinki

**EUREKA Innovation Days – the Power of Collaboration**

*This year, ITEA, the EUREKA Cluster on Software Innovation, lined up with the Finnish EUREKA Chairmanship team and all other EUREKA Clusters, and co-located its annual ITEA Event on 24 May with the EUREKA Innovation Days 2018 (22-24 May) in Helsinki. The EUREKA Innovation Days were all about ‘the power of collaboration’, a theme underlined by EUREKA high-level group Chairman, Heikki Uusi-Honko, who cited the venue of the Finlandia Hall as the place where the Helsinki treaty of 1975 was signed “when, in the middle of the Cold War, East and West sat here at the same table.”*

Over 850 participants this time around were treated to an exhibition of projects, demonstrations of success stories, interactive panel discussions, keynote speeches and presentations of awards. Three days in which the ‘smart’ insights and trends in mobility, energy, health and industry coupled with the essential role of collaboration in getting innovation into people’s lives were highlighted.

**Better quality of life for humanity**

ITEA’s contribution to the successes achieved by collaborative projects was showcased by 37 projects in the exhibition space. The vibrant buzz of expectation and reward that emanated from the guided tours of the exhibition space bore witness to the lively engagement along this corridor of software innovation. For the first time, ITEA organised tailored Innovation Discovery tours of the exhibition offering invited companies to learn how the latest innovations coming from ITEA projects could solve their current challenges and to initiate partnerships in ITEA for the future.

One of the ITEA projects present in Helsinki, MEDIATE, received the special 2018 EUREKA Innovation Award from the 2018 Millennium Technology Prize winner, Finnish physicist and inventor of Atomic Layer Deposition (ALD), Tuomo Suntola. The ITEA 2 MEDIATE project aimed at supporting healthcare professionals in the transition from invasive open surgery to minimally invasive, image-guided interventions. In accepting the award, project coordinator, Herman Stegehuis of Philips, paid tribute to the whole team without whom the success would not have been possible. “Because there are many simultaneous changes in healthcare (clinically, technically, regulatory, financially) and clinical applications are diverse, no single company can cover all innovation aspects on its own*.”*

**Innovation in a global environment**

So not only did the event offer new insights into business and technology developments within the four ‘smart’ domains but it also provided opportunities for networking and initiating or developing collaborative projects with companies and research organisations from Europe and beyond. During the plenary EUREKA Clusters session of Thursday 24 May, in their own two-minute pitches to an inquisitive audience, the Clusters underlined their roles in the innovation ecosystem. ITEA Chairwoman Zeynep Sarılar referred to the high and growing participation of SMEs in many successful projects within the ITEA collaborative community. Afterwards the call was open to SMEs to pitch their ideas to, and get feedback from, the Cluster chairs and find out how the different Clusters might serve as enablers. Furthermore, B2B matchmaking sessions each day proved a big draw to finding international collaboration for innovative ideas. This conference was all about demonstrating and not simply showcasing how collaboration has the power to make success happen. As Zeynep Sarılar also suggested, “EUREKA is the place for innovation in a global environment.”

**Positive impact in a global market**

It was also an opportunity for ITEA to celebrate 20 years of successful innovation, and to this end participants were invited to gain an insider view on ITEA impact and participation from project leaders, ITEA body members and Public Authorities. This involved an **interactive, audience-involving panel session with the four winners of the 2018 ITEA Awards of Excellence in which e**xperts from Airbus, Barco, IDEMIA and Philips shared their inspiring solutions for the challenges of collaborative city co-design (C³PO), safe and secure Building Management System (FUSE-IT), security of border management (IDEA4SWIFT) and minimally-invasive interventional treatments (BENEFIT). Finally, in a celebration of **20 years of ITEA, s**everal representatives from industry and Public Authorities spoke about the impact of ITEA, its projects and their personal experiences in ITEA. Andy de Mets of Barco, a ‘veteran’ of the ITEA set-up for 20 years, paid tribute to the game-changing impact of ITEA on his company: “In 2001 a small consortium came together in ITEA to find out whether digital cinema had a future. Well, we created a complete new market. We are the world market leader today with over 50% of market share in digital cinema with over €300 m in sales revenue.” Mike Timmermans of the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), said that the impact of ITEA for him was also very tangible. “With two of the projects we co-funded, MEDIATE and BENEFIT, winning awards, I can return home a happy man,” and Jonas Bjarne of the Swedish Innovation Agency, Vinnova, considered ITEA a success not only in terms of project results but also on the human front, referring to “a family, the place I come home to.”

In her closing address, Zeynep Sarılar paid homage to the impact of ITEA’s past 20 years but also looked ahead to the next twenty, reiterating the power of collaboration. “We don’t know what to expect at this moment. The only thing that we can do is to continue to be curious, open to learn and be ready to adapt to the future. So let’s focus on innovative solutions to societal challenges, collaborate with each other and go to the global markets to create a positive impact. If you want to be a part of this future of ITEA, then join us in the next Call and through collaboration make the future much brighter for everyone.”

For a full event overview, including presentations (photos will follow shortly):
<https://itea3.org/itea-event-2018>

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**Note for editors, not for publication:**For interview requests, questions and additional information about ITEA, please contact:

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**ABOUT ITEA**

[*ITEA*](https://itea3.org) *is a transnational and industry-driven Research, Development and Innovation (R&D&I) programme in the domain of software innovation. ITEA is a Cluster programme of* [*EUREKA*](http://www.eurekanetwork.org/eureka-clusters)*, an intergovernmental network for R&D&I cooperation, involving over 40 countries globally. ITEA is the home of software innovation, enabling an international and knowledgeable community to collaborate in funded projects that turn innovative ideas into new businesses, jobs, economic growth and benefits for society.*

In a rapidly changing society where societal challenges are omnipresent, digitisation is no longer an option but should be regarded as *the* opportunity to create innovative solutions. Digital technology will be applied in all aspects of society, touching every element of people’s lives. Software innovation is a core component for mastering this Digital Transition and this is the main focus of ITEA.

It is ITEA’s mission to enable businesses, with the involvement of their customers, to create innovative solutions that master the Digital Transition and tackle the major challenges in a way that really helps bring society forward. ITEA encourages its global Community to create impact and value through R&D&I projects in the area of Software Innovation with the knowledge of industry and the capability of national financing.

ITEA stimulates innovation projects in a global community of large industry, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), start-ups, academia and customer organisations. ITEA’s bottom-up project creation ensures that the project ideas are industry-driven and based on actual customer needs. Each year, ITEA issues one Call for projects starting with a two-day brokerage event. Each Call follows a two-step procedure, in which industrial experts evaluate the quality of the project proposal in terms of innovation, impact and consortium.

The ITEA programme is publicly funded on a national level. Each ITEA project partner can apply for funding from their own national Public Authority. An early dialogue between project teams and public authorities supports alignment with national priorities and the best possible opportunities for funding that lead to high success rates.

More information: <https://itea3.org>