Smart4Europe2
Catalysing Digitisation throughout Europe

Deliverable 1.3

Report on Service Centre and Innovation Support

Cover and Control Page of Document	
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[1] R=Report, DEC= Websites, patents filling, Ethics, ORDP: Open Research Data Pilot, etc., O=Other

[2] PU = Public, CO = Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)

Acronyms Listed in Document	
AE	Application Experiment
CSA	Coordination and Support Action
DIH	Digital Innovation Hub
EC	European Commission
EFECS	European Forum for Electronic Components and Systems
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Parties
H2020	Horizon 2020
IA	Innovation Action
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
SAE	Smart Anything Everywhere
SME	Small and Medium sized Enterprise
SEO	Search Engine Optimisation
SWOT	Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat
WMF	World Manufacturing Forum
WP	Work Package

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1 Executive Summary

This deliverable presents the efforts made to optimize the Innovation Portal, in order to serve better the Service Centre and Innovation Support functions.

Through entering the third phase of the SAE evolution in January 2020, six new Innovation Actions (IAs) are now aligned to the SAE initiative, engaging even more stakeholders and newcomers to this initiative than ever before. The SAE Service Centre is thus a crucial part of the Innovation Portal and has been refined to specifically support newcomers as well as the stakeholders of SAE supported actions (IAs) and their related Application Experiment (AE) partners.

The Innovation Portal provides a single-entry point both to the newcomers but also existing stakeholders of the SAE community offering access to comprehensive and well-structured information.

As the target groups addressed by the SAE initiative heavily differ not only by their technological but also organisational background (SME, start-up, large enterprise vs academia, RTO, Technology Provider), different approaches had to be considered when re-designing the website.

In this context, the main tasks were to

- collect the respective data from each new Innovation Actions and its partners
- process the data for the different target groups
- reduce complexity as well as structure the given information
- address the different target groups and their understanding of the SAE initiative by understanding their different needs and expectations
- structure the Innovation Portal according to the needs and interests of the different stakeholders

The revised Innovation Portal went online in August 2020. Feedback collected since then from the users of the Innovation Portal show that the information provided leads to a better understanding of the initiative, its ambitions and available resources.
Analytics, especially the page view data and time spent on individual pages confirm the individual feedback collected and show that the revised service centre and innovation support now better meet the needs of the newcomers as well as existing stakeholders.

2   Introduction to the Service Centre and Innovation Support

2.1   Objectives and approach of the Service Centre and Innovation support

The Innovation Portal provides a single-entry point both to the newcomers and existing stakeholders of the SAE community offering access to comprehensive and well-structured information.

The SAE Service Centre is established to specifically support newcomers, but also participants of SAE supported actions (IAs) and their related Application Experiment (AE) partners through its dedicated Innovation Portal https://smartanythingeverywhere.eu/.

Both the "**About**" Section https://smartanythingeverywhere.eu/about/ as well as the "**Services for newcomers**" https://smartanythingeverywhere.eu/services/ is to inform SMEs and mid-caps to help them decide which service, or SAE Innovation Action (IA) offers the best solution for their business needs. It contains a "Frequently Asked Question" (FAQ) section to further support the decision-making process. It gives consolidated information about the funding possibilities within the SAE initiative and links to further funding and investment options.

The **"Services for SAE stakeholders"** includes support for individual SAE DIHs, Innovation Actions and AE partners providing a non-public forum for coaching SAE partners where they can share their experiences. As a living database, all partners of SAE aligned Innovation Actions are not only listed in the community section of the Innovation Portal but also in the interactive map. This allows the user to easily identify the closest DIH, while at the same time also giving an excellent overview of the well-balanced coverage across Europe.

3   Re-Design of the Innovation Portal

3.1   Review recommendations tackled with the re-design of the Innovation Portal

The recommendations of the reviewers, especially during the final review of the CSA Smart4Europe in 2019 and Month 9 review of the successor CSA Smart4Europe2, focused especially on taking into account the different interests of newcomers versus members of the SAE community.

The recommendations of the reviewers concerning the Innovation Portal were especially:

- To adapt the Innovation Portal towards having a "clear and concrete vision of what exactly Smart4Europe/ Smart4Europe2 is trying to achieve"
- Make it more user-friendly (e.g. accessible from mobile devices)
- Address Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)
- Check with visitors on how useful and user-friendly the website is
- Provide more eye-catching style and pictures
- Advertise available material such as brochures, flyers, video clips more effectively

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Following the recommendations given, the consortium agreed on a complete re-design of the Innovation Portal to meet the needs of especially the newcomers to the initiative, but also the growing ecosystem and its various stakeholders.

Before starting the process of re-designing the Innovation Portal, adapting it to the needs of the individual target audience, a SWOT analysis of the current Innovation Portal was performed. Also, webpages of SAE related initiatives such as I4MS and DIHNET were analysed to understand the different approaches to web presentation of these actions.

Especially in terms of addressing the newcomers to the SAE initiative as well as the SAE community with the various stakeholders, the Innovation Portal was re-designed to meet their respective interest in the SAE initiative.

3.2   Addressing newcomers

When talking about newcomers, the consortium understands that this is mainly SMEs and mid-caps either looking for funding or engaged with the SAE initiative with an aligned IA. Nevertheless, also SAE stakeholders new to the SAE community can use the information at hand.
The **"Services for newcomers"** gives information to SMEs and mid-caps to help them to decide which service or IA aligned to SAE offers the best solution to their needs. Especially the landing page with its four sections below the sliders is dedicated to this. "What SAE is all about" offers a link to the subpage (the "About" page) where SAE is generally explained.
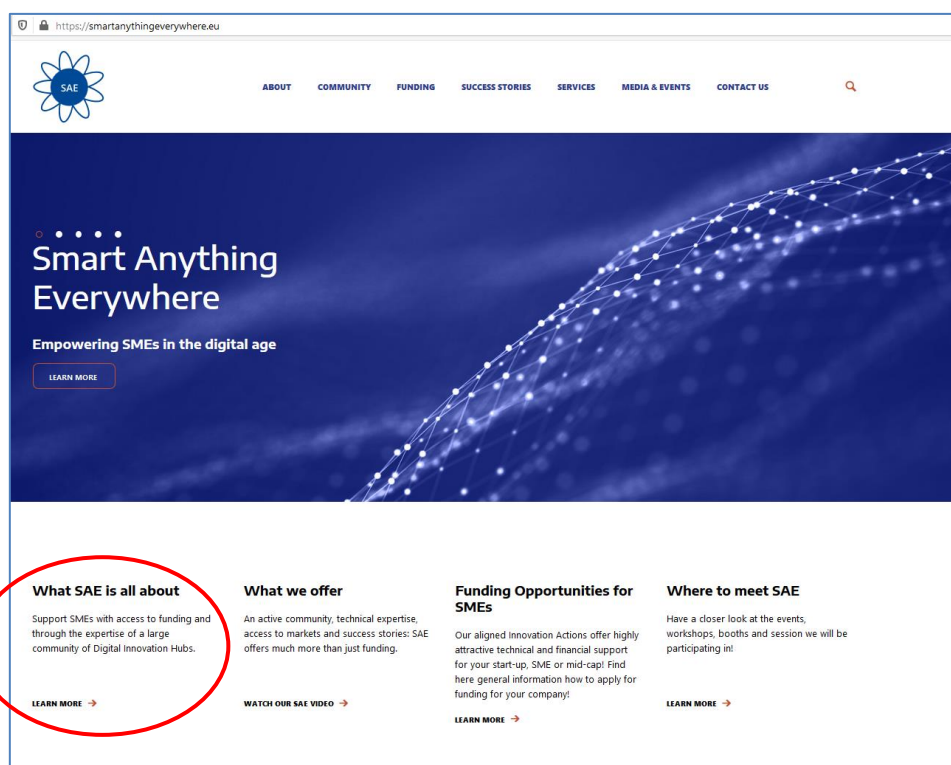

Figure 1. Landing page of the SAE Innovation Portal

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On the "About" page, information is presented such that newcomers quickly understand what the SAE initiative is all about, its history and the different phases, what SAE offers as well as the funding opportunities provided to SMEs.
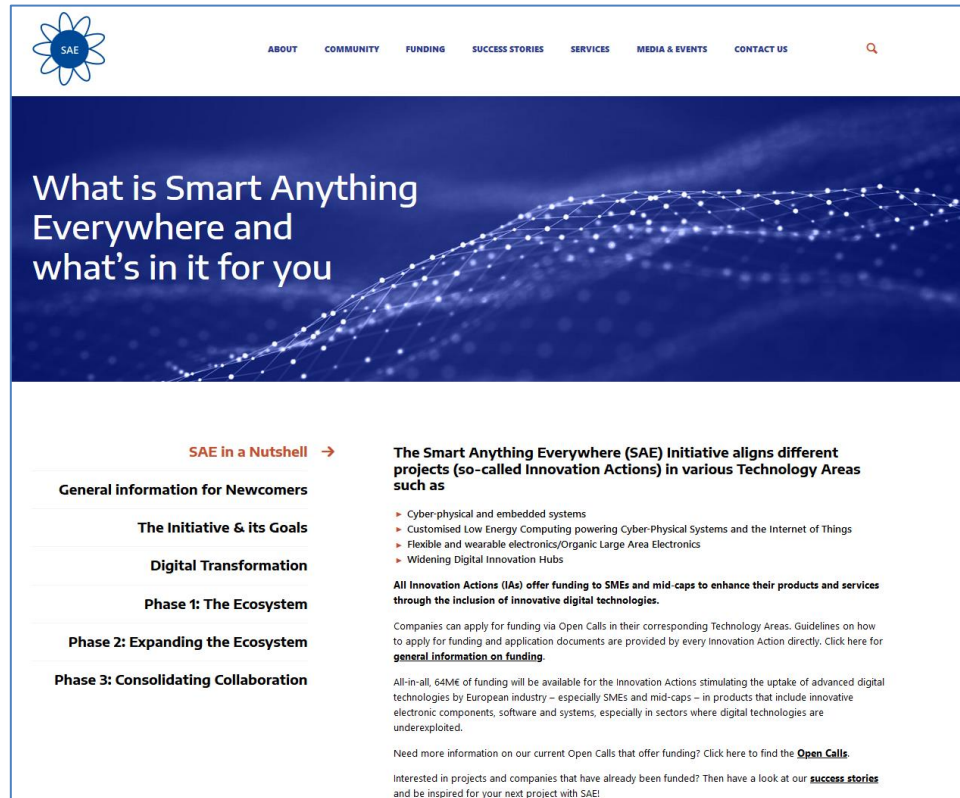

Figure 2. SAE in a Nutshell

Especially the first section "SAE in a nutshell" is dedicated to give a quick and easily understandable introduction to the initiative and the great opportunities offered to SMEs and mid-caps.

Further information is provided when opening the section below **"General information for newcomers"** which is dedicated to inform SMEs and mid-caps about the opportunities offered. As funding is of main interest, topics such as **"how does it work"**, **"who is eligible for funding"** or **"what rules are to follow"** are tackled in this subpage. This is also accessible via funding/funding easily explained.
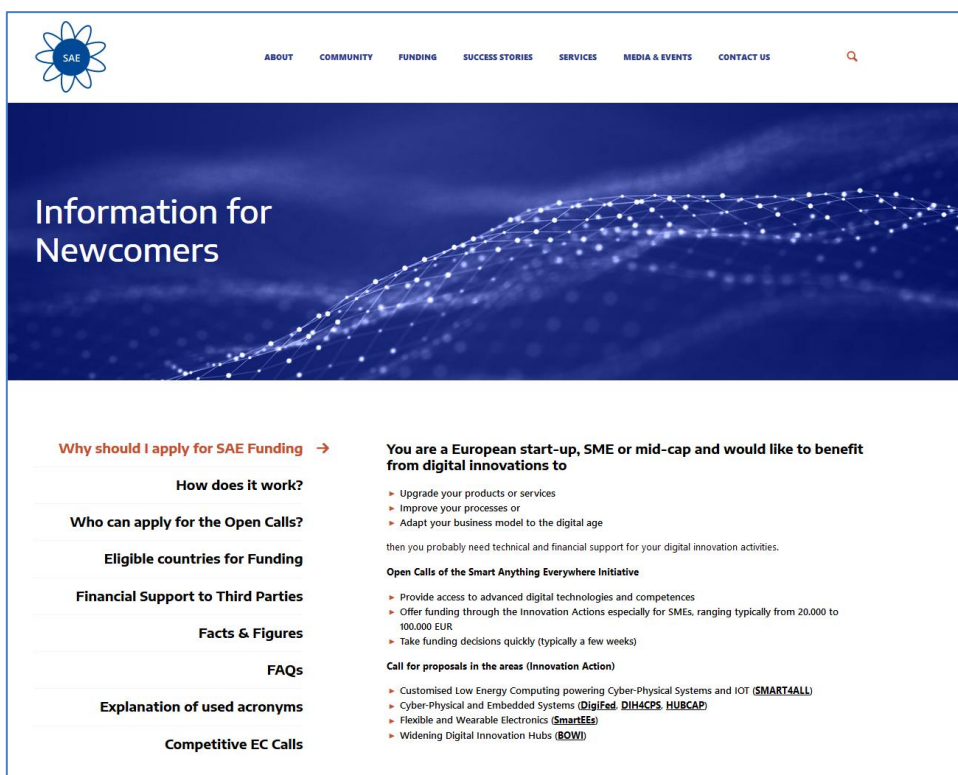
Figure 3. General Information for Newcomers

Figure 4. Newly introduced subpage "Information for Newcomers"

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It is of utmost importance to the consortium to make all available information as short as possible yet easy to understand. For this reason, the subpage called **"Information for newcomers"** was introduced on the new website. It is a comprehensive portal that gives information to SMEs and mid-caps to help them to decide which service, or SAE Innovation Action, could give the best solution to their innovation needs.

The page "information for newcomers" is also accessible via a direct link from the "Funding" page as SME/ mid-cap newcomers are very often more interested in funding than the initiative itself.
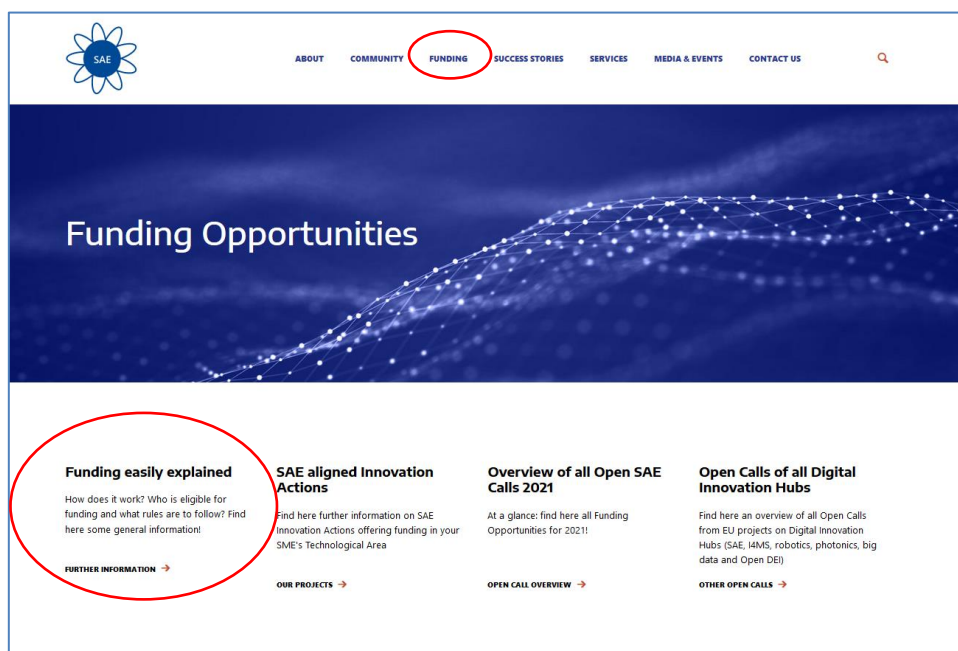

Figure 5. Funding Opportunities

Also, the main page "Community" is a service dedicated to the newcomers as they learn about the different DIH partners via the "Partner Spotlight" and their localisation in an interactive map (which DIH is closest to me). Further down on this page, the different IAs are described in detail.
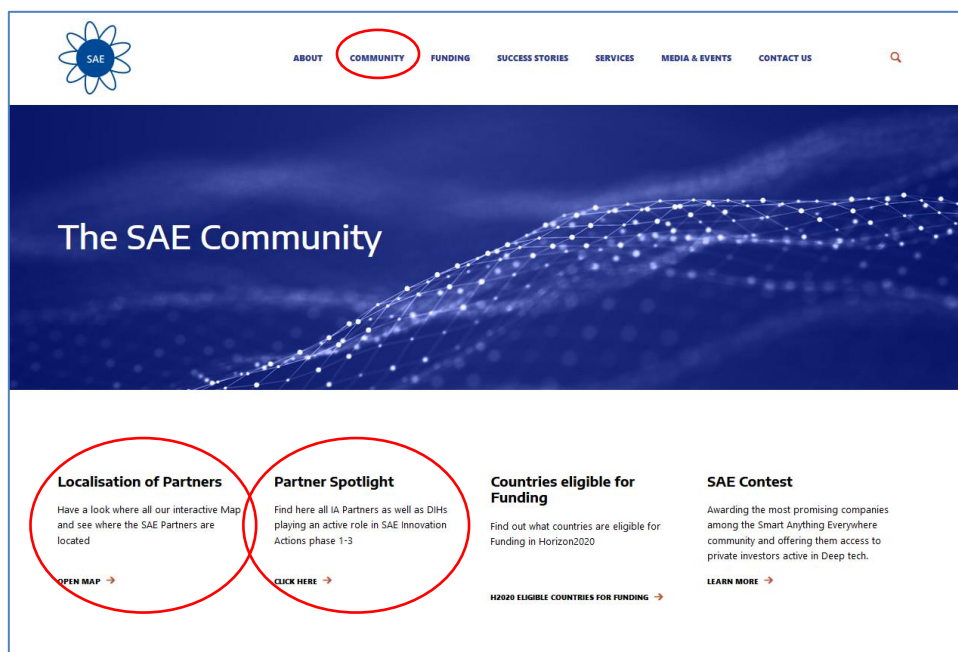
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Figure 6. The SAE Community

In the past, analytics have shown that the menu element "Success Stories", showcasing the results of successfully conducted Application Experiments, was of main interest to the audience. Discussion at several events have proved that this page is also of main interest to the SME/mid-cap newcomers as they can learn in various examples, which industrial impact was achieved with the help of SAE aligned funding through the Application Experiments. To increase the user friendliness, all success stories are sortable not only by their project alignment but also by technology and application area as well as country.

The menu section "Services" focuses on the question "What's in for you" and directly addresses the needs of the newcomers by linking to different "Market Places and Technology Brokerages" offered by SAE projects. This helps newcomers to choose the SAE Innovation Action that suits them best. The Service section also includes tools like the "Technology Radar" or the "Fundraising Readiness Assessment Tool". The Technology Radar was created to classify Smart Technologies, Smart Services, SAE Tools and SAE Platforms according to their level of market readiness and provide examples of applications in different sectors. It will be described in detail in deliverable D 4.1, due in month 18.

Visitors looking for financial support for their innovative idea who are curious to learn more about the most appropriate fundraising strategy for their company can take the Fundraising Readiness Assessment quiz. If newcomers have already a developed technology and founded a promising company, the section "Tips to attract investment" assists them to find private investment to support their operations.

The sections "Training", "Where to find a DIH closest to you" and "Explanation of used acronyms" further deliver an introduction into the Smart Anything Everywhere Initiative. Visitors are provided

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with links to helpful documents or webinars as well as an interactive map with the location of all partners and DIHs involved in the SAE initiative.

The new subpage "Services for newcomers" also contains a "Frequently Asked Question" (FAQ) section to further support the decision-making process. It gives consolidated information about the funding possibilities within the SAE Initiative and links to further funding and investment options.

The menu section "Media & Events" offers the sections of "News", "Events", "Media" and "Videos". While of course all of these sections are of interest for the newcomers, the "Media" as well as "Videos" sections offer the most service for them. Here as well, the recommendation to provide sophisticated "advertising materials such as brochures, flyers, video clips" and to use them more effectively, a new section titled "Media & Events" was introduced. The section can be easily reached through the top navigation and provides the visitor with updates on Events, the opportunity to download brochures and flyers and the possibility to watch new videos regarding the Initiative.
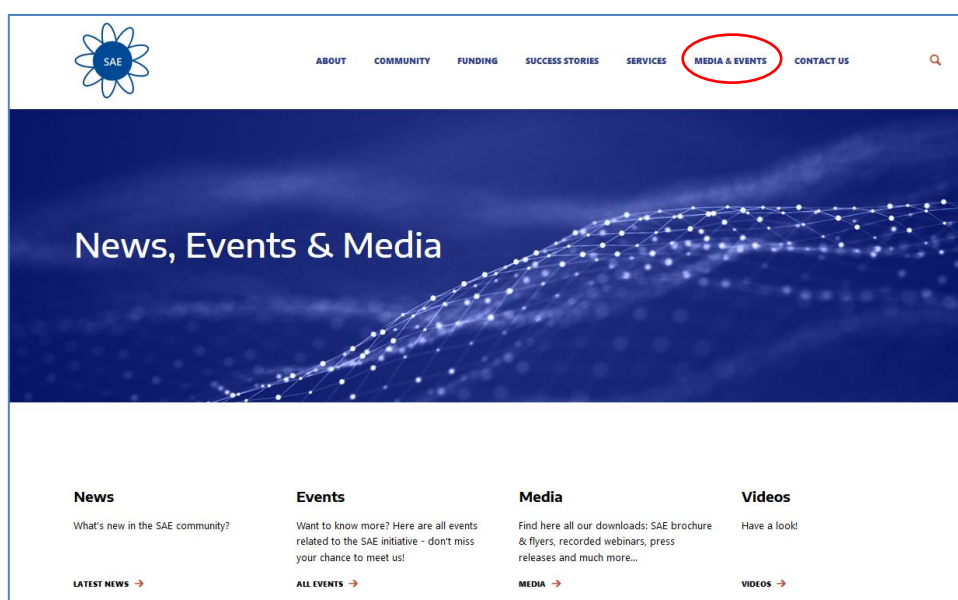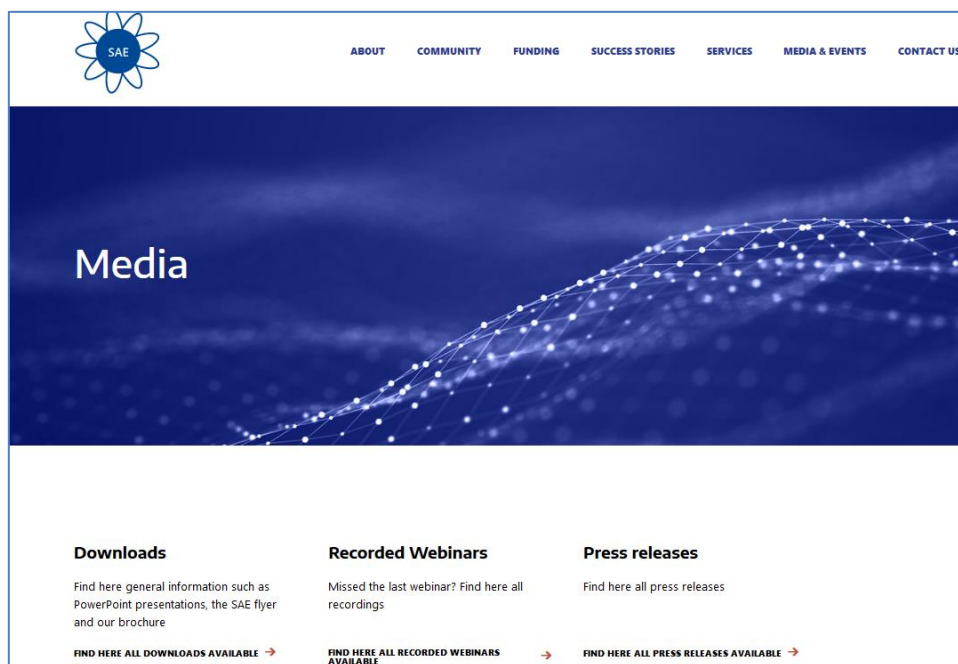

Figure 7. News, Events & Media

Figure 8. Media offerings for newcomers

Especially the "Media" page with its subpages "Downloads" and "Recorded Webinars" is a main service for newcomers, as the information provided here is provided in greater depth than on the before mentioned pages.

All in all, it can be said that utmost importance was placed on improving usefulness and user-friendliness of the Innovation Portal to further facilitate a concrete vision of what exactly the SAE initiative and its CSA Smart4Europe2 is trying to achieve.

3.3 Addressing existing SAE stakeholders

The before mentioned services for newcomers obviously also support the existing SAE stakeholders and community by serving them to support the partners involved in the respective Innovation Action.

Furthermore, the service for SAE stakeholders includes support for individual SAE DIHs, Innovation Actions and AE partners via several dissemination activities through the Innovation Portal on the landing page as well as several subpages.

On the Innovation Portal, especially on the Landing Page as well as on the menu page "Community", several presentations of the Innovation Actions themselves, their Open Calls as well as Success Stories help to show the broad picture of the active SAE community.

A non-public forum for coaching of SAE partners where they can share their experiences will be achieved with the dedicated Market Place to be found in the "Services" menu page. The SAE marketplace is enabled by the DIHIWARE, an integrated innovation & collaboration platform developed within the MIDIH project. It is hosted by Fondazione Politecnico di Milano and customized

according to Smart4Europe2 requirements. A dedicated deliverable D 1.2 due in month 12 will provide further information on its functionality.

Additionally, a service of great interest to the community is the Technology Radar which is being created to classify Smart Technologies, Smart Services, SAE Tools and SAE Platforms according to their level of market readiness as well as applications of the technologies in different sectors. Further information will be given in deliverable D 4.1 due in month 18.

Also, services to support attraction of investment, via tools developed by partner BLU are displayed. Both tools are accessible through a shared link to the partners websites:

The tool to assess the level of fundraising readiness is provided to learn more about the most appropriate fundraising strategy. It is followed by four tips to attract investment with the aim of making private investors fall in love with their company, to build a long-term relationship to support the growth and generate attractive value.

Concluding the service for SAE stakeholders, the menu page "Media & Events" offers the service of downloading the presentations from collaboration meetings but also media such as the SAE brochure and presentations.

4   Status Quo achieved in M12

Objective 1 "Enabling services to support and consolidate the SAE network" is directly feeding into four sub-objectives with respective KPIs. This section will elaborate the work done so far and its achievements:

4.1   Key Performance Indicators

KPIs defined in the proposal are to:

1. Maintain an Innovation Portal and promote it widely and reach over 1,500 visitors per month
2. Publicise 12+ SAE-IA profiles/videos and 36+ success stories from Application Experiments
3. Elaborate best practice guides and publish them on the portal
4. Provide direct support to 300+ SMEs through the Service Centre, consultancies, webinars and training

No.	Sub-objectives	KPIs	Achievements	link to Innovation Portal	Planned actions for M13-24
1	Maintain a single Innovation Portal with Market Place and Service Centre (one-stop shop)	Maintain an Innovation Portal to be promoted widely and reach over 1,500 visitors per month	Average number of visitors per month are analysed (see individual graphs)	https://smartanythingeverywhere.eu	* further increase visitors (especially attract non-tech SMEs) * collect further feedback via survey to enhance Innovation Portal
2	Broad dissemination of SAE successes and offer	Publicise 12+ SAE-IA profiles/videos and 36+ success stories from Application Experiments	71 success stories are currently pulicised on the Innovation Portal. Previous metrics gathering identified that success stories were of high interest so this area has been enhanced to add 33 new ones.	https://smartanythingeverywhere.eu/success-stories/	* publicise further success stories from phase 2 and 3 (when available) * define wording "success story" (recommendation of M9 review) * promote SAE contest award winners and finalists
3	Facilitate collaboration and knowledge transfer within the SAE network by sharing best practices and strengthening SAE community cohesion	Elaborate best practice guide and publish on portal	Extensive knowledge transfer is mainly done via regular SAE Cluster Collaboration Meetings. Public presentations are uploaded to the Innovation Portal. Confidential content is shared amongst the participants.	https://smartanythingeverywhere.eu/media-events/media/downloads/	Deliverable in the second Period
4	Support training and coaching for SMEs and DIHs	Provide direct support to 300+ SMEs through the Service Centre, consultancies, webinars and training	* Different online trainings offered by partners of the CSA as well as Innovation Actions aligned are publicised on the Innovation Portal. * Recordings of session during online events are also available. * So far, approximately 200 persons were reached with the trainings, whereof 50 SMEs	https://smartanythingeverywhere.eu/services/ https://smartanythingeverywhere.eu/media-events/media/recorded-webinars/	* Training activities will pe part of the SAE market place (for registered community). * Collect further training activities and disseminate broadly

Figure 9. Achievements and planned actions

4.2 Analytics

The objective to enable services to support and consolidate the SAE network was strongly characterised by maintaining and optimising a single Innovation Portal providing a Service Centre and Innovation Support. Over the past 3 months the Innovation Portal averaged over 2636 visitors per month which heavily exceeds the previously defined KPI of 1500 visitors per month. In comparison, the Innovation Portal used until August only had an average of 1312 visitors per month.

The increase of page views can be attributed to the re-design of the Innovation Portal, effective social media campaigns, the publication of various SAE videos and consistent community outreach/interaction. The different subpages that attracted the most visitors and kept them engaged are pages related to funding opportunities or services for newcomers. This shows the success of the Innovation Portal to broadly disseminate the SAE initiative itself, its successes but also opportunities.
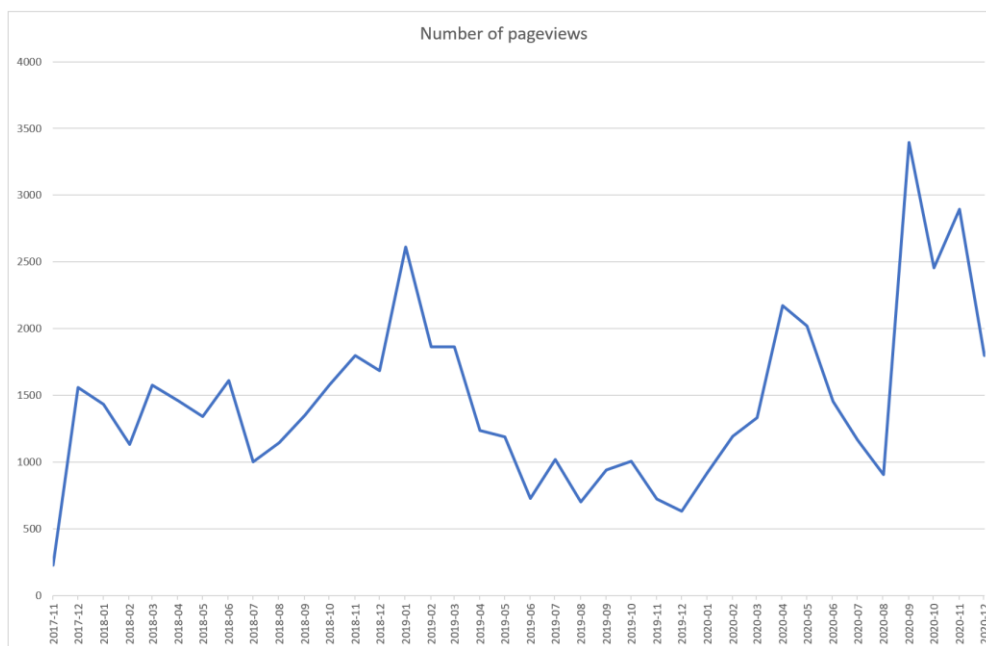
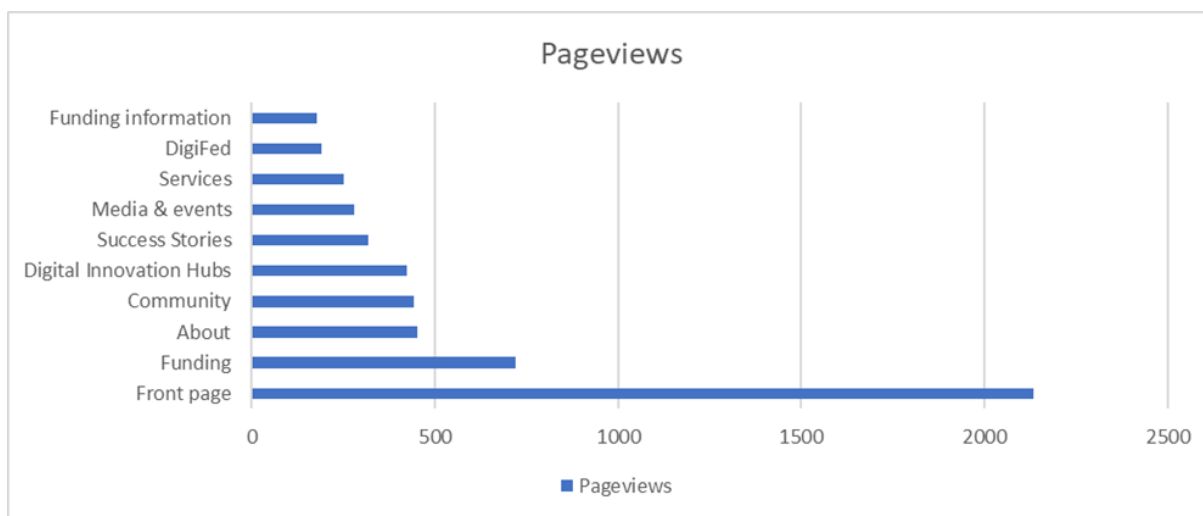**Figure 10. Number of monthly visitors (until Dec. 15)**
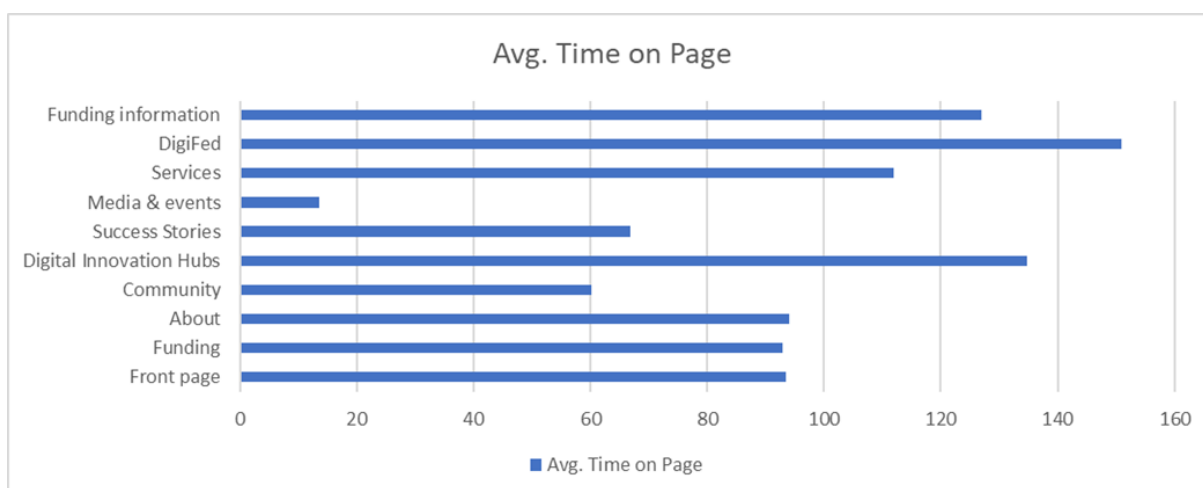

Figure 11. Top10 pages visited

Figure 11 Average time spent on pages (seconds)

Looking at figure 10, it can clearly be stated that next to the landing page, the funding page itself as well as the about page are the most frequented ones.

This is also reflected in number ten of the most visited pages, giving general information on funding. Especially the pages "about", "funding", "funding information" as well as the "service" page are dedicated to meet the needs of the newcomers. They have been thoroughly re-vised to make the pages as understandable for newcomers as possible by giving them the relevant information easily explained. The stakeholders of the SAE community are mainly visiting the pages "community", "Digital Innovation Hubs" as well as "success stories" to gain a better insight on the initiative and its offers. This conclusion is also reflected with the average time spent on the individual pages. Next to the subpage "DigiFed" and the page "Digital Innovation Hubs" itself, funding information is read in more detail next to "services" "about" and "funding".

To improve the availability of DIH services across Europe the Innovation Portal serves as a crucial instrument to provide access to digital technologies and important information featuring the DIHs across regions. The great utilisation and impact of the Innovation Portal across Europe can be measured by visitor numbers categorised by their respective geographical area. The geographical distribution of visitors was spread over 25 different countries with broad EU coverage which shows the far-reaching impact and the high coverage of the Innovation Portal.
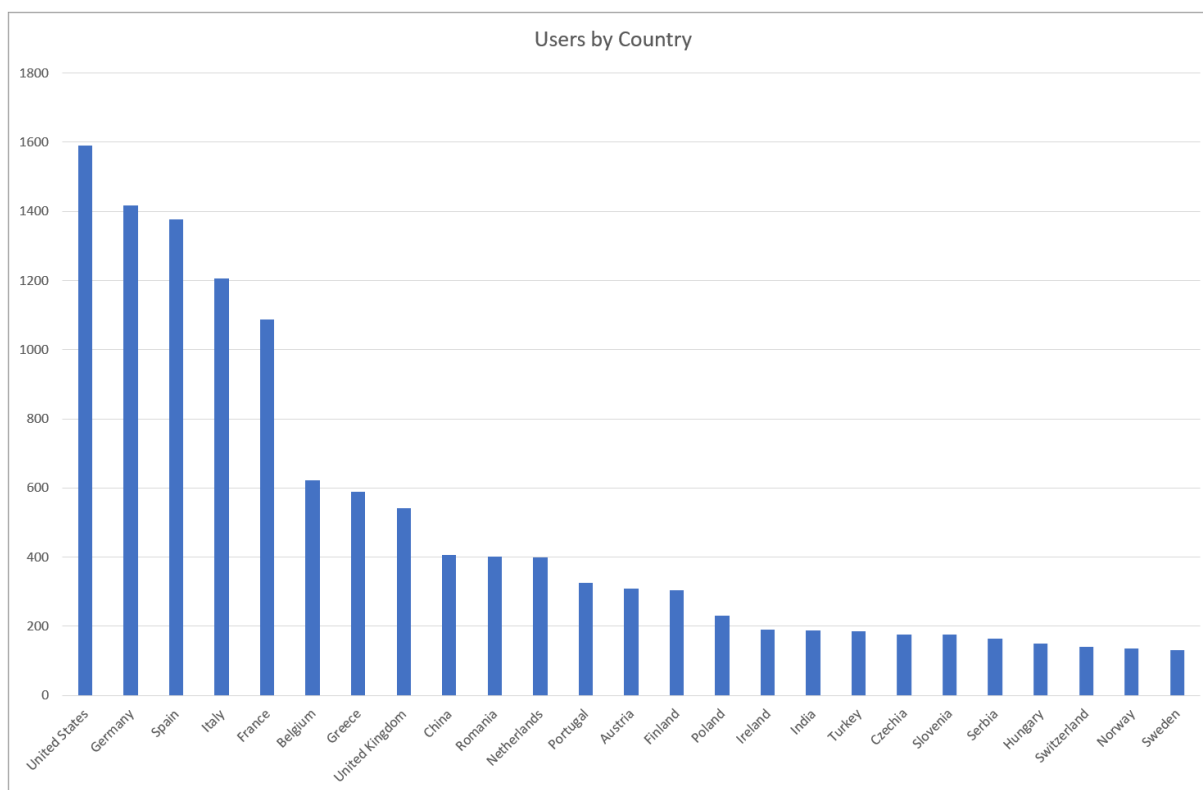
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Figure 12. Users ranked by country

Another example to illustrate the far-reaching impact the Initiative has is the strong engagement on social media, especially on Twitter. In November 2020 alone SAE's Twitter channel has earned 12.6K impressions with its community which corresponds to 419 impressions each day. Furthermore, the number of followers has increase over this year by 27% from 632 to 873. This highlights the success of SAE to broadly disseminate the SAE mission and build strong connections with new as well as established community members.

5   Conclusions and Outlook

The Innovation Portal went through significant changes by taking into account the feedback of the reviewers to specifically look at the individual needs of the different stakeholders and why they visit the Innovation Portal.

The most important changes are as follows:

- The Innovation Portal has been re-structured for a better usability
- The layout is now more user-friendly and accessible from mobile devices
- Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) was included

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- An online feedback survey set up to check with visitors how useful and user-friendly the Innovation Portal is
- More eye-catching style and pictures are now used, following the same style guide/ colour
- A section where general information, recordings, presentations, but also advertising material can be downloaded is provided

Especially the service for newcomers was re-structured completely and amplified with several documents to help the newcomers understand what SAE is, what support the initiative offers and how to benefit therefrom. But not only newcomers, also the stakeholders already engaged in SAE benefit from this information. For them, the community section was re-built completely, now showing all partners engaged in a SAE project since its beginning. Additionally, the interactive map showing directly where in Europe the partners are located helps to provide support when engaging with each other for future projects.

Also, of great value for the community is the possibility to download presentations given at different events, be it internal meetings like the Cluster Collaboration Meetings or presentations given at external events like the WMF or EFECS.

Performed analytics show that, especially since the re-design, we are already reaching our target audience better and we can see the effectiveness of our outreach activities linked to peaks in the curve which is helping to better plan the future activities.

For the next reporting period, the following actions are planned:

- Collect further and more detailed feedback from visitors and see where there is room for improvement
- Complete the allocation of all partners to their respective field of application and type of organisation
- Increase the living document strategy of the IP and add more documents from SAE aligned IAs to the Innovation Portal, be it press releases, trainings or recordings of IA offered webinars