

GETTING SMMES INTO FP7 – OUR STORY

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What I am about to say....

- Who we are and what we believe about SMEs in research
- What we have done and not done
- How does FP7 see the role of SMEs
- Our research agenda / programmes
- Our involvement in CIP programme ICT-PSP
- Challenges in being an SME in the FP7 research system
- Specific Objectives we are targeting for Calls 8 and 9
- How I want the research system to help and support SMEs

Who are we?

Core Activities	Software Development, Policy Development, Research, Project Management, Training
Areas	Mobile Web, Finance, ICT4D - Local Economic Development, Digital Heritage / Libraries, eGovernment, Education (Mathematics), Project Management for Service Delivery, Tourism.
Age	Company about 30 years old
Size	Grown up to 40, currently at 10 (SMME)
People	Hire young graduates and grow them into our methods
Where	Facilities in Johannesburg + Drakensberg. Presence in Polokwane/Tzaneen (LP) , Rustenburg (NW), Eshowe (KZN)
Why	To sustain our operations. To help make the world a better place.
Research	Mostly self-funded. One travel grant from ESASTAP. One research grant provided by SAFIPA (2010). Work commissioned by government (policy development). Research in Digital Libraries, eHeritage, eTourism, mApplications, eGovernment

What I believe

- We have a part to play in the research and development process
- We can innovate, develop and deploy faster than large enterprises / institutions
- We can self-fund and are willing to take risks on our future
- We can help to change the world for the better



What we have done – not done

- Done
 - Received ESASTAP funding for trip to Lithuania / Netherlands to explore partnerships for mobile web applications (2008)
 - Received grant from SAFIPA for development of mobile Web application for tourism in Tzaneen (2010)
 - Been invited into CIP ICT-PSP project for creating interfaces to Europeana Digital Library (unfunded – currently at contract negotiation stage)
 - Exploring co-investment for ICT-PSP funding
 - Presented our work at IST-Africa, GovTech, ICADLA and other conferences
- Not Done
 - Fully exploited the EuroAfrica-ICT and IST-Africa networks
 - Fully engaged with the NCP for South Africa

An example of our work

- Information Society
- Turning “nobodies” into “somebodies”
- Development of “Mini Web Pages” – takes 30 minutes to build and deploy
- Teach local people to build these – create jobs
- Information as Enabled for Economic Development

Back XtownX : John G Moothibi : Mini Web Page Home

John G Moothibi upholsterer

upholstery is my life

Contact Number: [073.006.4129](tel:073.006.4129)

I am John Moothibi, and I provide upholstery and repairs for sofas, chairs, motor trim, and general upholstery.



I work from my home and have a number of customers, including GWM, for whom I provide a range of products including the trim for the vehicles and ambulances, and a range of other items. Here is an example of some of my work.



These are containers for camping equipment, which is used within GWN's camping trailer.



I provide complete car seat trim, and also do repairs on car seats.



What is an SME in FP7?

- Three condition to be met
 - Employees < 250
 - Annual turnover < EUR 50 million
 - Annual balance sheet < EUR 43 million
- Linked Enterprises
 - No controlling entity above the organisations
 - The organisation does not control other organisations
- But how are SMEs viewed in FP7?

Regulation (EC) No 1906/2006 of the European Parliament

Rules of participation in FP7

“(7) The Seventh Framework Programme should promote participation from the outermost regions of the Community, as well as from a wide range of undertakings, research centres and universities, including SMEs.”

Where do ICT SMEs fit?

- Almost anywhere as part of a project
 - Referenced throughout the Work Programmes, Objectives and Calls
- Cooperation Programme EUR 32B
 - ICT EUR 9B
- Capacities Programme EUR 3B
 - Research for benefit of SMEs

Our Research Approach

An Entrepreneurial Approach :
Development and Research (D&R)
(rather than R&D)

Step 1 : Develop a Product

Step 2 : Research how to Improve

Step 3 : Get Products to Market / Usage /
Benefits / Impacts as priority

Our Research Programmes

- Even though we are an SME, we are working in a range of areas
- I outline what we are doing and how we are preparing to participate in FP7 projects.
 - Digital Libraries : cultural heritage, research data
 - Local Economic Development : LED as a complex local system – mobile applications for Tourism and eGovernment
 - Mathematics Education : using AI techniques to understand the thinking of students to improve teaching practices – diagnostic assessment

Digital Libraries

PROBLEM	Digital preservation, obsolescent technologies, need to greater levels of access
SITUATION	No national standards and practices – much money moving into these projects – short-term decisions on technologies.
OUR WORK	National Policy on Digitisation (Arts & Culture) – libraries, archives, museums, oral history. Developing the Digital Heritage Body of Knowledge (DHBOK).
RESEARCH QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to improved accessibility in digital libraries through semantic metadata (Linked Data)?• How to model shared and collective histories from biographical documentary sources (Oral History)?• How to use Virtual Museums to improve tourism?• Research Data Archives – where does all of the research data go?• Development of standard interfaces to large-scale aggregated digital libraries (through CIP ICT-PSP programme).



Local Economic Development

PROBLEM	No reliable information on local goods, services, skills in small towns and rural communities. Too little access to computers.
SITUATION	Almost everyone has access to mobile phones – increasingly smart phones
DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mobile-based access to directories of local goods, services, skills.• Tracking of supply chains (who buys what and why)• eTourism : perfect information for the benefit of tourist and local tourism providers
RESEARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modelling of the local economic structures in small towns and rural communities. “Town Dynamics” vs Urban Dynamics. The Science of Complex Systems.• How to measure trust in online data? (Can we trust the search results of Google?)• A new economic system “Locanomics” in contrast to the economics of globalisation.



Mobile eGovernment

PROBLEM	Most people have no access to eGovernment – and do not know where to look
SITUATION	Complex government structure – who do we ask for help? Mobile phones ubiquitous
DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single Entry Point for Government• Multi-way message routing and tracking• The range of government messages into thesaurus
RESEARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to best implement within government and communities• Measurement of acceptability and trust• Measurement of impacts (reduced travel and waiting time – improved services)• Local content created by local government• Linkage to municipal service delivery

Mathematics Education

PROBLEM	Why do students make similar mistakes, and how can we identify and remediate these?
SITUATION	Poor quality of mathematics teaching. Teachers have same misconceptions as students and propagate these misconceptions through teaching.
DEVELOPMENT	An autonomous eAssessment tool to support diagnostic assessment of learners in classrooms. Provides feedback to learners, teachers. Systemic evaluation of the curriculum, textbooks, teaching practices.
RESEARCH	Why are some questions better than others for diagnostic purposes? Modelling learning as an economic system of knowledge acquisition – some interventions are better than others.

Where do we find funding?

- Development : mostly self-funded
- Research : looking at FP7 opportunities (since 2007)
- Many challenges and fears
 - The different worlds between EU and Africa
 - EU : problem that only 95% of population has access to Internet – need to include older population
 - Africa : problems that only 10% of population has access to Internet – need to include everyone!
 - Do EU institutions truly understand the African situation concerning poverty and rural communities



Finding the right partners

Will partners metamorphose during a project? (Is the partner we negotiated with the same we are now having to deal with?)

How to determine best fit of partners within a larger project?



FP7 Administrative Overhead



- Very difficult for SMEs to cope with this without help
- Where to get this help?



Quick Analysis of SA Institutions in FP7 Projects

- 13 records indicating involvement within projects
- 6 of these are International Cooperation (EuroAfrica-ICT, IST-Africa, DigitalWorld, ...)
- Of the remaining 7 : Enterprises are : CSIR (3), T-Systems, Univ Stellenbosch, Sasol Synfuels, GS1
- There is massive scope for expansion and many international institutions would like to work with South African institutions and SMEs

What about rest of Africa?

- 19 countries are identified as having projects
 - 8 have one (mostly ICT-Africa)
 - 8 have 2 projects
 - Egypt : 5 projects
 - Morocco : 5 projects
 - Senegal : 4 projects
- 32 countries : no projects
- Total projects involvement in rest of Africa 38
- + South Africa = 51
- Of which >50% = international cooperation

Question

If the largest and most established African research institutions are not getting FP7-funded projects, how can SMMEs hope to find their way into these opportunities?

Is it worth the effort?

Work Programme 2011/12

Cooperation : Theme 3 : ICT

- Projects to have impacts on markets in 5-10 years
- High-risk ICT collaborative research
- Limited set of challenges with mid-to-long term goals that require trans-national collaboration
- Challenge = objectives + targeted outcomes + expected impacts
- Key principle = increase competitiveness of EU industry through high-risk research

Selected Challenges

- Challenge 4 : Technologies for Digital Content and Languages
- Challenge 5 : ICT for health, ageing well, inclusion and governance
- Challenge 7 : ICT for manufacturing & factories of the future
- Challenge 8 : ICT for learning and access to cultural resources

We have ideas and prototypes for each of these, but need to find compatible EU partners. Anyone out there listening right now – send me a message (roger@rl.co.za)

Involving SMEs (s 3.9)

- “SMEs are at the heart of innovation in ICT”
- Significant opportunities for SME involvement in areas focusing on development of open platforms for digital content and service provision and delivery.
- “SMEs can participate both as technology providers and in building of application on top of such platforms (Future Internet)”
- Some objectives look for small projects dominated by SMEs with only a few partners with lighter proposal submission (FET-Open)

Which Objectives?

- Objective-2001.x.y
- **Call 8 : Due Jan 2012**
 - 1.4 : Trustworthy ICT (d) Data Policy, Governance and Socio-Economic Ecosystems
 - Tools for measurement of trust in large population of competing stakeholders
 - 4.4 : Intelligent Information Management
- **Call 9 : April 2012**
 - 4.3 : Digital Preservation
 - 8.2 : ICT for access to cultural resources (EUR 35M)
 - Mobile Heritage Tourism, Oral History within Schools
- **FET-Open**
 - 9.1 : Challenging current thinking
 - 9.2 : High-tech research intensive SMEs in FET research
 - 9.7 : Dynamics of multi-level complex systems

Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP)

- ec.europa.eu/cip/
- SME is main target – encourage better take-up and use of ICT to help develop an Information Society
 - Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP)
 - ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT-PSP)

Enterprise Europe Network

- Helping small companies make the most of the business opportunities in the EU.
- www.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu
- >600 partners in 49 countries have branches
 - Only Egypt/Tunisia in Africa
 - No involvement from sub-saharan Africa
 - A missed opportunity? Or not eligible in terms of the rules of the EU?

ICT-PSP

- Stimulates a wide uptake of innovative ICT based services and the exploitation of digital content across Europe by citizens, government and businesses, **in particular SMEs**
- Focus areas
 - ICT for health, ageing, inclusion
 - Digital Libraries
 - ICT for improved public services
 - ICT for energy efficient and smart mobility
 - Multilingual web and Internet evolution

How to get African ICT SMEs into FP7

Policy and practice suggestions

- Funding support specific to SME ventures
- Creating dedicated support systems within FP7 structures for SMEs
- Reducing the administrative requirement for SMEs
- Providing for smaller STREP projects focusing on pilots and prototypes
- Providing support for deployment into the field – projects that focus on realising and measuring the impacts rather the core research
- Reviewing practicalities of the implementation of research
- Improving access to potential partners – and finding the right mix and match
- Building country-focussed communities of SMEs to find local partners
- Relaxing the requirement for 3 separate EU partners for smaller projects – allow projects with a single EU partner

Thank you for listening

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