

DOSSIER

3rd UNICORNQUEST MEETING

Bratislava, Slovakia

21-22 March 2024



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Introduction

UnicornQuest aims to build entrepreneurial ecosystems by promoting, attracting, and retaining to-be-unicorns thriving under EU principles and values, such as respect of human rights, freedom, democracy, and equality. This project arises from the need to reduce the exodus of promising start-ups and unicorns from Europe, especially the regions outside the capitals, which results in losses in terms of job creation, intellectual property and more. As such, the project is focused on learning and experience sharing activities, regional assessments and peer analysis and review of real cases to delineate strategies to improve regional policies which influence SME competitiveness and the retention and attraction of entrepreneurial talent.

PROJECT PARTNERS

- Science and Technology Park of Alentejo (PACT) (PT)
- Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency (SK)
- Western Development Commission (IE)
- Innovation & Management Centre Limited (WestBIC) (IE)
- North-West Regional Development Agency (RO)
- Business Development Friesland Foundation (NL)
- Liguria Region (IT)
- Zemgale Planning Region (LV)
- Pannon Business Network Association (HU)



- Hauts-de-France Regional Council (FR)
- EuraTechnologies (FR)

3rd Interregional Event Summary

On March 21 and 22 of 2024, Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency (SIEA) hosted the third UnicornQuest meeting, which brought together UnicornQuest project partners as well as some local and regional stakeholders.

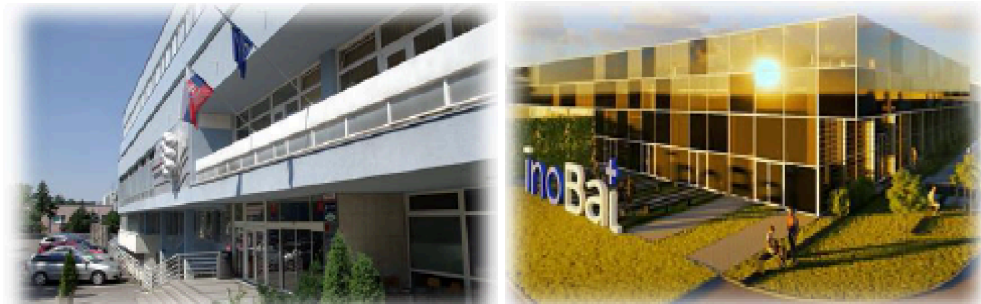
The first day was initiated by welcome speeches from side of Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency and from side of the Lead Partner PACT, followed by first round presentations and part of Forest Assessment. In the afternoon, the visit in InoBat was held. UnicornQuest project partners and stakeholders had the opportunity to meet local “soonicorn”. After that, consortium meeting were set up. The first day of the Event ended with a dinner at Akademia, followed by transfer to Bratislava.

Second day of the Event began with a presentation of SIEA, continued with shared partners’ experiences, consortium meeting and second round of stakeholders presentations. This last day of the Event ended by meeting with local company SENSONEO.

Event agenda

DAY 1 (March 21th 2024)

Main venue : Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency, Bajkalská 27, 8277 99 Bratislava, Slovakia



9h00 - 9h30 – Arrival and registration

9h30 - 11h00 – First round of presentations – SIEA, stakeholders, companies

Welcome speeches:

- Peter Adamovský, Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency
- Martin Svoboda, Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency
- Soumodip Sarkar, Alentejo Science and Technology Park (PACT)

Stakeholders from:

11h00 - 11h15 – Coffee break

11h15 - 13h00 – Roadmap “what’s next?” & Forest Assessment Workshop

13h00 - 14h15 – Lunch (At Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency)

14h15 - 15h00 – Transfer from SIEA to InoBat Voderady

15h00 - 17h00 – First site visit in InoBat

17h00 - 17h30 – Transfer from InoBat to Nádvorie Trnava

17h30 - 19h00 – Consortium meeting – Case Studies Presentation (at coworking space)

19h00 - 20h30 – Lunch

At Akademia

20h30 - 21h30 – Transfer to SIEA Bratislava

DAY 2 (March 22th 2024)

Main venue: Slovak University of Technology Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Information Technology, Ilkovičova 3, 841 04 Bratislava, Slovakia

9h00 - 9h30 - Arrival and registration

9h30 - 10h30 – Regional meeting with stakeholders – sharing partners´ experiences

10h30 - 10h45 – Coffee break

10h45 - 11h45 – Consortium meeting – Communication goals and progress + Project support

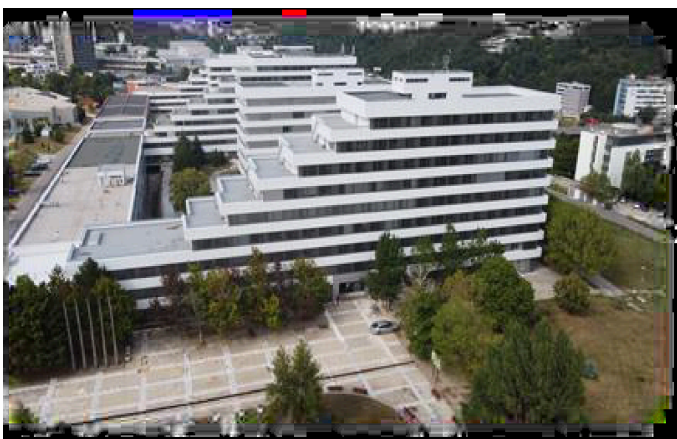
11h45 - 12h45 – Lunch

At the Slovak University of Technology Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Information Technology

12h45 – 14h15 – Second round of presentations – SIEA, stakeholders, companies

14h15 – 15h15 – SENSONEO presentation

15h15 - 15h30 – Closing of the Event



Opening session

The first day took place at Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency premises. The host partner, SIEA, briefly introduced the agenda and its objective of the Interregional Learning Event #3. Peter Adamovský (Project manager in Section of Innovation and International relations SIEA) welcome the participants and introduced Slovakian stakeholders. This section was followed by a welcome speech by Martin Svoboda (Director of Section of Innovation and International relations SIEA), and Soumodip Sarkar (lead partner PACT).



First round of presentations

This block of the first day's agenda consisted of presentations and Q&A sessions. Slovak stakeholders presented their activities. Katarína Sidorová from the Slovak Business Agency (the oldest specialised SME support institution in Slovakia) presented mainly core services and areas of expertise, international projects and the Enterprise Europe Network (support for innovative SMEs with international ambitions). Vladimír Tanistrák from the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic then presented the innovation and start-up policy in Slovakia. From this point of view, he presented that Slovakia does not have a specific strategy/policy for start-ups (included in the National R&D&I Strategy), nor is the definition of a start-up defined in the legislation. However, the Act No. 290/2016 Coll. on the support of small and medium-sized enterprises indirectly describes start-ups. Vladimír Tanistrák also presented the support of start-ups in Slovakia. The last presenter of this block was Michal Körmendi from the Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency (SARIO), who presented SARIO's mission (i.e. investor support, foreign trade support, innovation sourcing) and key sectors of the Slovak economy (i.e. automotive and machinery; electronics & ICT & business services). At the end of the last presentation, the participants had the opportunity to ask questions in an open discussion. Every question was answered.



Roadmap “what’s next?” & Forest Assessment Workshop

In the second block of the first day’s agenda, Suylianne Oliveira presented the project progress chart and its purpose (i.e. better understanding of deliverables, deadlines and budget expenditures). She also presented the access to the progress cart spreadsheet. She explained each step in detail and she also highlighted the other uses of the project progress chart (e.g. for reminding the policy instruments, reminding partner’s teams, keeping up with Interreg Europe events dates, etc.). The presentation was followed by the Q&A session. The last point of this agenda block was the Forest Assessment Workshop. Inés Barrena Gragera presented the structure of the assessment and introduced the origin and evolution of the unicorn start-up concept, the main characteristics and the situation of unicorns worldwide. She also presented common factors that contribute to unicorn success and mentioned best examples of unicorns in Europe. After that, she introduced Unicorn Forrest Assessment, methodology and area of analysis, followed by a fruitful discussion and Q&A part, which was continued the next day due to the agenda.



First site visit in InoBat

The participants then travelled by bus to visit InoBat, a local 'soonicorn', and met with Marián Boček, the Executive Director of InoBat. InoBat is a Slovak company based in Voderady. InoBat specialises in the pioneering research, development, manufacture and supply of high quality innovative electric batteries tailored to the specific requirements of global mainstream and specialist OEMs in the automotive, commercial vehicle, motorsport and aerospace sectors. UnicornQuest project partners and stakeholders had the opportunity to visit InoBat, the first battery line in Slovakia. The line covered a distance of 24 169 kilometres. *InoBat's vision started with a sketch on a napkin and an idea to put Slovakia on the world map of electromobility.* The company offers innovative solutions along the entire value chain thanks to its "C2C" circular value chain, backed by a strong consortium of strategic investors and partners.



Consortium meeting – Case Studies Presentation

After the case study visit in InoBat, the participants took a bus to the Consortium meeting - case study presentation, which was held in Nádvorie Trnava. Americo Mateus introduced the case study. After the first part of the presentation, there was room for regional case presentations, followed by a question and answer session.

To sum up, Suylianne de Oliveira presented KNOKcare. Then regional case studies were presented by companies: Yobbers; HIRO ROBOTICS, s.r.l.; HOODLIE s.r.l.; TACKPAY s.r.l.; Adventrum Tech; Spirocco Ltd.; NanoCleanWorld; REYOUZZ.

As mentioned above, the last part of the first day's agenda was the Q&A session. After the last part of the first day's agenda, the participants continued with dinner at Akademia in Trnava and transfer to Bratislava.



Regional meeting with stakeholders

In the morning of the second day, Peter Adamovský presented the activities of the Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency, especially in the field of business start-ups (and also other activities), but he also presented general information about the organisation (i.e. organisational structure of SIEA; Section of Innovation and its objective). The prepared presentation also mentioned the funding schemes and the implementation section of the ESIF and the Operational Programme Slovakia 2021 - 2029.

After that, Maria Smaranda presented good practices from the side of the Innovation Coucher. According to her, empathy is the key factor to understand the client's problem. This part was followed by an open discussion on various topics.



Consortium meeting – Communication goals and progress + Project support

In the second block of the agenda, Andrea Enyingi-Kurucz presented communication activities. She shared with the participants a document with a social media plan. Andrea asked project partners to share articles about unicorns for the communication part and about all events related to UnicornQuest project. She also informed the UnicornQuest project partners about the status quo of social media. LinkedIn is the most working social platform for UnicornQuest project. She also wants to support Facebook platform to improve the number of followers.

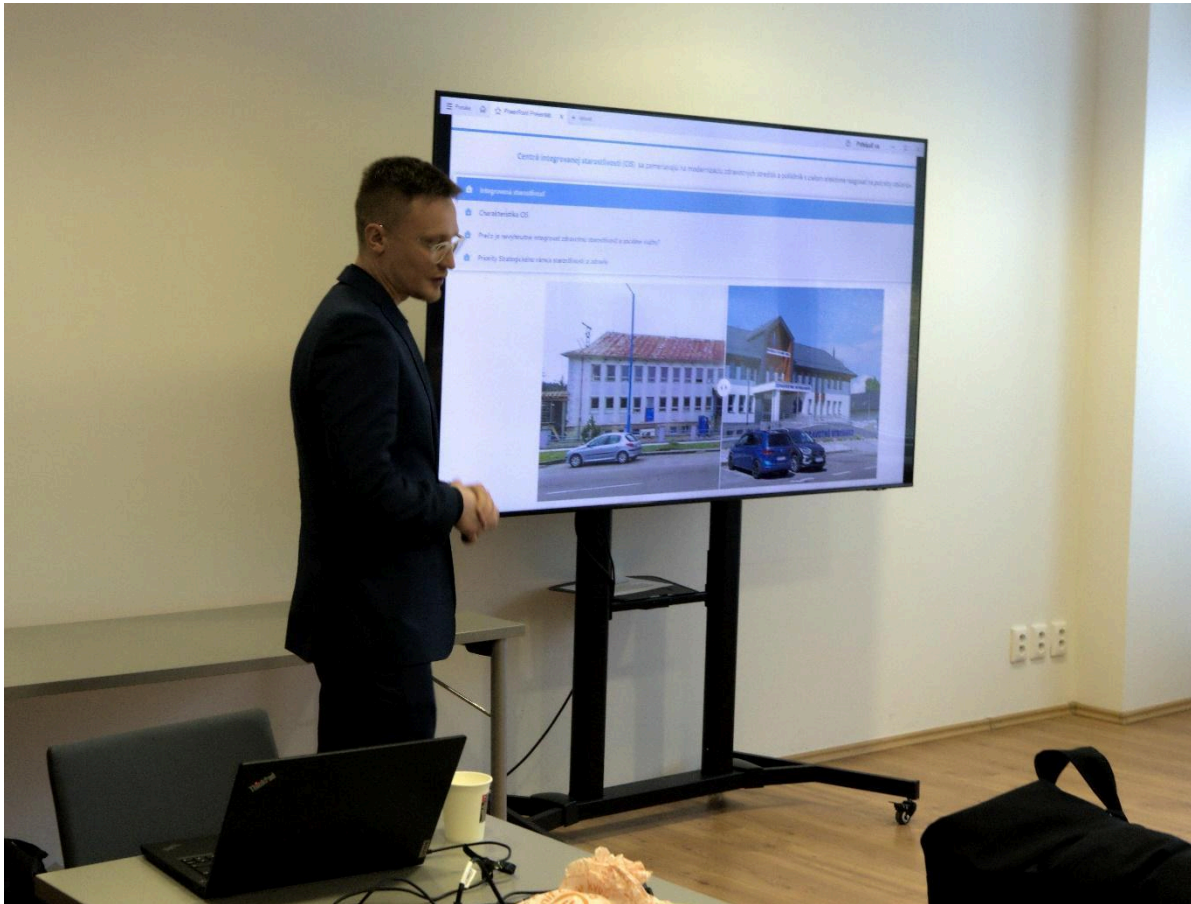
In this part of the agenda, there was space to continue the discussion related to the Forest Assessment from the previous day. Discussion was mainly concentrated in area of common and individual part of structure Forrest Assessment. Some proposals or modifications were formulated from side of participants. Some of the proposals were accepted and others will be revised. The actual structure of Forrest Assessment will be shared with UnicornQuest project partners after modifications.



Second round of presentations

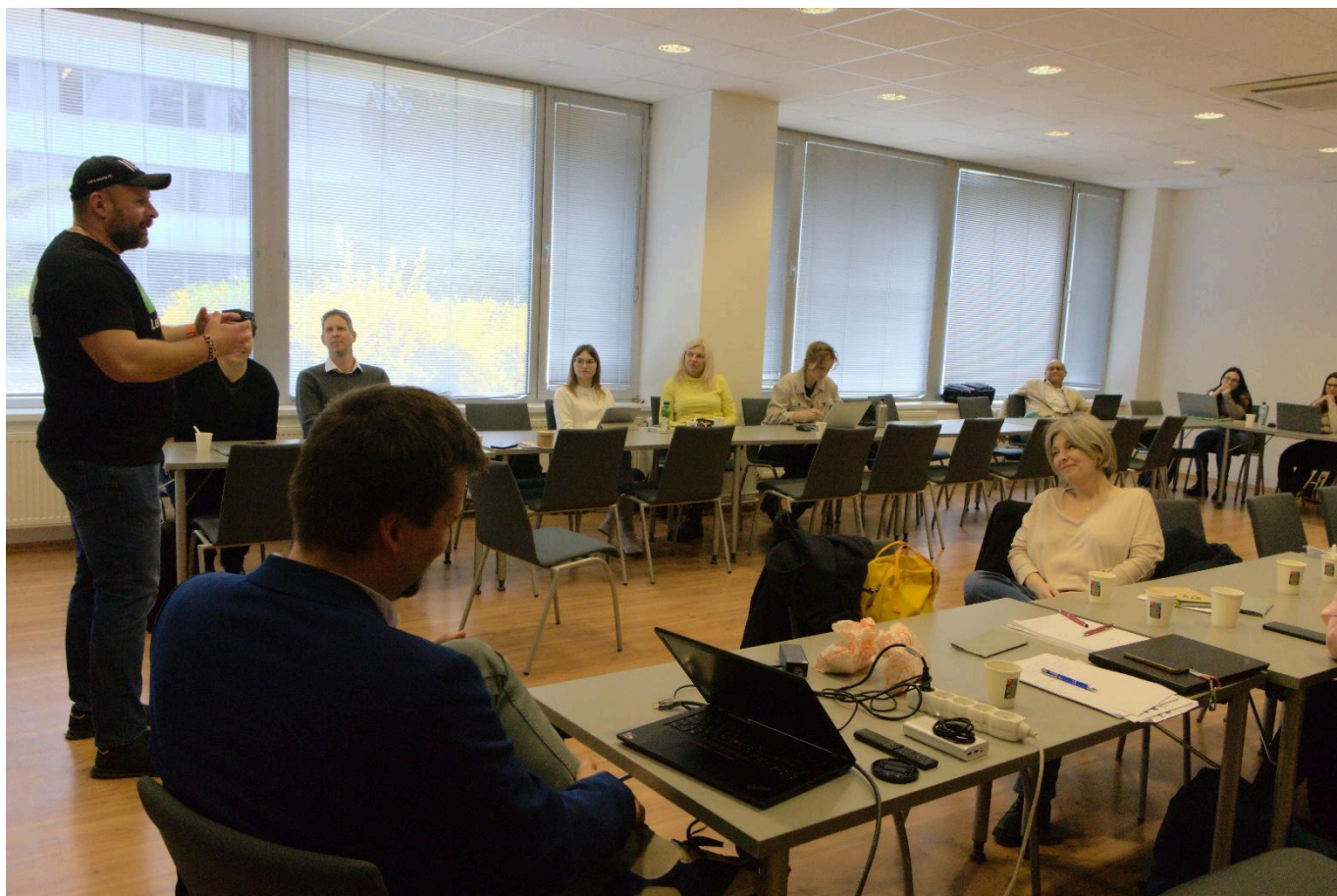
In this part of the second day's agenda, Andrea Miklasová presented the activities of the University Technology Incubator of STU. They work with STU students and STU alumni. She presented the mission of her incubator, her team, programmes and services, partners and mentors. After the presentation there was an extensive discussion on the topic of cooperation between universities and the business sector.

The agenda continued with the presentation of Lukáš Sekelský from the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, who presented support for start-ups in the healthcare sector. He spoke about their behavioural and experimental economics team and about comprehensive behavioural approach implementation projects. He also presented a case study. This part of the agenda ended with a question and answer session.



SENSONEO presentation

The agenda of the second day was closed by local company SENSONEO (CEO Martin Basila presenting their story) and Q&A. SENSONEO started with one product, a waste level monitoring solution, consisting of sensors that measure the waste level in bins and an intelligent waste management software system. Over the years they have expanded and perfected their service portfolio, which now ranges from waste and collection monitoring, route planning, factory waste management to take-back systems and deposit return scheme integration. SENSONEO has successfully implemented Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) software in more than five countries, achieving recycling rates of over 90%. In addition, SENSONEO has developed tools to automate factory waste collection, enabling its customers to improve waste diversion rates and site recycling.



Final world had Peter Adamovský. He thanked all the involved participants.