



Research Success Stories



January 2012

“Funded by the EU”: a seal that opens doors

“Odyssey” is what comes to mind when one hears the story of how the LEAP-project grew from idea to implementation – including, fortunately, a happy ending for the crew, ETH Zurich and four enterprises.

The aim of the LEAP project is to investigate how to increase efficiency in new product development processes. To this end, the swiss Center for Automotive Research of ETH Zurich works with four automotive companies from Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Germany. Such collaboration between research organizations and enterprises is financed by the European “Industry Academia Partnerships and Pathways” funding scheme. The start of the project was less than easy, but now yields distinct benefits.



Dr Anja Schulze
ETH Zurich
 LEAP Coordinator

Soon they found that it is not implemented at all, so they wanted to share their knowledge of the concept with European companies, start pilot projects and evaluate them to see whether, when and how the concept could be put into practice in Europe.

The team applied for funding under the “Industry Academia Partnerships and Pathways” scheme. Their first application was rejected. A revised application, then, was accepted in

2008 – just as the crisis hit the automotive industry.

“It is amazing how this “funded by the EU”-seal helps to open doors.”

A difficult journey

Initially, the ETH team wanted to investigate how the concept of Lean Management is implemented in product development in Europe.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

LEAP stands for “Lean Development – new principles for innovation management and a more time and cost efficient development of novel products”. The ideal that “lean” management aims for: the right production process for the right product at the right time, satisfying consumers’ needs, without waste, without glitches or redundancies and with collaborators who continuously improve the process and product. The swiss Center for Automotive Research of ETH Zurich shares its knowledge of this concept with four automotive companies: Behr GmbH, Brose Fahrzeugteile GmbH, Bystronic Laser AG and ThyssenKrupp Presta AG. Together, they find ways to apply lean management principles, originating from Japan, in the development of new products in Europe.

Having other priorities, three of four partners retreated. New partners had to be found at a time of crisis, and the European Commission had to be convinced of the necessity and quality of the new partners. After all of this, an administrative hurdle concerning employment contracts and taxes almost stopped the project in the last minute. Fortunately, this hurdle was overcome with the help of Euresearch, and the project could finally start.

The benefits

“It is amazing how this ‘funded by the EU’-seal helps to open doors”, says the project’s coordinator Anja Schulze. Not only, but also thanks to this “seal of quality” the ETH team was able to visit and talk to people who rarely give interviews and to invite excellent experts for workshops and conferences. The companies, on the other hand, gain access to the ETH team’s knowledge and extend their professional network and expertise.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Project Name:	LEAP (Lean Development – new principles for innovation management and a more time and cost efficient development of novel products)
Marie Curie Action:	FP7-PEOPLE-IAPP-2008 Marie Curie Action “Industry-Academia Partnerships and Pathways”
Coordinator:	Anja Schulze
Organisation:	ETH Zurich
Start Date - End Date:	2010/01/01 – 2013/12/31
Duration:	48 months
Project Cost:	913061 €

Euresearch – Your Swiss Guide to European Research and Innovation

Euresearch informs and advises about the participation in European Research and Development Programmes & facilitates Innovation partnerships in Europe.

We guide you in finding opportunities fitting your needs.
We answer all your questions related to FP7, COST and EEN.
We also help you with the preparation of your project.

Funding European Research Projects



FP7 – the 7th Framework Programme for R&D of the EU

FP7 is the main instrument for scientific and technological cooperation in Europe funding basic and market oriented research, applied development and fellowships.

www.euresearch.ch/fp7

Funding European Scientific Cooperation



COST – European Cooperation in Science and Technology

European scientists can get support to cooperate on a particular project and exchange expertise with financial support for joint activities such as conferences, short-term scientific exchanges and publications. Research itself is not funded.

www.sbf.admin.ch/htm/themen/international

Building European Innovation and Business Cooperation



EEN – Enterprise Europe Network

Find appropriate cooperation partners in Europe with the support of the Enterprise Europe Network (600 partner organisations in more than 40 countries) facilitating company-company and company-academia innovation partnerships in Europe and beyond.

In Switzerland Euresearch offers personal brokerage support services to find technology partners, new innovation opportunities and to access new markets.

www.swisseen.ch



EURESEARCH

Swiss guide to European research & innovation

Euresearch Head Office
Effingerstrasse 19
CH - 3008 Bern
Phone +41 31 380 60 00
www.euresearch.ch

