



# Tampere Region Economic Development Agency **INNOVATION VOUCHER**



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund



COUNCIL OF  
TAMPERE REGION

Leverage from  
the EU  
2014–2020

# MAIN OBJECTIVES AND TARGET GROUPS

## ➤ Main objectives:

- An **open and market-based** innovation voucher system, utilizing a **digital platform**
- A co-operative process among all the parties involved (Voucher users, service providers, system managers)
- **A dynamic process** reacting to companies' innovation needs
- **Themes:**
  - Wellbeing and health
  - Renewing industry
  - IoT
  - Smart traffic and mobility
  - Other solutions relating to Smart City development

## ➤ Target groups:

- Voucher users (start-ups, micro-enterprises, SMEs)
- Companies and organizations as service providers
- Universities and educational institutions as service providers
- Stakeholders as future utilizers of innovation voucher



# HOW IT WORKS IN PRACTICE

- Service Provider registers to the digital platform and creates a **Product Card**
- System Manager checks and approves the Product Card, which is then transferred to **Service Catalogue**
- A company finds an interesting service from the catalogue, contacts the Service Provider and **applies for an Innovation Voucher (max 5.000 €)** for this service (on the digital platform)
- Application is checked and **approved** by the System Manager
- Voucher User and Service Provider agree about **the implementation** between themselves
- Voucher User acknowledges the service as **"Done"** on the digital platform and gives feedback
- **Payment** (value of the voucher) is made directly from Tredea to the Service Provider, after the acceptance of the service by Voucher User



# HOW THE COMPANIES USE IT

- **Research & Development**
  - studies of technology based properties
  - laboratory studies and validation in laboratory environment
- **Exploring market opportunities**
  - preliminary market research
  - competitor analysis
- **Protecting and managing IPR**
  - gaining control, investing and maintaining control over IP portfolio
- **Prototyping and industrial demonstration**
  - first basic prototype, laboratory prototype
- **Product trials**
  - first trials and building relationship with early customers
- **Industrialisation and commercialisation**
  - establishing a product/service, service design and digitalisation



# EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

- 104 vouchers (value 458.500 €) have been granted since November 2016
- 84/104 services have been finalized, 20 services still under work
- Results until now:
  - 61 / 84 companies believe to start exporting to a new market area
  - 25 / 84 are expecting a remarkable growth of turnover
  - 9 / 84 are reporting of creating a new job already now

## Voucher has activated their innovation process!

- Comments by the companies after using the voucher:
  - "Easy to use and flexible tool for entrepreneurs"
  - "Enables R&D and experimentations, that might otherwise be postponed or remain undone"
  - "We were able to buy professional knowhow that we were lacking"
  - "We believe that this leads to a remarkable growth of our business"



# POTENTIAL FOR LEARNING OR TRANSFER

- Positive feedback: **Easy, flexible, open, market-based and fast process**
  - 99 companies have received the voucher by March 2017:
  - 23 start-ups, 61 micro-enterprises, 15 SMEs
  - 47 / 99 have never applied or received any kind public funding before
- At best, the digital platform enables a smooth process with a **minimum human resource** and is easily **scalable**
- The development steps of the platform can be utilized by all the member organisations in the future



# SUSTAINABILITY

- Innovation voucher can be integrated into the regional business ecosystem as an up-to-date tool for all the ecosystem members
  - a concrete innovation tool for organizations managing the system
  - for voucher users, an attractive way of helping them with their innovation activities
  - **for service providers**, a tool for productizing their services and a market-based channel to find new customers and partners
- The scalability of innovation voucher is high, due to digital platform and minimum manual resources needed
- The goals and purposes of use of the voucher can be regionally defined

