Action Plan for Pilot Actions

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Abstract:

The overall goal of this document is to provide an initial plan for the pilot actions planned by the NearUS consortium, based on the gap analysis done by NearUS. The pilot actions are high-quality and demand-driven services to be provided by the NearUS Network/Centres across the European Union (EU) and in the US, for the organisations based in the EU Member States and Associated Countries. This action plan includes: brief description, target group, indicative planning for the next 3 years, selection criteria, outreach plan, etc. It is a living document, therefore the lessons learnt from the first pilot actions (services), the results of evaluation and other feedbacks will be taken into account and, when needed, the action plan will be adjusted.

Keywords: pilot actions, action plan, planning, target group, selection criteria

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Executive Summary

This document provides an **initial** plan for the pilot actions (i.e. pilot services): brief description, target group, indicative planning for the next 3 years, selection criteria, outreach plan, etc.

It is a living document, therefore the lessons learnt from the first pilot actions (services), the results of evaluation and other feedbacks will be taken into account and, **when needed, the action plan will be adjusted.**

The pilot actions of NearUS include **research-oriented pilot actions** and **business/market-oriented pilot actions**, described in this Action Plan for Pilot Actions:

Research-oriented pilot actions
Target customers: Representatives of research organisations, universities, etc. who look for research-related collaboration opportunities in the US
> **Research Connection Symposia**   > **Working visits**   > **Work Space at the NearUS Network Centres/Associated Hubs**

Potential research-oriented pilot actions to be additionally investigated during NearUS Year 1 and, if confirmed, to be planned for Year 2-3, are:
- **IPR support service (tbc);**
- **Manuscript editing (for publication in journals) (tbc);**
- **Support in proposal writing (tbc).**

Business/market-oriented pilot actions
Target customers: researchers, start-ups, spin-offs, SMEs (from both, research and business background) with the aim to internationalise/enter the US market, and to develop Research2Market or Business2Business partnerships
> **Innovation Tours**   > **Bootcamps**   > **Matchmaking, Connecting & Pitching events**   > **Work Space at the NearUS Centres/Associated Hubs**   > **Media Promotion Service for start ups**   > **Business Acceleration Programme**

For completeness: NearUS will also provide **advice and support to the European research and innovation community**. These activities are described in other NearUS documents and not included in the present report. They include:

- **Thematic Research Studies**
- **Digital tools for researchers (Online education modules, webinars, First-Aid Information Kit)**
- **Training Events for Researchers**
- **Innovation/Market Studies**
- **Digital tools for businesses (online education modules, webinars, First-Aid Information Kit)**
- **Training Events for Businesses**

The NearUS Project

Network for European Research and Innovation acceleration in the US

The NearUS initiative will establish a Network of European Research and Innovation Centres throughout the United States. It will act as a central contact point for European research and innovation actors seeking to grow and reinforce collaboration across the Atlantic. The mission of the Network is to provide standardised as well as tailor-made, research & innovation internationalisation support services to European researchers and innovators, to accelerate access to the US market, and maximise chances of success. The initiative started in April 2017.

NearUS targets to serve the following actors:

- Accelerators
- Businesses
- Clusters

- Entrepreneurs
- Funding Agencies

- Incubators
- Networks
- R&D institutes and labs

- Research managers and administrators

- Research Parks
- SME's
- Start-ups

- Universities
- University Associations

The NearUS Network will include the following entities:

- **One "Coordination Node" in Europe** (at EBN, Brussels)
- **One "Coordination Node" in the US** (at InBIA)
- **Two physical "Landing Hubs":**
    - **San Francisco Centre**: NearUS West Coast Landing Hub at European American Enterprise Council
    - **Boston Centre**: NearUS East Coast Landing Hub at Cambridge Innovation Centre
- **Five Associate Hubs across the US**, and plans to expand the NearUS Network beyond these first five Hubs, over four years.

The NearUS Network is built on local US experience and strong existing ties between the EU and US, while providing new researcher- and entrepreneur-serving capabilities which address the resource gaps necessary to enable access for all EU Member States and Associated Countries, as well as every state in the US.

A variety of services are proposed for researchers and entrepreneurs engaged by the Network during the pilot phase, then the Centres' pilot activities will be evaluated to inevitably retain the initiative's most successful components to ensure a sustainable plan for NearUS in the future.

Services will target various, commercially viable technology maturity levels (**Research2Research**, **Research2Market** and **Business2Business** stages) and will include research connection symposia, business matchmaking opportunities, working visits and

innovation tours to US organisations to explore technology/product partnerships and/or business development middle / long term opportunities, pitching to potential investors, entrepreneurial boot camps, work space access, hands on business acceleration programmes, and more. As the NearUS initiative is highly competitive to best serve the strongest researchers and entrepreneurs, all services must be applied for through an open and transparent selective mechanism.
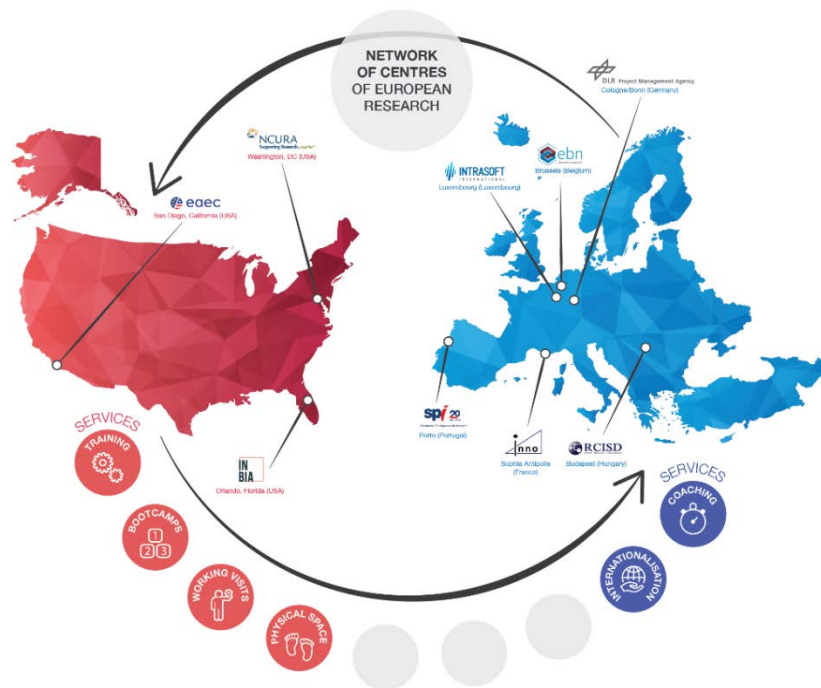
60 associated partners in the EU and US support the NearUS Network, with more associated partners expected in the future.

NearUS Consortium:

Coordinator: German Aerospace Center (DLR), Germany

Partners:

> inno TSD, France
> European Business and Innovation Centre Network (EBN), Brussels
> International Business Innovation Association (InBIA), USA
> European American Enterprise Council (EAEC), USA
> INTRASOFT International (INTRA), Luxembourg
> Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovação (SPI), Portugal
> Regional Centre for Information and Scientific Development (RCISD), Hungary
> National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA), USA

Graph 1: NearUS Network

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
B2B	Business to Business
EU	European Union
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
NearUS	Network for European Research and Innovation acceleration in the US
R&D	Research and Development
R&I	Research and Innovation
R2M	Research to Market
R2R	Research to Research
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
US	United States of America

1 Introduction

Context

Based on the outcomes of the NearUS gaps analysis, this report prepares the implementation of connecting tools and services (offered mainly by consortium partners but also by other service providers, if relevant). The criteria for setting up the pilot actions will be defined. This provides guidance on whether the existing services are sufficient or if new, tailor-made formats are needed to increase connection opportunities that meet critical client needs. The pilot actions will be set up using technical implementation tools. Participants will be selected for the different pilot actions via a call procedure.

Goals

The overall goal of this document is to provide planning of implementation of the NearUS pilot actions. The pilot actions are high-quality and demand-driven services to be provided by the NearUS Network/Centres across the European Union (EU) and in the US, for the organisations based in the EU Member States and Associated Countries.

The overall goal of the action plan is accompanied by six intermediate sub-goals:

1. To build upon existing services for the EU Research and Innovation (R&I) community going to the United States (US) and to bring synergies and complementarities:
    > NearUS performed a mapping on existing tools and services as well as service providers.
    > A needs analysis, performed by NearUS, ensures the alignment of project activities to the demand of potential clients.
    > A gap analysis laid results of the offer and demand analysis together and analysed gaps and potential synergies. Please see section two on the results.
2. To develop a sound portfolio of demand driven services as "pilot actions" – to be delivered by the Network/Centres via the NearUS project.
    > A large panel of existing services, including by the project partners, will be adapted and integrated into the Network/Centres' offer.
    > A network of 60 Associated Partners supports NearUS' activities.
3. To design modular, scalable (when possible) and sustainable, revenue generating services.
4. To develop a metrics and a process to monitor, assess and optimise the services. This includes integrating a feedback loop and to adapt/optimise the services when necessary, ensuring that it is constantly driven by demand and bringing value to the market.
5. To organise open and transparent selection of EU R&I organisations, institutions and companies, entrepreneurs and researchers by attracting most relevant beneficiaries to the project services.
6. To deliver a sound offer, complemented by existing support to EU organisations, and comprising a multitude of support bundled in research-oriented and market-oriented strands, with sub-divisions as originally planned: Research to Research (R2R), Research to Market (R2M) and Business to Business (B2B).

Target Groups

The report targets potential clients for the NearUS pilot actions - EU R&I organisations, including:

> Accelerators
> Incubators
> Research parks
> Businesses networks
> Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
> Clusters
> Research and Development (R&D) institutes and labs
> Start-ups
> Entrepreneurs
> Research managers and administrators
> Universities
> Other organisations and multipliers, such as consultants, technology hubs representatives etc.

Each service will have its own target group. Two main strands of the services are research-oriented and market-oriented services, with sub-division strands (R2R, R2M, and B2B).

Approach

This document provides an **initial** plan for the pilot actions (i.e. pilot services): brief description, target group, indicative planning for the next 3 years, selection criteria, outreach plan, etc.

It is a living document, therefore the lessons learnt from the first pilot actions (services), the results of evaluation and other feedbacks will be taken into account and, **when needed, the action plan will be adjusted.**

2 Main Results from the NearUS Gap Analysis

NearUS aims at providing targeted support services to European R&I stakeholders aiming at collaborating with US counterparts and accessing the US market. A number of services were initially pre-defined during the NearUS initiative preparation, due to the sound experience of the project members. In order to assess and quantify European R&I stakeholders' demand for the proposed support services in the US and to fine-tune the services based on the feedback from the potential customers, the NearUS initiative started with a market research. The following steps were part of the market research process:

> Offer Analysis (supply mapping): existing EU and US-based support service providers were identified based on extensive desk research, online survey and additional interviews. The results along with potential synergies can be found in the report "Mapping of existing tools and services as well as service providers".

> Needs Analysis (demand mapping): in order to assess the demand and latent needs of European stakeholders from the Research and Innovation community seeking for support to internationalise to the US, an online survey was launched and disseminated to over 10,000 European stakeholders. The in-depth analysis of the survey responses, information retrieved through desk research and additional interviews can be found in the report "Mapping of clients and their demands".

> Gap Analysis: the results of supply mapping and demand mapping were compared and analysed in one report in order to identify gaps between the offer and the demand. The results of the gap analysis have been compared to the activities initially planned in the project's Description of Action. As a result, recommendations were drawn on where and how to adapt the project operational work plan (roadmap), to be sure the NearUS offer is targeted to the demand of potential clients and can thus be established; the sustainability of these new services being a next step. These results can be found in the report "Gap analysis, identification of synergies, and operational project roadmap".

Therefore, the Pilot Actions proposed in this Action Plan are set in accordance with the results from the Gap Analysis.

One of the main findings from the Gap Analysis is the lack of clarity with regard to what was defined as the 'Research to Market' strand in NearUS.

Accordingly, and in order to elaborate an offer which will be clear to clients, whether they are from EU or US origin, Research- vs Market-/Business oriented services could be a better distinction, leaving R2M out in the terminology. The services previously identified as R2M are suggested to be integrated into business/market-oriented services. The services previously identified as R2M were reorganised accordingly in this document, as indicated in the next Chapter.

3 Pilot Actions on Connecting Events and Services

The pilot actions of NearUS include **research-oriented pilot actions** and **business/market-oriented pilot actions**, described in this Action Plan:

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Target customers: Representatives of research organisations, universities, etc. who look for research-related collaboration opportunities in the US
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Potential research-oriented pilot actions to be additionally investigated during NearUS Year 1 and, if confirmed, to be planned for Year 2-3, are:

- **IPR support service (tbc);**
- **Manuscript editing** (for publication in journals) **(tbc);**
- **Support in proposal writing (tbc).**

Business/market-oriented pilot actions
Target customers: researchers, start-ups, spin-offs, SMEs (from both, research and business background) with the aim to internationalise/enter the US market, and to develop Research2Market or Business2Business partnerships
> **Innovation Tours** > **Bootcamps** > **Matchmaking, Connecting & Pitching events** > **Work Space at the NearUS Centres/Associated Hubs** > **Media Promotion Service for start ups** > **Business Acceleration Programme**

For completeness: NearUS will also provide **advice and support to the European research and innovation community**. These activities are described in other NearUS documents and are not included in the present report. They include:

- **Thematic Research Studies**
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- **Training Events for Researchers**
- **Innovation/Market Studies**
- **Digital tools for businesses (online education modules, webinars, First-Aid Information Kit)**
- **Training Events for Businesses**

3.1 Research-oriented services

3.1.1 Research Connection Symposia

The Research Connection Symposia bring research managers together with their high potential researchers to the NearUS Symposium connected to the NCURA Annual Event each August in Washington D.C., US. Over the three years of the project, a total of 60 European research managers and researchers will be selected for the 3 Symposia to meet US counterparts to identify joint collaboration efforts and the prospect for joint research endeavours. Each symposium will feature thematic sessions where EU researchers present their work and define their research needs to the potential US partners. Sufficient networking opportunities will be ensured – for example through the World Café method. Matchmaking sessions (short meetings between participants of the symposium, organised through e.g. the web-based matchmaking platform) could be part of the research connection symposia.

> A research connection symposium comprised of EU and US researchers and research managers is an effective venue to establish and to strengthen transatlantic research collaborations.

Target Group: European Research Managers and their Researchers

Funding principle: Eligible costs are travel and accommodation costs. Applicants can apply for a total of 1.000€ travel grants. 60 grants are planned to be provided during the NearUS project period.

Date: Each year – in 2018, 2019, 2020 - in August in Washington D.C. (in conjunction with the NCURA Annual Event).

Eligibility Criteria:

> Only research managers that apply together with at least one of their researchers are eligible.
> Type of Actor: Research Manager and Researchers from European research institutes, universities, national academies of science.

> Representative(s) of the Organisation based in the EU or Associated Country at time of application
> Ability to communicate professionally in English

Selection Criteria for applicants:

> Some track record of international collaboration, e.g., joint projects, joint publications, joint presentations, etc.
> Institutional support as indicated by a letter of support from a supervisor or high-level official at the applicants' institution
> Potential US collaborators that are realistic and appropriate
> A financial plan to sustain future collaboration after the symposium

Targeted Dissemination: Promotion channels are mainly research managers. NCURA and EARMA will serve as main dissemination channels. Other university / research institution organizations will serve as additional dissemination channels.

Contacts:

> **NCURA: Jesse Szeto**
> DLR: Johanna Füllmann
> RCISD: Adam David

3.1.2 Working Visits

> The one-week working visit addresses EU specialists, that are highly interested in expanding an existing collaboration with the US.

Three one-week working visits – separated from the innovation tours – to the US will be organised, each targeting a different area of research. Each visit will consist of up to 5 EU specialists (comprised of a group of research managers and researchers) who already have an existing collaboration with the US and are highly interested in expanding and solidifying long-term collaboration with their US partner. EU and US research organisations selected for the working visits will need to present in advance an implementation plan for long-term collaboration. This will be organised in synergy with other initiatives such as BILAT USA 4.0.

Target Group: One or two groups of EU researchers and research managers who are looking to strengthen an existing collaboration with US partners.

Budget: Applicants can apply for a total of 3.000€ travel grants. Eligible costs are travel and accommodation costs. Three one-week working visits (up to 5 days) are planned for up to 5 EU specialists each visit (one visit per year – in 2018, 2019 and 2020), thus up to 15 travel grants in total are planned.

Date and Time: starting from 2018

Eligibility Criteria:

> Type of Actor: Research Manager and Researchers from European research institutes, universities, national academies of science.

> Actor based in the EU or Associated Country at time of application
> Ability to communicate professionally in English
> Existing collaboration with at least 1 US partner

Selection Criteria:

> Some track record of international collaboration with the selected US partner(s), e.g., joint projects, joint publications, joint presentations, etc.
> Institutional support as indicated by a letter of support from a high-level official at the applicants' institution
> Some indication of interest from the intended US collaborator(s)
> A financial plan to sustain future collaboration after the symposium

Targeted Dissemination: Promotion channels are mainly research managers. NCURA and EARMA will serve as main dissemination channels. Other university / research institution organizations will serve as additional dissemination channels.

Contacts:

> **NCURA: Jesse Szeto**
> DLR: Johanna Füllmann
> RCISD: Adam David

3.1.3 Work Space

This service is planned to be provided for both research organisations and businesses. NearUS provides work space, and – in the future – possibly, infrastructure and secondment opportunities, to private and public European organisations coming to the US and seeking a landing hub for investigating

> NearUS provides work space to European private and public organisations coming to the US and seeking a landing hub

market opportunities or research opportunities in the US. Participants can choose to use Work Space at either the San Francisco Centre – Rocket Hub - or Boston Centre – Cambridge Innovation Centre. In future years, Network Nodes at Soft Landing sites throughout the US will enable interested parties to directly select the best eco-system suitable to their needs.

Target Group: specialists from organisations based in the EU MS or Associated Countries, coming to the US and seeking a landing hub, to investigate market opportunities or research opportunities in the US. It is however expected that the EU researchers coming to the US to explore research opportunities will be located on campus of their host universities in the US, and thus this service will be especially requested by the researchers looking for market-related opportunities (Research2Market target group) and by technology-based businesses.

Budget and funding principle: A work space worth of up to 700€ for up to two weeks will be provided at the premises of the Centre/Landing Hub (responsibles: InBIA and EAEC).

Date and Time: Continuously throughout the year (tbc, depending on the demand).

Eligibility Criteria: organisations based in the EU MS and Associated Countries

Selection Criteria: tbc

Targeted Dissemination: The main dissemination tools that will be used to promote this service are the website and events during which the project will be presented.

Contact:

InBIA (for Boston centre) – Andrea Wesser

EAEC (for San Francisco Centre) – Sebastien Torre

3.1.4 Services to be further investigated

Several additional pilot services can be potentially offered by NearUS. They are not included in the current Action Plan for Pilot Actions and will be investigated further. The investigation is planned to be done by the end of spring 2018. These services include:

> IPR support service;
> Manuscript editing (for publication in journals);
> Support in proposal writing.

3.2 Business/market-oriented pilot actions

Enable participants to commercialize their research and innovations in the US

Enable EU businesses to expand to the US market

3.2.1 Innovation Tours

This service is planned for both R2M and B2B target groups. During these US innovation tours, EU R&I actors that are in the *process of commercialising* innovative EU research through new business ventures will be introduced to incubators, accelerators and US university innovation centres.

This service aims at R&I actors that are in the process of commercializing. Participants will be introduced to incubators, accelerators and US university innovation centres. B2B target group (start-ups etc.) will be accepted too.

This service gives the participants the opportunity to:

> Understand the local US ecosystem that supports Innovation;
> Have live feedbacks on the project/prototype/business plan from participants;
> Explore funding opportunities in the US;
> Meet potential partners;

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> Understand & better leverage NearUS support.

The tour will introduce selected participants to accelerators, renowned US university research gems, and successful US and EU scale-ups and unicorns. Participants will receive guidance on visa/immigration/IP/pitch support and will be introduced to potential partners including corporations and potential investors. Additionally, state and city officials as well as the NearUS Hubs will be visited that can provide EU participants with soft-landing solutions and future guidance on local business trends practices and programmes.

Expected outcomes and impact per participant:

> ≥ 5 meetings/discussions with potential partners
> ≥ 3 meetings/discussions with investors
> ≥ 1 Follow up calls/meetings that same week/month for expression/validation of interest
> ≥ 3 next meetings/calls in the next twelve months
> ≥ 1 "deal" or "partnership" with US/international prospected targets met that week - in the next 24 months.

This Pilot Action could be seen as a first step US immersion programme, to help organisations to really understand the US market. As well, it will work as a marketing tool, in order to drive demand towards other pilot actions.

Target Group:

> Individual EU Research actors who are highly interested in exploring the US market as a middle to long term vehicle for commercialising promising EU research;
> Early stage start-up founders spun out of universities or research labs or licensing related technologies;
> Researchers looking for market opportunities and funding for their R&D project;
> Representatives of a research organisation looking for market opportunities for a specific portfolio of R&D projects;
> Representatives of research ecosystems looking for market opportunities for a specific portfolio of R&D projects; including cluster managers, research lab managers, tech transfer office managers, etc.

Funding principle:

The costs for the venue, materials, guest speakers, catering during the event and transportation within the US are covered. Participants will however have to cover the costs for flights to and from the United States as well as other costs not mentioned above (e.g. ESTA/VISA application costs, health insurance, accommodation, dinners, etc.) by themselves. A package for the hotels will be proposed at a negotiated price.

Dates:

Six tours will be organised in total, West and East Coast every year around January and June, each consisting of 10, 20, 40 (years 1, 2, 3) individual EU R&I actors who are highly interested in exploring the US market as a vehicle for commercialising promising EU research. The innovation tours will be held in concert with key US conferences such as

SelectUSA or State EDO events, and/or a few industry events such as CES (Consumer Electronic Show) or BIO International Convention.

The 1st Innovation Tour (10 participants, West Coast) is organised on January 15-19, 2018, to San Francisco, Sacramento and Silicon Valley.

Eligibility Criteria:

In order to qualify for the provided services, applicants have to be:

> Based in EU Member States or Associated Countries
> Industry focused in line with the call announcement (e.g. Information and Communications Technology (ICT), life science etc.)
> Able to communicate (read and speak) in English
> Pitch deck provided as part of the application.

Selection Criteria:

The applicant must:

> Demonstrate a business/licensing model in place (or soon in place)
> Demonstrate the actions taken to fund / start / grow the business idea (i.e. already talking to their government for funding, and/or banks for guaranteed loans, and/or to investors)
> Demonstrate an interest in the US Market itself even if long term
> Have an understanding of the competition landscape, the US market and the opportunity

Targeted Dissemination: The main dissemination tools that will be used to promote this service are social media and the website. In addition, direct emails will be sent out in the created contact lists and also the partners will communicate the calls to their networks. Moreover, larger networks like the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), European Cluster Platform, Startup Europe will be contacted so as to ensure the broadest awareness creation possible.

Contact: European American Enterprise Council (EAEC) **– Sebastien Torre (West Coast Innovation Tour), Blandine Chantepie-Kari (East Coast Innovation Tour)**

3.2.2 Boot Camps pre-departure workshops (R2M and B2B)

This is the preparatory step before the two-weeks R2M and B2B Bootcamps (Bootcamps are described in the next Chapter).

Participants in the pre-departure workshops are those specialists selected for the Boot Camps in the US. The pre-departure workshops prepare participants in the R2M & B2B Annual Boot Camps to make the most of their two weeks in the US. Designed to run over two days in Brussels, the workshops focus on critical success factors

The pre-departure workshops prepare participants in the R2M & B2B Boot Camps to make the most of their two weeks in the US. They are a first chance for participants to connect with each other and pitch their products and services to US market insiders in a safe, supportive environment.

for cracking the US market. They will feature joint plenaries and two parallel strands: one tailored for R2M participants, the other adapted to the specific needs of B2B participants. The final content and structure will be updated annually to better meet the changing needs of selected cohorts but will address the following topics:

> Understanding your American customers
> Knowing your American competitors
> Defining your value proposition for the American market
> Taking the right route to market
> Virtual pitch to US market insiders

Timed to take place between 1 and 2 months before the Boot Camps, the pre-departure workshops are a first chance for participants to connect with each other and pitch their products and services to US market insiders in a safe, supportive environment. In total, 6 pre-departure workshops are planned (3 for R2M, and 3 for B2B Boot Camps).

They are a first chance for participants to connect with each other and pitch their products and services to US market insiders in a safe, supportive environment.

Funding principle: Selected participants for the Boot Camps must attend pre-departure workshops in Brussels at their own travel /accommodation cost, or should find alternative sources for funding to cover their travel/accommodation cost to Brussels. Trainer fees and materials for the kick-off workshop in Brussels, as well as workshop premises costs will be covered by NearUS.

Dates: the first pre-departure workshop will take place in Brussels early February 2018

Contact: **EBN – Margaret Mulligan**

3.2.3 Research2Market Boot Camps

Three annually held two-week Boot Camps will place competitively selected EU R&I actors that are in the *early stages of commercialising* EU research and/or are pre-revenue start-ups at Soft Landing incubators that are affiliated with US R&I centres. These Boot Camps will each provide 10, 20, 40 (years 1, 2, 3) EU participants with an opportunity to evaluate the commercial viability of their innovations and to deep dive into the US business environment. The Boot Camp will be held in an

> The R2M Boot Camps are directed to R&I actors that are at an early stage of commercializing. It is a two-week program in which the commercial viability of innovations will be evaluated.

"accelerator" format that includes a blend of educational workshops, opportunities to meet early-stage investors as well as costumers, and other market validation opportunities. Educational workshops will be linked to existing workshops such as InBIA's NewCo Academy and EAEC InAGrad™ programme. All R2M Boot Camp participants will start the programme in Boston and engage in unique networking receptions which engage the local Boston innovation ecosystem's experts, as well as an introductory course in "Conducting Business in the US". This course covers two intensive days of corporate culture, US-based resources for product development, legal, human resources and other basics leading to the successful deployment of setting up a US subsidiary. By Day 3 of the programme, participants will then travel to a Soft Landing site that has been assigned to them based on their US market of interest and that site's particular resources available to entrepreneurs

within that industry market. Each day, regardless of which site participants are assigned, InBIA staff will host a one to two-hour course on relevant areas of further developing their business model. On the last two days of the Boot Camp, participants will come back to Boston for an intensive networking opportunity to pitch their idea/demonstrate their product to strategic partners and investors from renowned firms throughout New England.

Target Group: Established start-ups from EU Member States or Associated Countries universities or public/private labs are highly recommended to apply. Individuals who are thinking of starting a company can apply, but must meet the requirements outlined below.

NearUS is looking for competitively selected EU R&I actors that are in the early stages of commercializing EU research and/or are pre-revenue start-ups. Pre-revenue technology companies spun out of universities or public/private labs are recommended to apply. NearUS will further accept researchers who are interested in founding a company, but must meet the following requirements also required of the established start-ups:

> - The company or interested founder must be able to develop the technology/product; he / she must be a recognized expert in this technology/industry
> - The company or interested founder must at least have a patent pending/intellectual property secured on the product at the heart of the intended business model and expansion in the US
> - This product/technology must have either technology development and/or business opportunities in the US

Funding principle: The costs for the venue, materials, trainer fee, guest speakers' costs, catering during Boot Camp working hours, and transportation in the US Associated Hubs cities are covered by grants provided to NearUS selected participants. Participants will however have to cover (or find alternative funding sources to) the costs for flights to and from the United States, travel to and from Brussels, travel from Boston to the US Associated Hubs, and their accommodations, as well as other costs not mentioned above (e.g. ESTA/VISA application costs, health insurance, meals outside the Boot Camp hours etc.) by themselves.

Dates:

> - 1st R2M Boot Camp: March 4-16, 2018 in Boston, MA with an individual programme in Boston or other cities in the US
> - 2nd R2M Boot Camp: Boston (with an individual programme in Boston or other cities in the US), approx. March/April 2019, 20 participants
> - 3rd R2M Boot Camp: Boston (with an individual programme in Boston or other cities in the US), approx. March/May 2020: 40 participants

Eligibility and Selection Criteria:

> - In order to qualify for the provided services, applicants have to be based in EU Member States or Associated Countries.
> - Start-ups shall be established. R&I actors that are in the early stages of commercializing EU research, and individuals who are thinking of starting a company can apply, but must meet the requirements outlined above in the chapter "Target group".

> Participants must be able to communicate (read and speak) in English.

Targeted Dissemination: The main dissemination tools that will be used to promote this service are the social media channels and the website, as also relevant networks. In addition, relevant material will be hosted on the website of the project and will be disseminated via linking them to the social media messages.

Contact: InBIA – Andrea Wesser

3.2.4 Business2Business Boot Camps

In parallel to the Boot Camps in WT3.4 three specific Boot Camps in the US (and Kick-Off Workshops in Europe) will be organised for 10, 20, 40 (years 1, 2, 3) selected EU businesses that are ready for commercialisation in the US (and must have annual revenues of at least €100,000). These companies should have some track record in their own markets, and where it has been tested that the solution/technology is ready and it works.

> The B2B Boot Camps are directed to EU-businesses that are ready to commercialize in the US at accelerators.

All B2B Boot Camp participants will start the programme in Boston and engage in unique networking receptions which engage the local Boston innovation ecosystem's investors and serial entrepreneurs, as well as a more advanced course in "Conducting Business in the US". This course covers two intensive days of corporate culture, US-based resources for product development, legal, human resources and other topics leading to the successful deployment of setting up or sustaining a US subsidiary. By Day 3 of the programme, participants will then travel to a Soft Landing site that has been assigned to them based on their US market of interest and that site's particular resources available to entrepreneurs within that industry market. Each day, regardless of which site participants are assigned, InBIA staff will host a one hour course on relevant areas of further developing their sales and marketing efforts while targeting US customers. On the last two days of the Boot Camp, participants will come back to Boston for an intensive networking opportunity to pitch their product/company to strategic partners and investors from renowned firms throughout New England.

Target Group: Small to medium enterprises that are post-revenue, incorporated in the EU Member States or Associated Countries.

NearUS is looking for competitive businesses incorporated in EU Member States or Associated Countries, that are ready for commercialization in the US and:

> - Already have an annual revenue of at least €100,000
> - The company should have some track record in their own markets, and where it has been tested that the solution/technology is ready and working
> - The company must also have at least one sales/business development executive identified.
> - The company must have some form of "tangible assets" – have secured at least one piece of intellectual property (either internally generated or licensed from another entity) and/or have an inventory of product.
> - The company should have a brick and mortar, established place of business where products/services are developed

> A founder or individual with majority stake in the company is expected to participate in the Boot Camp. (The sales/business development executive who is/will be assigned to the US markets is highly recommended to attend as well.)

Funding principle: The costs for the venue, materials, guest speakers, meals during Boot Camp, and transportation in the US Associated Hubs cities are covered by grants provided to NearUS selected participants. Participants will however have to cover the costs for flights to and from the United States, travel to and from Brussels, travel from Boston to the US Associated Hubs, and their accommodations, as well as other costs not mentioned above (e.g. ESTA/VISA application costs, health insurance, etc.) by themselves.

Dates:

> 1st B2B Boot Camp: March 4-16, 2018 in Boston, MA with an individual programme in Boston or other cities in the US
> 2nd B2B Boot Camp: Boston (with an individual programme in Boston or other cities in the US), approx. March/April 2019, 20 participants
> 3rd B2B Boot Camp: Boston (with an individual programme in Boston or other cities in the US), approx. March/May 2020: 40 participants

Eligibility Criteria:

> In order to qualify for the provided services, applicants have to be based in EU Member States or Associated Countries.
> **Small to medium enterprises** must be post-revenue.
> Participants shall be able to communicate (read and speak) in English.

Targeted Dissemination: The main dissemination tools that will be used to promote this service are the social media channels and the website, as also relevant networks.

Responsible Partner: InBIA – Andrea Wesser

3.2.5 Matchmaking, Connecting & Pitching events (Match&Pitch etc.)

EU researchers and entrepreneurs looking for partnering and investment opportunities in the US will be matched at Connecting/Matchmaking Events – usually in conjunction to big trade fairs or conferences - and also during pitch competitions to investors such as at CES[1] or BIO[2] MatchFest/PitchFest.

> Participants who are looking for partnering and opportunities will be matched.

The selected innovators will have the opportunity to present their prototypes and/or V1 to selected potential US partners. They will be matched with partners, buyers, channels and investors during a matchmaking event and introduced to early-stage focused investors. More concretely, this service gives the participants the opportunity to:

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[1] Consumer Electronics Show (CES)

[2] technology Innovation Organisation (BIO)

- Be exposed to potential US partners and investors, for a low-cost risk-controlled US market discovery process.
- Be introduced to individual investors that could become their active partners in the US.
- Have early R&D project introduced for tech transfer and licensing opportunities to US corporate partners.
- Be introduced to more mature technologies/end-products to US manufacturers' reps and channels, for feedback and a middle/long term relationship.

Six matchmaking events are planned: 3 on the East Coast, 3 on the West Coast.

Six VC pitching events are planned: 3 on the East Coast, 3 on the West Coast.

Expected outcomes and impact per participant:

- ≥7 meetings/discussions with potential partners
- ≥4 meetings/discussions with investors
- ≥3 Follow up calls/meetings that same week/month for expression/validation of interest
- ≥3 next meetings in the next twelve months
- ≥1 deal with US/international prospected targets met in the next 24 months.

Target Group:

EU and Associated Countries-based:
- Start-up founders, mainly early stage looking for market opportunities and funding for their innovation;
- Researchers looking for market opportunities and private funding for their R&D project (pre-start-up stage);
- Representatives of a Research Organisation looking for market opportunities and funding for a limited portfolio of "hot" R&D projects.

Funding principle: The costs for the venue, materials, guest speakers, matchmaking platform, and (at some events) catering during the welcoming cocktail are covered. Participants will have to cover the costs for flights to and from the United States, as well as other costs not mentioned above (e.g. ESTA/VISA application costs, health insurance, accommodation, dinners, etc.) by themselves, or find alternative funding sources.

Date:

In total, 12 events (including the event above) are planned:

- 6 VC pitching events - half at East Coast and half at West Coast (most probably in San Francisco); 10, 20, 30 participants per event in 2018, 2019, 2020
- 6 matchmaking events, half at East Coast and half at West Coast (most probably in San Francisco); 10, 20, 30 participants per event in 2018, 2019, 2020

The 1st NearUS Match&Pitch (West Coast) will be at CES, January 7-11, 2018, Las Vegas, NV

The 2nd NearUS pitch event (East Coast) will be at the end of the Boot Camp in Boston on March 16, enabling underline different participants underline in addition to the Boot Camp participants to pitch.

The matchmaking events under the responsibility of InBIA will be a part of InBIA ICBI annual conference each year. The deadline for the separate pitch participants proposals - scheduled for March 16, 2018 in Boston at CIC – will be mid-January 2018. The deadline for the Matchmaking event proposals – scheduled for April 25, 2018 in Dallas – will be February 1, 2018.

Other events will be planned later on.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria:

For the 1st Match&Pitch event (West Coast), in order to qualify for the provided services, applicants have to:
> Be based in EU Member States or Associated Countries
> Be able to demonstrate a working prototype or V1
> Have registered Intellectual Property or are registering IPs
> Read, understand and speak English
> Be industry focused in ICT and/or ICT convergence (see list in 1.)
> Upload their pitch deck

Targeted Dissemination: The main dissemination tools that will be used to promote this service are social media and the website as also the events where NearUS will participate in. At the same time NearUS partners will also be informing the networks they participate in for these opportunities.

Contact: EAEC – Sebastien Torre (events on the West Coast), InBIA – Andrea Wesser (events on the East Coast)

3.2.6 Work Space

This service is planned to be provided for both research organisations and businesses.

NearUS provides work space, and – in the future – possibly, infrastructure and secondment opportunities, to private and public European organisations coming to the US and seeking a landing hub,

> NearUS provides work space to European private and public organisations coming to the US and seeking a landing hub

to investigate market opportunities or research opportunities in the US. Participants can choose to utilize Work Space at either the San Francisco Centre – Rocket Hub or Boston Centre – Cambridge Innovation Centre). In future years, Network Nodes at Soft Landing sites throughout the US will enable interested parties to directly select the best eco-system suitable to their needs.

Target Group: specialists from the organisations based in the EU MS or Associated Countries, coming to the US and seeking a landing hub.

Budget and funding principle: A work space worth of up to 700€ for up to two weeks will be provided at the premises of the Centre/Landing Hub (responsibles: InBIA and EAEC).

Date and Time: Continuously throughout the year (tbc, depending on the demand).

Eligibility Criteria: organisations based in the EU MS and Associated Countries

Selection Criteria: tbc

Targeted Dissemination: The main dissemination tool that will be used to promote this service is the website and also events the project will be represented in.

Contact:

InBIA (for Boston centre) – Andrea Wesser

EAEC (for San Francisco centre) – Sebastien Torre

3.2.7 Media Promotion Service for start-ups

European technology start-ups willing to expand to the US need media support as one of the major support services. This service helps them (1) to get visibility in the US and thus helps a lot to get more meetings with potential customers; (2) to have more credibility when meeting customers; (3) to get partnering with US companies. This service aims particularly at providing Europeans with the following media promotion:

> This service helps start-ups to get visibility in the US and thereby contributes to getting more meetings with potential US customers.

> - Help in writing of press releases and articles about the companies, their products etc.
> - Help in getting publications in major tech medias like Techcrunch and others, when possible
> - Help for the companies' staff to write blog posts, as one of their marketing tools.

Target Group: EU and Associated Countries -based technology start-ups, especially early stage start-ups

Budget: In total 30 participants will receive media promotion support of up to 1000€.

Date and Time: continuously

Eligibility Criteria: this is an additional service for those who already benefitted from at least one of the NearUS services. Applicants have to use at least one NearUS service prior to apply.

Selection Criteria: applicants have to have received one NearUS service prior to apply. Possibly, the NearUS support will be matched with own sources of the start-up.

Targeted Dissemination: The main dissemination tools that will be used to promote this service are the website, social media, and provision of information during other NearUS events/services. In addition, relevant material will be hosted on the website of the project and will be disseminated to the partners' networks.

Contacts:

EAEC – Sebastien Torre

INTRA – Raimund Broechler

3.2.8 Business Acceleration Programme

18 EU entrepreneurs wishing to commercialise their technologies/products/solutions in the US will be supported for up to four months during their initial installation phase. These activities cover:

> This service is directed to EU-entrepreneurs, who wish to commercialize their technologies, products and solutions in the US: They will be supported for four months during the initial installation phase.

> Business development and sales/marketing plan
> Product management requirements documents (Market Requirements Document, Product Requirements Document)
> Organisations' collaterals (including website)
> Introduction to the local community, strategic partners, events and law firms (concerning incorporation and IP protection), business angel networks, venture capital firms.
> Introduction to end-clients for Proofs of Concept and Pilots Advisory Sessions with industry experts.

Target Group: entrepreneurs (including established start-ups and prospective start up founders, as well as SMEs) from EU and Associated Countries, wishing to commercialise their technologies/products/solutions in the US

Budget: no costs will be covered by NearUS budget.

Eligibility Criteria:

> Based in the EU or Associated Countries.
> Type of organisation: prospective start up founders, established start-ups, post-revenue SMEs

Selection Criteria: Possible criterion (to be confirmed further): Applicants who participated in a NearUS service prior will be preferred; however others are not excluded to apply.

Targeted Dissemination: The main dissemination tools that will be used to promote this service are the website, social media, and provision of information during other NearUS events/services, during the events where NearUS will participate in and the networks that NearUS partners have access to like Enterprise Europe Network, StartUp Europe, European Cluster Platform.

Contact: EAEC – Sebastien Torre

4 First year services - summary

This section only serves as an overview of the scheduled services, which are subject to change.

The following activities will be undertaken in the first year with participants identified through the first call. Detailed information on the services can be found in chapter 3 - Pilot Actions on Connecting Events and Services.

4.1 Research oriented pilot actions 2017/2018

Research Connection Symposium Time Frame: August 2018 (in conjunction with NCURA Annual event)	**Participants**: 20 EU researchers and research managers **Thematic Session**: around a H2020 thematic programme, tbd through call applicants **Lead partner**: NCURA
Working Visits Time Frame: after February 2018 **Tbd after the plenary consortium meeting in January 2018.**	**Participants**: up to 5 EU specialists, who are highly interested in establishing a long-term collaboration with the US **Area of Research**: tbd Service will be provided through calls **Partners**: DLR, RCSID
Work space Continuously, starting in 2018	**Participants:** EU organisations (research- and market-oriented) **Thematic:** open to all thematic topics **Partners:** InBIA, EAEC, DLR

4.2 Market-oriented Pilot Actions 2017/2018

Matchmaking, Connecting & Pitching events (Match&Pitch) Time Frame: January 7-11, 2018 Other events tbc	**Participants**: 10 **Area of research:** ICT and convergent technologies **Partner:** EAEC
Innovation Tour Time Frame: 5 days; January 15-19, 2018	**Participants:** 10 individual EU R&I actors who are highly interested in exploring the US market as a vehicle for commercialising promising EU research. **Area of Research:** ICT and convergent technologies **Partners**: EAEC

Pre-departure workshops in Brussels (R2M and B2B) Time Frame: early February 2018	**Participants:** participants selected for the R2M and B2B Boot Camps **Thematic Session**: open to all thematic topics **Partner**: EBN
R2M Boot Camps Time Frame: two weeks; March 4-16, 2018 (and pre-departure workshop early February 2018)	**Participants**: 10 (year 1) EU participants who wish to commercialise in the US **Thematic Session**: open to all thematic topics **Partners**: InBIA
B2B Boot Camps Time Frame: March 4-16, 2018 (and pre-departure workshop early February 2018)	**Participants:** 10 selected EU businesses **Thematic Session**: open to all thematic topics **Partners:** InBIA
Work space Continuously, starting in 2018	**Participants:** EU organisations (research- and market-oriented) **Thematic:** open to all thematic topics **Partners:** InBIA, EAEC, DLR
Media support for start ups Time Frame: Continuously, starting in 2018	**Participants**: EU and Associated Countries-based technology start-ups, especially early stage start-ups Applicant has to use at least one NearUS service prior to apply. **Area of Research**: no specific thematic **Responsible**: EAEC
Business Acceleration Programme; four month during initial phase) Time Frame: Continuously, starting possibly in 2018	**Participants**: EU entrepreneurs wishing to commercialise their technologies/products/innovations (number of participants is indicative: participants will pay market price for the service). Applicant has to use at least one NearUS service prior to apply. **Area of Research**: no specific thematic **Responsible**: EAEC

After most of the activities of the first call have been evaluated, the services will be adjusted according to the evaluation results and recommendations obtained.

5 NearUS open calls for applications

The participants will be selected through open calls. Those target participants will come from all EU MS/AC.

Call Documents will include publicly available materials:

> Call Text (including description of the offered service, target group description, selection criteria, submission procedure etc.)
> Application template (Word and, when needed, other formats, such as PowerPoint presentation template, etc.)
> Evaluation Rubrics

The first NearUS calls will be open on October 5th, 2017.

In the second year of NearUS (April 2018 - March 2019), the second call phase will be started.

5.1 Ethics

All the activities carried out under NearUS will comply with ethical principles and relevant national, EU and international legislation, such as the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Convention on Human Rights.

All data collected and processed – in particular in the call for applications - will be on a "need to know" basis and in compliance with privacy. No sensitive personal data will be collected. Data protection measures will be applied with regard to data collection, storage, retention, destruction, privacy and confidentiality.

The NearUS project will support open and responsible research and innovation collaboration. Open and responsible research and innovation will be taken into account – the applicants who are not conducting open and responsible research (e.g. who are doing gene transfer) will not be accepted.

5.2 Evaluation Procedure

The NearUS calls will include a public document with evaluation rubrics (see example in the Annex).

The evaluation procedure will differ from call to call. However, in all calls:

> the NearUS partner responsible for the call, will be responsible for the evaluation procedure
> When needed, an evaluation panel will be created with external experts (industry, associated partners, etc.)
> the applications will be first checked for eligibility
> The evaluators will base their evaluation on the criteria set out in the call text
> The proposals will be ranked and the list of recommended participants will be proposed to the Work package leader
> The Work package Leader will approve the selection.

6 Outreach

6.1 Dissemination Means

Each service responsible partner will prepare an email example for dissemination of the call for application. This email shall be provided to all NearUS partners not later than the public launch of the call for application on the NearUS-website[3], but if possible even earlier.

Prior to the launch of the call, the finalised text is sent to the partner responsible for outreach, Intrasoft International. This partner will prepare a teaser for the calls that will be finalised together with the coordinator and the call responsible partner. The finalised teaser is then sent as a formatted email with the banner and footers to be used, to all partners that will further promote it to their individual networks. At the same time, all information will be also disseminated to the associated partners though a specific emailing list that has been created.

Before the call is launched publicly the partner responsible for outreach will create the specific web pages that include the call description, and all relevant links based on the input received by the service provider.

All partners should weekly inform the outreach partner on their activities in respect to the call dissemination. Whereas, the outreach partner will check the larger networks described in the table below so as to ensure that all of them have been contacted. At the same time, twice a week the status of the applications received will be checked, so as to be able to make adjustments to the dissemination according to the needs and numbers of applications received.

6.2 Dissemination Channels

The calls for application will all be disseminated towards the following channels that are in the responsibility of the following partners:

> DLR: European Commission, European Delegation in the US, EU MS/AC counsellors in the US, the Strategic Forum for International Cooperation (SFIC), BILAT USA 4.0 partners, national dissemination channels in Germany including: www.kooperation-international.de, EU-Buero of the Federal Ministry for Research and Education, EURAXESS Links North America

> EBN: to EBN networks

> InBIA: to InBIA networks

> EAEC: to EIC Digital; Mind the Bridge, Ready2Go, and other EAEC networks

> Inno: to clusters, e.g. via European Cluster Collaboration Platform, and other inno TSD's networks

> Intrasoft: to EEN-US, StartUp Europe Community, F6S platform, and NearUS Associated Partners (via the web site mailing)

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[3] www.near-us.eu

> RCISD: to RCISD network

> NCURA: to NCURA-members, EARMA, other research managers' associations, research university organizations

> SPI: to EURADA, ERRIN, TCI network, ERICENA and CEBRABIC consortium partners

At the same time, the service responsible will disseminate the calls for applications to additional channels (depends on each service), or can suggest other dissemination sources to the outreach responsible.

It remains in the responsibility of each service responsible partner to keep track of the dissemination channels used and to remind partners on the necessary dissemination activities for their stakeholders. Partners will do their best to actively promote and disseminate the calls for application via their channels. All partners are strongly encouraged to retweet and make re-use of the social media channels and messages sent via them. For their convenience images used in twitter are tagging the partner organisations so that these can easily "retweet" them.

The messages to be promoted include both the ones from the NearUS official account but also from other accounts promoting the NeaUS service calls, which are retweeted by the official account and act as multipliers e.g. EaP Plus, ECCP, BILAT USA 4.0. Partners can also opt to create their own tweets but they are encouraged to make then use of @NearUS_centers so as to be retweeted.

Stakeholders that should be informed about NearUS calls, in the duration of the project, through targeted dissemination are 10,000. This number includes the final number of stakeholders and is a factor of the potential visibility coming from posting the news through the various networks.

A list of the major relevant projects, initiatives and networks – where the first calls will be promoted – is provided below:

Network/initiative
ERICENA (NearUS "sister" project in China)
CEBRABIC (NearUS "sister" project in Brazil)
BILAT USA 4.0 project
ICT Policy, Research and Innovation for a Smart Society: towards new avenues in EU-US ICT collaboration (PICASSO project)*
Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) - US and Europe
EBN innovation network
European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP)
EURAXESS Links North America
InBIA
EAEC
NCURA
Startup Europe's Accelerator Assembly

Startup-Europe
Eurochambers
European Business Angels Network
EIT Digital (US based)
EIT (other topics except Digital)
F6S (https://www.f6s.com)
Mind the Bridge
Ready2Go
Overseas Trade Fair Programme (Deloitte)
TCI Network
European Association of Development Agencies (EURADA)
ERRIN Network

7 Key Performance Indicators

The services delivered during the project as "pilot actions" – evaluated and optimised - will be the cornerstones of the services of the sustainable Network/Centres after the end of NearUS.

Every participant will be asked before or after taking part in one service action to:

> Reply to the survey conducted for evaluation
> Provide email-contact for the newsletter
> Write a short testimonial and/or quote,
> Provide additional feedback when relevant and when asked by the service responsible

The KPIs are as following:

Open call to select participants	Over 1000 applications from EU organisations in total; About 750 participants selected for support through services
Services pilot phase conducted	Action plan for pilot actions implemented during 24 months, targeting R2R, R2M and B2B support for 750+ EU participants
Provision of physical space	On demand – support to 100+ organisations (public and private)
Media support	30 EU organisations (start-ups) with high potential of growth in US supported
Research Connection Symposia	3 Research Connection Symposia; thematic sessions, H2020 training, 60 EU participants
Working visits (R2R)	3 up to one week visits; 15 EU participants
Matchmaking Events	6 Matchmaking events; 120 EU participants
Innovation Tours	6 Innovation Tours; 140 EU participants
R2M and B2B Boot camps	6 boot camps (R2M and B2B in parallel); up to 2 weeks each; 180 EU participants; 6 pre-departure workshops (3 R2M and 3 B2B) in Europe 2 days each
Business Acceleration Programme	Up to four months; 3 programmes, 18 EU participants
Venture Capital Pitching Events	6 events; 120 EU participants

8 References

Reference	Name of document (include authors, version, date etc. where applicable)
[REF-01]	European Commission, H2020 Programme – Communicating EU research and innovation guidance for project participants http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/gm/h2020-guide-comm_en.pdf

Annex 1 – Example of evaluation process for the service "Innovation tour"

2017 NearUS Application

Evaluation Process

Innovation Tour – category Innovator

1. Eligibility Check

- Part of the target group ☐ Yes ☐ No
    1. Individual EU Research actors who are highly interested in exploring the US market as a middle to long term vehicle for commercialising promising EU research;
    2. Early stage start-up founders spun out of universities or research labs or licensing related technologies;
    3. Researchers looking for market opportunities and funding for their R&D project;

- Based in EU Member States or Associated Countries ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Industry focused in ICT and/or ICT convergence, such as Smart Home, Smart City, Autonomous Vehicles, Manufacturing, Drones, R/AR/360/Simulation, and Security ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Able to write in English ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Word count is respected ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Pitch deck uploaded ☐ Yes ☐ No

Application eligible if <u>ALL</u> criteria are met.

2. Application Review

a. Expectation (question 1)

Are the expectations in line with NearUS mission statement? Are the objectives clearly defined?

5 - Exceptional	4 - Above Average	3 - Good	2 - Fair	1 - Poor
The applicant has: - Clearly understood the service offered - Clearly articulated his/her needs and objectives - Clearly demonstrated that his/her needs will be met by the service proposed		The applicant has: - Understood the service offered - Articulated some needs and objectives, but not specifically - Demonstrated that his/her needs will be met by the service proposed		The applicant has: - Poorly understood the service offered - Not articulated clear needs and objectives

b. Knowledge of the US market and its opportunities (question 2)

Opportunities perceived in the US, definition of the US target market, adaptability and scalability of the technology.

5 - Exceptional	4 - Above Average	3 - Good	2 - Fair	1 - Poor
The applicant has: - Clearly understood the needs in the US and defined the opportunities - Clearly defined his/her US target market(s) or niche market(s) - Clearly articulated how the technology could be competitive and scalable for the US market		The applicant has: - Identified a market need, target market and end US customers but not all - Created a market definition that may have some data, but is not entirely thought out - A valid competitive advantage statement		The applicant has: - Poorly identified or not Identified his/her US target market, market need or potential end customers - Not articulated a clear competitive advantage for US customer buy-in

c. **Motivation** (question 3)

Evaluation of the motivation of the candidate to pursue the long-term success for your company/project in the US? Is he/she the right representative for the US market.

5 - Exceptional	4 - Above Average	3 - Good	2 - Fair	1 - Poor
The applicant has: - Clearly articulated his/her motivation - Clearly demonstrated that he/she has the right profile to learn then share what he/she has learnt. - The control / power to influence the project or his/her organization in the long term		The applicant has: - Articulated some of his/her motivation - Demonstrated that his/her needs will be met by the service proposed - Some control / power to influence the project or his/her organization in the short to mid-term		The applicant has: - Poorly showed his/her motivation or articulated enthusiasm - No control / power to influence the project or his/her organization in the short to mid-term

d. **Overall** (after review of the 3 answers <u>AND</u> the pitch deck)

What is your overall impression of the proposed technology, market, strategy, and ability to grow into a successful company? How well does this applicant align with NearUS goals and/or can utilize the NearUS program? Is the pitch deck ready to be presented?

5 - Exceptional	4 - Above Average	3 - Good	2 - Fair	1 - Poor
The applicant has: - Clearly articulated a need - A well thought out technical and business strategy to address that need - A strong technical competitive edge - Presented the needs of a presence in the US and needs NearUS resources to succeed		The applicant has: - The potential to be successful, but may need to better identify a market need, business strategy, technical roadmap or go-to market strategy - A technology that does not completely address the market needs - May not have immediate opportunities in the US		The applicant: - Does not have a clear grasp of the market needs, the strategies need to address the market, how the future of their technology should be steered and/or have a unique competitive advantage - May not be able to be a successful start-up company or utilize NearUS

3. Pitch Deck Review

a. Overall

What is your overall impression of the pitch deck, proposed technology, market, strategy, and ability to grow into a successful company? How well does this project align with NearUS goals and/or can utilize the NearUS program?

5 - Exceptional	4 - Above Average	3 - Good	2 - Fair	1 - Poor
The applicant has: - Clearly articulated a need - A well thought out technical and business strategy to address that need - A strong technical competitive edge - Presented the needs of a presence in the US and needs NearUS resources to succeed		The applicant has: - The potential to be successful, but may need to better identify a market need, business strategy, technical roadmap or go-to market strategy - A technology that does not completely address the market needs - May not have immediate opportunities in the US		The applicant: - Does not have a clear grasp of the market needs, the strategies need to address the market, how the future of their technology should be steered and/or have a unique competitive advantage - May not be able to be a successful start-up company or utilize NearUS

b. Idea/Technology

Is the idea truly innovative, based on innovation breakthrough / IP or potential IP - Has the technology been implemented or could be implemented in a demonstrable, replicable setting? Does the technology have significant technical barriers to overcome?

5 - Exceptional	4 - Above Average	3 - Good	2 - Fair	1 - Poor
The participant has: - Well defined a problem and is answering it with a truly innovative approach - An idea based on breakthrough technology that could be protected, licensed and scalable		The participant has: - Identified a problem and is answering it with a new approach - An idea that could be protected, licensed and/or scalable		The participant has: - Identified a general problem and is answering it with a partial or general solution - An idea that may not be protectable or scalable

c. Commercial Potential

Is the target market clearly defined? Does the applicant have a clearly defined market need and a good understanding of who will be his/her target customers? Does the applicant have an easy time conveying an attractive buy-in to these customers?

5 - Exceptional	4 - Above Average	3 - Good	2 - Fair	1 - Poor
The applicant has: - Clearly identified a market need and end users of the product in the US - Relevant target market - Clearly articulated the competitive advantages of the product for customer interaction		The applicant has: - Identified a market need, target market and end customers but not all - Created a market definition that may have some good data, but is not entirely thought out - A valid competitive advantage statement, at least for the European market		The applicant has: - Poorly identified or not identified the proper target market, market need or potential end customers - Not articulated a clear competitive advantage for customer buy-in

d. Funding Potential and Resources

Is the target market sufficiently large and/or is there room for growth of the target market? What is the level of risk for the project? Is the initial team appropriate to grow a start-up/spin off? If needed, does it have proper mentors/advisory board established?

5 - Exceptional	4 - Above Average	3 - Good	2 - Fair	1 - Poor
The project has: - A market with attractive growth opportunities - A sound team and mentors/advisory board - Potential to be an attractive investment opportunity		The project: - May operate in an attractive market, but has an incomplete tech that may not meet all the market needs - Is missing key team members or mentors - May provide a good investment opportunity in the future, but could present a significant risk to investors		The project: - Will not be attractive to investment because it will operate in a too small target market - Has a high degree of risk with a low chance of overcoming those risks - Does not have a sound team

Top 20 applicants are selected (innovators and multipliers)

4. Interview

a. Marketing / Presentation

Evaluation of the "look" of the slide deck, and of the ability to present of the candidate. Is he/she the right representative of the technology for the US market.

5 - Exceptional	4 - Above Average	3 - Good	2 - Fair	1 - Poor
The applicant has: - Clearly articulated his/her project in English - Clearly demonstrated his/her interest to learn about the US market - Respected the 15 min presentation, and was clear, to the point in his/her answers to the questions/comments - A clear Slide Deck, easy to follow		The applicant has: - Articulated most of the points in the slide deck - Respected the 15 min presentation, and was able to answers the questions/comments - Only minor changes /improvement in the slide deck will be needed		The applicant has: - Poorly presenter his/her technology or articulated enthusiasm - Has to redo his/her slide deck - Could not respect a 15 min presentation or does not have the English level required

b. Competitiveness

Has the participant clearly identified competitors, barriers to entry and enumerated its competitive advantages?

5 - Exceptional	4 - Above Average	3 - Good	2 - Fair	1 - Poor
The competitive landscape is: - Well understood on a Global /US Scale and the applicant may have the ability to produce a product with a competitive advantage		The competitive landscape is: - Adequately, but not completely, defined - Not fully understood to develop the project's competitive advantages		The participant has: - Done a poor job of identifying appropriate competition in the US - No clearly defined competitive advantage

c. Commitment and Resources

Has the participant/team already initiated relationships with customers, partners, etc. for the project's advancement? Did the participant show a clear effort in the input quality and thorough completion of the application? Did the participant identify risks and acknowledge potential solutions? Are the milestones for future iterations/product improvements, appropriate expectations to meet in the timeframes mentioned?

5 - Exceptional	4 - Above Average	3 - Good	2 - Fair	1 - Poor
The applicant has: - Exceptional dedication to be entrepreneur - A complete application that contains appropriate detailed descriptions and strategies - A defined roadmap and IP milestones that can be met with resources proposed		The applicant has: - The necessary dedication to be entrepreneur t - Several key or potential relationships for the success of the project have been identified and approached - Has demonstrated thought towards future product technical and IP milestones		The applicant did not complete multiple sections of the application - No relationships exist and few if any risks have been identified - Does not have a good idea of necessary IP or technical milestones needed - Is severely lacking the technical prowess to pursue the proposed technology plan

d. Overall

What is your overall impression of the proposed technology, market, strategy, and ability to grow into a successful company? How well does this applicant align with NearUS goals and/or can utilize the NearUS program? Is the applicant able to present his/her pitch deck in an engaging way? Is the applicant able to answer questions in a structured manner?

5 - Exceptional	4 - Above Average	3 - Good	2 - Fair	1 - Poor
The applicant has: - Clearly articulated a need - A well thought out technical and business strategy to address that need - A strong technical competitive edge - Presented the needs of a presence in the US and needs NearUS resources to succeed - Answered all the questions		The applicant has: - The potential to be successful, but may need to better identify a market need, business strategy, technical roadmap or go-to market strategy - A technology that does not completely address the market needs - May not have immediate opportunities in the US		The applicant: - Does not have a clear grasp of the market needs, the strategies need to address the market, how the future of his/her technology should be steered and/or have a unique competitive advantage - May not be able to be a successful start-up company or utilize NearUS

in a clear manner		- Answered most of the expert questions in a clear manner		- Could not answer the expert question in a concisemanner

Top 10 applicants are selected (innovators and multipliers)