PRESS RELEASE

HEPTech Knowledge Café on Meaningful Collaborations with Industry

The HEPTech Network together with the Knowledge Transfer Network, UK, organised a Knowledge Café on Meaningful Collaborations with Industry, in London, on the 12th of November 2015.

This workshop was a follow-up of the last *Workshop on Start-up and Spin-out creation* and brought together technology transfer officers and entrepreneurs who presented cases of collaborations between academia and industry that originated with their institutions or companies.

Bernard Denis, from the Knowledge Transfer Group at CERN, presented a case study of a unique setting of technology transfer that originated with CERN and the Medipix Collaboration.

Medipix is a family of photon counting and particle tracking pixel detectors developed by an international collaboration, hosted by CERN.

The digital data recorded by Medipix family of devices are transferred to a computer via readout electronics, which is also responsible for setup and control of the detector parameters. Several readout systems were developed within the Medipix collaboration.

Medipix has several commercial applications - in material analysis, space dosimetry, medical imaging, gamma camera, etc. A chip based on Medipix technology will serve as the read-out chip in the new vertex detector of the LHCb experiment.

In this collaboration, the institutes who generated IP, own it. Most of the chip design is done by CERN. The development of the chip is co-financed by the collaboration members. They have free access to the chip for R&D purposes and revenues generated through commercialization are shared between the owner of the IP and the collaboration members. Bernard pointed out that since it was very expensive to make a chip, cost-sharing was one of the triggers for collaboration. Three exclusive licenses and ten non-exclusive production licenses have been granted. Eight spin-off companies were created to develop products based on Medipix technology.

The key success factors derived from this case study are: (i) a collaboration agreement with clear IP provisions and simple ownership scheme, and (ii) an impartial and transparent technology transfer office.

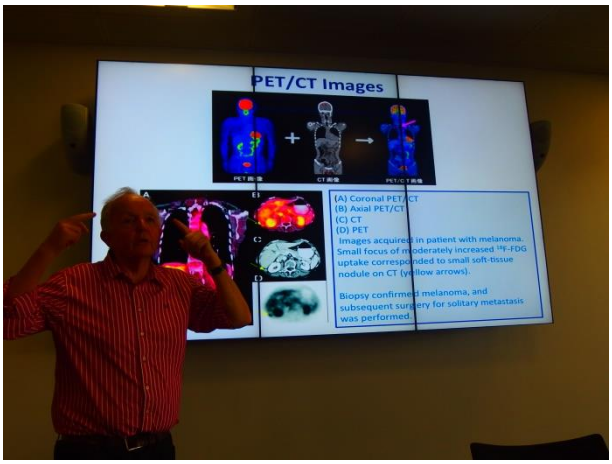
Evangelos Gazis from the National Technical University of Athens brought up for discussion a case study relating to an on-going research project and the IP and licensing rights affiliated with it.

The ITN FP 7 funded EDUSAFE project is focused on research in the use of Virtual and Augmented reality during planned and emergency maintenance in extreme radiation background environments (ATLAS cavern, nuclear research centers, nuclear installations, reactors, power plants, space activities).

Evangelos clarified that the Project Consortium was struggling with issues relating to the commercialization of the output resulting from the R&D collaboration due to difficulties in agreeing the licensing rights for each partner, and how to proceed towards a commercial product.

The case led to a constructive discussion where the workshop participants posed guiding questions and shared their ideas about possible solutions to the problem.

The lesson learnt from this case was that technology licensing appeared to be a proper methodology for R&D partnership projects, able to lead their products to the market. A commercial start-up could be helpful in solving the issues and facing industrial challenges since the academic staff/researchers have no proper background to understand and promote market-oriented approaches.



Finally, presenting a case study about the recent developments in the PET industry, Dewi Lewis from PHYSEGA Ltd discussed various PET applications and the route to commercialization of some of them. He also demonstrated a model for industrial landscape mapping presenting companies and their PET market share.

The participants enjoyed a friendly atmosphere of constructive discussions throughout the whole day of the workshop.

Eleonora Getsova,
HEPTech Communication Officer