



Success Stories



Researchers' Success Stories / October 2011

When worst case scenarios become the default

A large scale fire in a city: in case of such a crisis, governments have to know exactly what they have to do and how – fast. As part of the BRIDGE project, VSH, a Swiss SME, helps them to prepare for such scenarios.

The Bridge project deals with scenarios most people would rather not think about: fires in tunnels, earthquakes, floods. The project looks for ways to save as many lives as possible in such situations. One major partner in this 19-million Euro project is a middle-size Swiss company, Versuchsstollen Hagerbach AG (VSH).



Maximilian Wietek
Swiss Partner BRIDGE

resources to coordinate such a big project. But instead of giving up, they let bigger partners coordinate the project (SINTEF, Norway and FIT) and took over the leadership of two Work Packages. For Maximilian Wietek from VSH's Research & Technology department, such projects have two major advantages: "First, up to 75 percent of the costs are paid by the European Commission".

Big business for a small company

During an info day on the FP7 Security theme, VSH came to know the Fraunhofer-Institut für Angewandte Informationstechnik (FIT). The two companies decided to collaborate and developed the idea for BRIDGE. Over time, the idea for the project grew bigger and bigger, and VSH realized that it did not have the

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Second, having experience with the Framework Programmes, we can now involve our

FACTS AND FIGURES

Project Name:	BRIDGE
Research Area:	FP7 Security - Restoring security and safety in case of crisis.
SME Project Partner:	Versuchsstollen Hagerbach AG (VSH), Switzerland
Coordinator:	SINTEF, Norway
Start Date:	2011/02/01
End Date:	2015/01/31
Duration:	48 months
Project Cost:	19,3 million Euro
Project Funding:	13,6 million Euro
Contract type:	FP7: Integration Project

ABOUT THE PROJECT

When an earthquake destroys a densely populated area governments have to have, collect and share relevant data on the crisis: Where is help most important, who can help? They have to be able to access the data in a comprehensible form when and where they need them. And they have to have people who are trained to do what needs to be done. Bridge develops technical and organizational means to help them meet these necessities. They do this by cross-disciplinary research and development (engineering, IT, human behaviour, medicine). Moreover, by involving active end-users, Bridge ensures that it develops solutions that are accepted by and work for those who will use them.

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Persistence needed

However, there are also problems for SMEs regarding FP7 projects: the negotiation and implementation phase takes longer than usual and bills can take years to be settled. "As an SME, it is not self-evident that you can afford such projects", says Maximilian Wietek.

As regards the planning and the finding of partners, he describes the process similar to people in earlier success stories: VSH had a vision, collaborated with FIT on planning the project designed for a specific FP7 call, and once the plan was advanced enough, it was not a problem to find partners who liked to join the project. And Maximilian Wietek adds that Euresearch is extremely helpful when it comes to advice on European funds: "They are on one of our speed-dial buttons, so to speak."

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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

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