



**KnowING IPR project**  
**Fostering Innovation in the Danube Region**  
**through Knowledge Engineering and IPR**  
**Management**

**O.T5.2. Mentoring Success stories**

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## 1. Introduction

The objective of the Activity T5.2 *IPR: do* is to provide concrete and up to date KnowING HUB service to start-ups and SMEs. The idea was to replicate in shorter iteration the Mentoring programme, as it was successfully elaborated and developed during the WP T4. The service was upgraded to include the access of participants to the updated training materials via asynchronous learning through Moodle platform.

The Mentoring programme brings in front an innovative mixture of mentoring combined with synchronous one-on-one discussion with the expert and asynchronous learning via pre-prepared materials in online setting. The similar approach was used in the scope of the Calibrated TechTransfer Summer Schools and the results are to some level encouraging.

### 1.1 Mentoring Success Stories and their relation with the EUSDR

Within the work of the KnowING IPR project the team have always heavily intertwined the project goals with the goals of the EUSDR. Even more, the KnowING IPR was always heavily supporting the three Priority areas of the EUSDR, PA8 as the main PA focus but also PA7 and PA9 through different activities.

In the context of Mentoring programme, the strong focus is in supporting PA9 – People and skills, as the Mentoring programme is designed to tackle and respond to individual request of skills improvement. However, the process is designed very carefully – the participating SMEs and Start-up representatives are invited to participate in asynchronous activities first and are on the next level, once the trust is build invited for one-on-one mentoring session. Using this approach, we are nevertheless supporting both *PA7 – Knowledge society* goals and lastly, *PA8 – Competitiveness of enterprises*.

Namely, the participants that decided to share their business problems with the KnowING HUB providers we able to receive the feedback on how to proceed or just a suggestion and insight of another opinion. Confidentiality was held on the highest of levels.

## 2. Mentoring methodology

AS reported in D.T5.2.1 the methodology setting up the Mentoring programme was focused on the following aspects:

- Open call for SMEs and start-ups was prepared and launched in August 2021
- A total of 23 SMEs and Start-ups were selected and invited to participate in the Mentoring programme.
- The mentoring event initiated on 5<sup>th</sup> of October, via Zoom, due to issues in obtaining enough applicants for the Mentoring programme. The participants were explained, the mentoring programme consists of two types of activities
  - o asynchronous learning via online virtual classroom, and
  - o synchronous one-on-one mentoring session with KnowING HUB provider.
- Mentoring programme was concluded with Concluding event, that took place online on 10<sup>th</sup> of December, 2021.

## 3. Mentoring objectives

*The main objective of the mentoring programme is to:* offer tailored up to day services for specific needs of the SMEs and start-ups of the Danube Region in the field of IP protection and business model development.

Doing so, the intent of the KnowING IPR project was to re-confirm the correct solution of the range of the KnowING HUB services for companies. In this way, the direct contribution in building prosperity for the Danube region by addressing the three Priority area of Pillar no 3. Of the EUSDR.

## 4. Asynchronous mentoring via online materials

Online materials were delivered and put on disposal to participants of the Mentoring programme via the Moodle platform. The platform was successfully used in other KnowING IPR activities therefore the capitalization for the Activity T5.2 was in place.

Moodle is a learning platform designed to provide educators, administrators and learners a single and robust, secure and integrated system to create personalised learning environments. It has a simple interface, drag-and-drop features and is therefore easy to use. The virtual classroom offers the users the possibility to exchange opinions, via forum, and to communicate with mentoring organiser and virtual classroom administrators. Additionally, the Virtual classroom offers the mentees the possibility the fill in the quiz, controlling their gained knowledge.

Moodle is accessible in English for KnowING HUB mentees and is accessible from PC and mobile device. All users obtain a username and password to ensure highest levels of security.

## 5. Synchronous mentoring success stories

### 5.1 I.T.TIM doo; Slovenia

I.T.TIM d.o.o is a small IT company that registered in the program in order to get help in increasing the market value of their organization. Their first needs addressed the topics of having a commercialization plan, of receiving support for the patenting and the trademarking processes. The mentoring session was conducted by FIS, and the theme of the session was the presentation of the KnowING HUB tool and mentoring program. They had a request for mentoring on IPR in general and Licensing and commercialization in particular.

Firstly Mr. Strniša was introduced to the KnowING IPR materials on IPR management, Technology Transfer and Open Innovation. Several case studies were presented to him. He was introduced to the developed application of the KnowING Hub in order to test it for potential use, with the help of reading and video materials posted on the social media channels of the KnowING IPR Hub and KnowING IPR Helpdesk. Several introductory searches were demonstrated. Later on, the FIS experts presented him some of the national opportunities that are available for young companies and possible developments that could be helpful to them in the field of intellectual property. The company deals with the development of IT solutions but they have no relevant information on how to use the national legislation in their benefit. According to their own description, IT.TIM d.o.o assists subscribers, in a friendly and professional way, in the initiation of IT solutions that will enable them to gain or maintain a competitive advantage.

Three questions were addressed:

Software licenses: how to offer programs to users without giving them a possibility to resell them?

*Answer:* Software as such cannot be protected in Slovenia. However, the software can be protected by copyright. There is a copyright agency in Slovenia, where you can also find examples of contracts that you use when working with clients.

How can a company sell video recordings, made by drone on the online platform?

*Answer:* In this case, too, it is a matter of using the copyright and sales relationship. An example of authorship and business rules should be provided, clearly stating the provisions on copyright and the transfer of copyright.

Can online e-learning platforms like Moodle be used abroad and to what extend?

*Answer:* It can be used for you to be able to offer your own services like preparation of learning environment, placement, access, education etc.

## 5.2 Franel doo; Slovenia

Franel d.o.o. is a dealer for professional HORECA equipment and inventory in Slovenia since 1993. They were dealing with integrated solutions for choosing small catering inventory for bars, pizzerias, restaurants, hotels, schools, canteens. They offer rental of small catering inventory for catering and other major events. Further on, they also offer service of hotel appliances. In their line of work, they came across different forms and possibilities of the process and product optimizations. The reason to apply for the program was to gain better finance management and their immediate need was to develop a commercialization plan.

They had 2 mentoring sessions, both of them conducted by FIS, and the themes were the presentation of the KnowING HUB tool and mentoring program, as well as IPR, Licensing and commercialization. They had a request for mentoring on IPR in general and Licensing and commercialization in particular. Session no 1 took place on December 6<sup>th</sup>, while session no 2 took place on December 12<sup>th</sup>. Franel d.o.o could offer the optimizations to the partner companies to use them in the production. Due to that, they had a request for mentoring on IPR in general and Licensing and commercialization.

Mr. Frančeškin was introduced to the KnowING IPR materials on IPR management, Technology Transfer and Open Innovation. Several case studies were presented to him. He was shown the developed application of the KnowING Hub in order to test it for potential use with the help of the reading and video materials of the KnowING IPR Hub and KnowING IPR Helpdesk. Several introductory searches were demonstrated.

The second mentoring session took place on December 12<sup>th</sup>. Since Mr. Frančeškin had no pre-existing knowledge about patenting and licencing, he was introduced to the fundamental legal differences between the two terms. The discussions covered what IPR is and what does it mean from the legal and practical point of view for the company. Further, he was introduced to the national legal procedures and processes. Several possibilities for financing the licencing or patenting by national bodies and their calls for tenders were also presented to him.

### 5.3 KOP Kovinoplastika; Slovenija

The request from KOP Kovinoplastika was that the mentoring session to be conducted in Slovenian, since the representative of the company did not speak English, therefore he was assigned to FIS. The micro company is in the process of obtaining a patent protection for an innovative solution on cup lid and their immediate needs were related on how to further proceed in order to monetise the invention. Two mentoring sessions were organized in order to provide full answers to the requested topics.

Mr. Besednjak, who is the director of the SME KOP Kovinoplastika is an engineer who is a Tier 3 supplier to several larger companies in the region. He works with automotive sector and appliance manufacturers from Slovenia and wider. He applied to the Mentoring programme with the desire to gain more knowledge on how to protect his invention, he developed in the past year. He wishes to produce the invention himself. He was not so far joined the KnowING IPR activities also due to language issues and therefore, he was not able to use in full the training materials developed within the KnowING IPR Hub.

The **first meeting, conducted on December 6<sup>th</sup>**, was focused on discussion on what are his expectations of the mentoring programme and several conclusions were gained after the discussion:

- He had issues in obtaining information on how to approach the patenting process. He communicated with national patent office but gained very scarce and technical direction and no true help and information to guide him through the patenting process.
- He evaluated the usage of the patent for his product and decided he will apply for nation patent due to the reason that the income gained by production and sale is not expected to be as large to justify the costs of an international patent. He determined that one of the most important reasons for obtaining the patent is a personal goal and it is not much related to the financial gains expected from it.
- He was satisfied with the initial discussion and we agreed to meet in the upcoming days again, to introduce him to the KnowING IPR tool and explain its usage on the way of properly preparing patent search and analysis needed for his patent application.

The **second mentoring session, conducted on December 8<sup>th</sup>**, aimed towards introducing the functionalities and conducted specific usage of KnowING HUB services. We continued the discussion on how to proceed with his patent application and the additional information he needed to provide the patenting office of the Republic of Slovenia. He expressed interest in very detailed browsing with KnowING HUB as he is interested in conducting market research on the applicability of his invention to wider market demands of the sector harmed and modified by Covid-19 measures governments adopted in the past years. Mr. Besednjak was invited to join the Final even of the Mentoring programme on 10<sup>th</sup> of December, 2021.



## 5.4 DDS Diagnostic; Romania

Founded in 2002 by Dana Stan, PhD. in Chemistry, DDS Diagnostic is one of the most important companies in the Romanian market, specialized in the research and development of the latest generation of diagnostic technologies. DDS Diagnostic team is specialised in multidisciplinary research focusing on micro and nano technologies, electrochemistry, biosensors and diagnostics, as well as diagnostic and testing solutions and innovations in areas such as biology, biochemistry, chemistry, medicine, electronics or specialised software. DDS Diagnostic is a 100% Romanian company dedicated to innovation in the field of in vitro diagnostics by identifying, developing, producing and marketing the most advanced diagnostic and testing solutions. DDS Diagnostic is the first company in Romania to manufacture and market rapid diagnostic tests for self-diagnosis of Covid-19 (personal use). These tests are on the EC list of in vitro medical diagnostic solutions for Covid-19. The diagnostic kits have been available in hospitals, clinics and medical laboratories since 2003, each of which has gone through a phase of research, testing and approval; the company is accredited by the National Authority for Research-Development. Research projects in the field of bio-nanotechnologies, innovative processes and products are developed in collaboration with important university and research institutions in Romania, such as Horia Hulubei National Institute for R&D in Physics and Nuclear Engineering, Victor Babeş National Institute for R&D in Pathology and Pathology and Biomedical Sciences, National Institute for Research and Development in Microtechnology, Carol Davila University for Medicine and Pharmacy or the University of Bucharest.

The company is strongly involved in the research domain, gaining over the years solid knowledge about commercialization. Their main reason they joined the program was to have a better understanding of patent ownership and employee/employer rights, legal implications, and the best practices in incentives for the research team. Their immediate need was to gain support in the patent process especially when having to sign contractual agreements with external collaborators regarding IPR.

UEFISCDI has contacted DDS Diagnostic and after a short correspondence, an online meeting was scheduled for November 25th, using the Zoom platform.

The meeting took place at 15.00 EET, on November 25th. The main topics of the meeting were:

- presentation of the mentoring program with highlight on its benefits
- presentation of the Knowing IPR Hub tool and the advantages that it offers to researchers
- presentation of the IPR Roadshow event on December 7<sup>th</sup>

Mr. Lixandru was interested in the Knowing IPR Hub tool and asked for more information (as a result, the video materials were sent to him). He also expressed interest in scheduling another mentoring session with focus on IPR (what benefits can his company offer to the research team, other than the usual percentages of IPR that are stipulated in the Romanian legislation). He also wanted to know more on how to collaborate with third parties (companies, start-ups) when they are developing a common project (how can IPR be divided among the partners). Currently his company is working on several medical research projects and he was not interested in filling in a Patent report (mostly because of NDA agreements that are in place in his organization). A second meeting was scheduled for December 6th, using zoom platform. However, due to an unexpected operational emergency in his company, Mr. Lixandru informed the projects' expert that he cannot

participate and asked for another meeting. The second mentoring session did not take place, Mr. Lixandru was unable to confirm a date within the program's timeline.

## 5.5 [www.firewall.eu](http://www.firewall.eu); Romania

Mr. Chiroiu has established a start-up which is currently developing a software program that aims to build the first European firewall. He needs specific help in order to submit and register his patent and in general, is interested in having a snapshot of the patent situation of a specific technology/product at national/international level, of analysing the validity of certain patents and of obtaining support for the patenting the trademarking processes. Two mentoring sessions were conducted in order to help the company to start the patenting process. Mr. Chiroiu also filled in a Patent Report for this invention, but because he did not submit the patent to the Romanian Patent and Trademark Office yet, some of the questions in the report were left unanswered so that his invention could be protected.

For **mentoring session one**, UEFISCDI has contacted Mr. Chiroiu and presented the mentoring program, (its benefits), the KnowING IPR tool, the Patent report. The communication was done by phone and emails. Mr. Chiroiu is developing a software solution that is currently in testing phase. He started to fill in the patent report for his solution. We agreed to keep the information on a minimum level, since the solution is not patented yet. The main topic that Mr. Chiroiu is interested in is the patenting process. He said that he will use the KnowING IPR tool to conduct preliminary research of similar patents with his solution. This round of information exchange took place between 16th and 25th of November.

A **second mentoring session** was scheduled for December 6th, at 16.30 EET, with experts in IPR & patenting process, internationalization and patent analysis & evaluation, on the Zoom platform. The main topics of the meeting were:

What is IPR (with focus on software IPR);

What are the main steps that an inventor/researcher must take in order to protect his product;

How is the patenting process in Romania (documents, timeline, costs). The experts offered advice on how to fill in the patenting documents (what are the most important one, what are the first documents that must be submitted). They also explained how long the patent lasts and in which territories is protected. They explained the common mistakes that a researcher usually does while submitting the patent and offered advices on how to avoid them.

They also explained what are the solutions that Mr. Chiroiu's start-up has after the patent is registered (selling the patent, licensing, developing a production line, etc) and gave several names of programs where Mr. Chiroiu may apply in order to obtain future financial support.

Mr. Chiroiu needs to finalize the testing phase of his product and then submit the patent to the Romanian Office for Patents and Trademarks. He was strongly encouraged to continue his research and patent the final solution.

Mr. Chiroiu was invited to the IPR Roadshow event that took place on December 7th and he accepted the invitation. During the event he was able to find out more information about the patenting process, the analysis and evaluation of various risks while patenting different products or solutions and of course, about the KnowING IPR project and KnowING IPR Hub tool.

## 5.6 Scraping Robotics Ltd; Hungary

Scraping Robotics started off as a university project, and in the past one year became a quickly developing start-up. Our field of expertise is production technology development, specifically the automation of hand scraping. Our innovation helps to reduce the time necessary for producing and maintaining machine parts and tools. We make one of the most skill-intensive stages of production and maintenance faster, of uniform quality, and accurately plannable in time.

Their product is mostly software-based and they would like to know more details about patents and solutions available in their case. They believe that software patenting is not an option in the EU, so they are interested in alternative solutions (e.g. utility patent). The main reasons to join the program were to have a snapshot of the patent situation of a specific technology/product at national/international level, and to have a commercialization plan. PBN organized two mentoring sessions in order to help them clarify their questions and provide feasible solutions to their challenges.

The **first mentoring session** was scheduled for October 15th, using the zoom platform.

The meeting took place at 9:00 CET, on 15th October 2021. The main topics of the meeting were:

- introduction of the participants
- presentation of the mentoring program with highlight on its benefits
- presentation of the KnowING IPR Hub tool
- conclusions & next steps

Mr. Bereczki and his team needed support in the patenting process and trademark procedure. He was satisfied with the initial discussion and agreed to meet in the upcoming weeks again. He was also interested in the e-learning training materials because they would like to know more about software patenting.

PBN started to find the proper IPR expert and the **second mentoring session** was scheduled to 10th November 2021. The meeting took place at 14:00 CET, and an external expert brought by PBN provided answers for Scraping Robotics Ltd.

The main topics of the meeting were:

- patenting process: procedure, in what stage is recommended to implement novelty research, outlook for the international process
- trademarking process

After the mentoring session, PBN asked Mr. Bereczki if they need further help within the mentoring programme. He expressed his satisfaction with the programme and he said that they do not need further support. Mr. Bereczki informed PBN about the next steps after the mentoring

programme. They will complete the documents for novelty search and they will start the trademarking process for the name and logo of the company.

## 5.7 Leisure Master Ltd; Hungary

The company has developed an innovative hygiene appliance and they would like to protect the idea/ product. The reason to join the program was to receive support during the patenting and trademarking processes. In order to provide the necessary support, PBN organized two mentoring sessions: the first one introducing the program, the platform and methods to use it and the second one to provide specific support for the first stage of patenting – type of patenting and submitting the patenting documents to the Hungarian authorities.

For the **first mentoring session**, PBN has contacted Leisure Master Ltd on 30 September 2021 and scheduled a first meeting. The main topics of discussions were:

- introduction of the participants
- presentation of the mentoring program with highlight on its benefits
- presentation of the KnowING IPR Hub tool
- conclusions & next steps

Mr. Sule and his team needed support in patent situation of his product, the patenting and trademarking process. After the discussion, PBN started to find the proper IPR external expert to be able to meet their expectations.

During the **second mentoring session**, Mr. Sule received help in the novelty search of his invention. PBN and the external IPR expert helped him understand what is the situation of their product in the market. Besides the KnowING IPR Hub tool, they used other databases to conduct the search. Mr. Sule and the assigned expert discussed the “similar” products and tried to find the elements that make his invention different from the competition. After that, the type of patenting needed to be discussed. Following the examination of his product, the expert suggested the utility model protection procedure. In order to submit this type of registration patenting document, Mr. Sule needed to compile a proper description of the invention, which would be afterwards submitted to the Hungarian Intellectual Property Office. With the help of the expert, they compiled the proper description by the end of the mentoring programme. The key elements and advantages of the product, additional, special feature, technology of the product (which does not appear in other products) are included and highlighted in the compiled description. Moreover, Mr. Sule and his team could not find the proper database for the trademark search, and they could not know how to interpret the results. As part of the mentoring, Mr. Sule received help in searching the name of the product in online databases too. He received also specific recommendations, as to what he should pay attention when choosing a name and what counts as unique, distinctive for a name to become protectable.

## 5.8 Sanovigado Kft; Hungary

The company is a pharmaceutical service provider and pharmaceutical software developer. The main reasons to join the program were to receive more information about the software related IP and to search for spin-off possibilities. They want to analyze the validity of certain patents and to have a commercialization plan.

BKIK provided specialized IPR support with the help of IPR expert Mr. György Kovács (attorney at law, IPR expert, at Kovács, Réti, Szegheő Law Firm) and Mr. András Jókuti (Legal Head of Knowledge Transfer Office , BME) and several mentoring sessions were organized in order to provide the necessary information for the participant.

The **first mentoring session** took place on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 17.00-18.30 CET. At the beginning of the mentoring session, the representative of the mentee company briefly introduced his organization. The enterprise offers pharmacovigilance services, and is planning to exploit two software programs that were developed at the Hungarian medical university, SOTE. The elaboration of the software programs is being carried out by university students, researchers, and university professors. The Mentor emphasized the significance of clarifying the type of the legal agreements of work of the researchers who are participating in the development of the software programs, since this relationship is fundamental in defining the ownership of the intellectual outputs. In order to do this, the detailed examination of work agreements of those involved in the research and the overview of the university intellectual property regulation is necessary. Also, the detailed presentation of each intellectual output is essential to decide which form of intellectual property proves to be adequate to the legal protection of the developed software programs. The clarification and discussion of these questions are planned to be the subject of the further mentoring sessions.

The **second mentoring session** took place on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 17.00-18.30 CET. During the session, first the different form of legal agreements to work of those participating in the research were clarified. As the Mentee has explained, the contracts of the researchers employed with contract of services in the research have been examined, and the conclusion was drawn that provisions in the aforementioned contracts regarding intellectual property expressly name the university as subject entitled to the intellectual outputs. The Mentor has examined the provisions of the university intellectual property regulation, and based on that it could be concluded that the university is entitled to the intellectual outputs created by both, university professors within the frames of their work agreement, and university students within the frames of their student work agreement. In addition, a detailed discussion was held about the possible forms of intellectual property (primarily copy right, or maybe patent) in respect of the two software programs the mentee company intends to exploit. The conversation also touched upon the role of the university knowledge transfer office in the formulation of the adequate intellectual property protection and the elaboration of the business model of the planned spinoff.

The **third mentoring session** took place on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 17.00-18.30 CET. At the last mentoring sessions, questions of the mentee regarding the topics and information discussed at previous sessions were answered. As response for the mentee's question concerning the business model of spinoff enterprises the mentor explained that according to the Law on Information Autonomy not those enterprises are to be considered as spinoffs in which the university has

shared ownership, but every enterprise that was established to exploit any university intellectual property. In this regard, knowledge transfer offices of universities have developed rather different practices. In some cases, entrepreneurs may gain complete exploitation right to utilize a certain intellectual property of a university in exchange for a one-time fee, while in other cases, entrepreneurs have to pay a regular licence fee for the exploitation of the intellectual property. In regard of the latter, practice is again rather different concerning the initial date of paying the licence and the proportion of the respective intellectual property forms within the licence fee. It would be of utmost importance that the Mentee begin the negotiations with the university knowledge transfer office in time about the university registration of the intellectual outputs, the mapping of their possible intellectual property protection, providing legal protection, and the elaboration of an exploitation strategy acceptably for both parties.

## 5.9 KórházSuli Foundation; Hungary

The KórházSuli is a special program for the education of long-term ill students. They are supported in home learning by university students with help of mentor teachers and under parental supervision. The program is built on the knowledge and volunteering of helping groups (from the same age), this way not only the patients but the healthy children's social sensitivity is improved. They are an NGO - not with a product but with a service. Despite of the Educational law the home tutoring of the long-term ill children healing and studying is completely unresolved in Hungary. KórházSuli is a very unique program which offers a solution to this problem. They have been working on this methodology for 8 years, by now they feel it is ready for the patenting and trademarking process. The goal is spread the system to the countryside or/and to foreign countries too. The main reasons to join the program were receive support for the and the trademarking patenting processes.

BKIK provided specialized IPR support with the help of IPR expert Mr. György Kovács (attorney at law, IPR expert, at Kovács, Réti, Szegheő Law Firm) and Mr. András Jókuti (Legal Head of Knowledge Transfer Office, BME) and several mentoring sessions were organized in order to provide the necessary information for the participant.

The **first mentoring session** took place on November 17th, 16.00-17.30 CET. At the meeting, the representative of the mentee company explained that her foundation has elaborated a methodology, which is practically a set of written principles. Some of these principles of the methodology have already been published, however, the majority of the learning material exists in the form of a manuscript. The foundation aims at supporting the reintegration of permanently ill children into public education with the active involvement of the children's families and schools. The Mentor emphasized the significance of clarifying the type of the legal agreements of work of the researchers who are participating in the elaboration of the methodology, since this relationship is fundamental in defining the ownership of the intellectual outputs. In order to do this, the detailed examination of the intellectual property clauses in the work agreements of those involved in the methodology development is necessary. Also, the detailed presentation of each intellectual output is essential to decide which form of intellectual property proves to be adequate

to the legal protection of the developed methodology. The clarification and discussion of these questions are planned to be the subject of the further mentoring sessions.

The **second mentoring session** took place on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 16.00-17.30 CET. During the session, first the different form of legal agreements to work of those participating in the elaboration of the methodology were clarified. As the Mentor explained, copyrights are established at the author, so if they intend to acquire property rights, these legal relationships have to be clarified. If the intellectual output was created by an employee within the terms of their work agreement, then the transfer of right occurs automatically. In case, the author is completing their contract, then the contract should contain the provisions concerning the copyright. In order to avoid later legal debates, these points of the contract should at least establish the foundation's right to use the intellectual outputs. As the Mentor explained, under certain circumstances the methodology could be properly protected by copyright or know-how protection. The detailed illustration of the aforementioned types of legal protection is set on the agenda of the next session along with the discussion of some aspects of branding and branding strategy in domestic and international environment.

The **third mentoring session** took place on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 16.00-17.30 CET. As the mentee explained, their methodology, in its current state, is not a clearly drafted, organized set of information available in textbook format. However, they are working on the structured presentation of the methodology and planning the development of a version for commercialization. The mentor noted that the latter element is an essential prerequisite of applying for copyright protection for the methodology. Copyright protection over the methodology is established by its drafting. In order to facilitate the demonstration of the copyright, it may prove beneficial to use the deposit function of the voluntary register of publications which is available at the SZTNH, and at the WIPO on an international level. Intellectual outputs protected by copyright may be licenced, as well. In order to discover these possibilities, an established intellectual property is necessary. To sum up, should there be a learning material that was created by the mentee, or written by the mentee's colleagues, and is not protected by someone else's copyright, and is their own intellectual output, then it is protected by copyright, may be licenced. The intellectual output in question may be spread, copied, recast, etc. only with the permission of the owner of the copyright. Another possibility is branding, i. e. the protection of the existing name and logo as part of the brand. It is advisable to expand this protection to international level, and also, acquiring an EU trademark is important before entering international markets.

## 5.10 Elite Vernici SRL; Moldova

The registration form was completed by Mr. Dmitri Bucica, Company Director. On November 1st, AGEPI sent a welcome message, with the description of the mentoring program and inviting the company representatives to participate in the launching of the Mentoring program held on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and to establish a cooperation with a view to provide consultancy and advice on interested for the company issues.

A second email was sent to Mr. Dmitri Bucica on December 9, with the proposal to settle a fist mentoring session and a first message was sent with the invitation to participate in the Knowing IPR Mentoring Program concluding event, organised on 10th December 2021.

In the process of preparation for the mentoring session, AGEPI made an IP portfolio search in the IP databases and identified the following situation with reference to Elite Vernici SRL:

In 2021, the “Elite Vernici” SRL company applied for the registration of a national combined trademark (deposit number 048698 dated 06.09.2021 ) for products in classes 02, 04, 35 of the Nice Classification. The application is under examination procedure and no decision was issued yet on registration of the trademark. The company has no other IPR or application for registering/patenting any IP objects.

Based on the identified IP situation, AGEPI get in contact with Mr. Dmitri Bucica and he confirmed the interest to receive more information about the registration of trademarks and designs but also on how IP could contribute to the business development and expansion of the company activity. In particular, Mr. Bucica briefed the AGEPI representative about their intention to extend the activity from selling paints and varnishes products to producing them. In this connection, AGEPI representative guided Mr. Bucica on how he could obtain more information on the existing technologies in paint/varnished production by using the free of charge Patent Databases, including the KnowingIPR Hub and invited the company to settle an on-site mentoring session (within the AGEPI premises or at the Company premises) in order to provide them with a practical guidance on how to make a technology prior art search report for obtaining information in the technology they are interested on. Mr. Bucica has been also informed about the benefits of using patent information, including the availability of free to use patented invention, for establishing modern technological production processes without infringing any bodies patents/IP rights. In total AGEPI had two phone sessions with Mr. Bucica but no, in person, sessions were organised by the end of the mentoring program.

At the end of the mentoring program, AGEPI announced the company representative that AGEPI will continue to provide the company with additional free of charge support on interested IPR related issues.



## 5.11 Vizual Art SLR; Moldova

The company registered to participate in the mentoring program under conditions that the advice will be delivered in Romanian language, based on the invitation email sent on October 21, 2021 to a list of associations and companies AGEPI is working with. The registration form was completed by the legal adviser of the Company, Iulius Șoproncu. Based on the invitation sent to the Company on November 1, 2021, the “Vizual Art” representatives participated in the launching of the Mentoring program held on November 3rd.

After the launching of the Mentoring program event, two phone calls took place and a visit to the Company premises was undertaken on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021. In the process of preparation for the mentoring session, AGEPI made an IP portfolio search in the IP databases and identified that “Vizual Art” company has no registered IPR, and never applied for any.

During the visit, the Company director, Oleg Vieru, presented the new corporative identity of the company and asked for advice on how the company logo could be protected. In 2020, the company made an rebranding of the company identity but the new logo is not yet protected. The company was recommended to apply for a trademark protection of the company logo as soon as possible, in order to ensure its protection and to secure the investments of the company in the development of the new brand. The company was also helped to identify any other IPR protectable assets and considering that the main treasure of the company is the clients lists and the visual creative content elaborated, more information was provided on how to protect the confidential information (trade secrets), including by providing special confidential commitment in employees’ contracts. Information about the possibility to protect the original visual works through copyright and the benefits of using design protecting for certain products: such as lightening equipment and installations produced by the companies as visual décor for publicity campaigns. Additionally, the company representatives were trained on how to use the AGEPI trademark database for identifying protected signs in order to avoid manufacturing of publicity using signs and logos that are protected. Advice on how to use the WIPO IP Diagnosis tool for self-assessment of the IP needs and opportunities.

The “Vizual Art” company participated in the Knowing IPR Mentoring Program concluding event, organised on 10th December 2021. At the end of the mentoring program, AGEPI announced the company representative that AGEPI will continue to provide the company with additional free of charge support for filing application for registration of the company logo as a trademark.

## 5.12 Kaufkraft.AI; Croatia

The participant said that Kaufkraft.AI builds automated software and tools for blockchain tech and cryptocurrencies. He described Kaufkraft.AI as a start-up in the early phase of development. After the introductions, the mentor presented the KnowING IPR project and mentoring program with its benefits. The participant and mentor talked about the possibilities of patenting parts of Kaufkraft.AI's solutions – like crypto algorithmic trading programming languages and UI components. They agreed that participant will use the KnowING IPR HUB tool to conduct preliminary research of similar patents like his solutions. The discussion will then be continued on the next session. Another session was scheduled for 23.11.2021. Mentor and the participant exchanged their contacts in order to maintain the communication in the period between two sessions, if needed.

The participant described his conclusions related to conducted preliminary research of similar patents like his solutions. The main conclusion was that he has found some solutions similar to the Kaufkraft.AI's solutions patented. The participant also expressed his aim to find out more about the patenting process itself with all relevant details. So, the next topic of the session was discussion related to the stages of patenting process and IPR. The mentor explained important stages of the patenting process to the participant – from the legal and practical point of view. The mentor and the participant analysed possible ways of patenting process exactly for Kaufkraft.AI's solutions related to automated software and tools for blockchain tech and cryptocurrencies. The mentor and participant agreed that the participant will try to set the draft of the plan for patenting Kaufkraft.AI's solutions until the third session.

Namely, the mentor used the opportunity to emphasize the peculiarities of software IPR and what are the main steps that inventor (in this case Kaufkraft.AI) must take in order to protect his product. Afterwards, the mentor emphasized how the patenting process looks like in Croatia, with all its phases. The mentor emphasized the most important documents in this process and explained how the timeline of patenting usually looks like. Considering the development phase of participant's start-up, the participant was worried about the costs, so mentor informed the participant about approximate costs related to patenting in Croatia.

The participant asked what are Kaufkraft.AI's concrete business possibilities after registering their patent. Afterwards, the mentor and the participant discussed the business possibilities of selling the patent, developing a production line and licensing. Since the mentor has experiences with the financing, she mentioned a few programs for applying and obtaining the finances.

### 5.13 Proteron consulting; Croatia

The participant described his SME as an IT company focused on cloud-based solutions, ICT consulting and project management. After the welcoming part, the mentor presented the KnowING IPR project, Mentoring Programme and its benefits. The participant and mentor talked about the possibilities of patenting in general and mentor encouraged the participant to use the Knowing IPR HUB tool to conduct preliminary research of patents.

The participant briefly described his research and expressed worries about patenting process in the field of cloud solutions. Afterwards, the mentor briefly presented and explained the patenting process, how it usually looks like with all its phases, emphasizing the details which might be important for Dario's SME. After explaining the legal procedures, the participant and mentor discussed about possible ways of patenting process for Proteron Consulting's cloud-based solutions. Furthermore, Dario mentioned that his SME provides consulting services and solutions that include project management, innovation management and agile enterprise transformation.

This was followed by participant's concrete questions related to Proteron Consulting's solutions. Also, Dario asked the mentor how the patenting process looks like in Croatia. The mentor explained all peculiarities and phases of patenting process in Croatia and which are the most important documents in this process. Afterwards, the mentor and the participant talked about the timeline of patenting and how it usually looks like.

The mentor also informed the participant about the most common mistakes that inventors do when they submit the patent. Then, the mentor advised the participant how to avoid these mistakes.

Mr. Dario Novaković asked the mentor about the commercialization plan – how to level-up the business thanks to the patenting. Mrs. Marijana explained some of the possibilities for business development after patenting a solution, including licensing and developing a production line. Mrs. Marijana said that Proteron Consulting can definitely benefit from patenting and that they should not suspect in the process of patenting a software or cloud-based solution.

## 5.14 Tritonel Multimedia; Croatia

Mrs. Marijana Šarolić Robić introduced herself as a legal expert and experienced start-up and SME mentor, especially in the field of IPR and software patenting. Mr. Zdravko Kunić described his SME and team as engineers that work on implementation and maintenance of electronic equipment and software for specific industry use. The participant pointed out some of the specific cases on which Tritonel Multimedia worked and works and expressed his interest in mentoring programme because he would like to gain better insights in IPR and patenting.

Moreover, the participant asked the mentor how to recognize which projects inside the company have the potential for protecting. The mentor asked to name a few of Tritonel Multimedia's solutions and discussed with the participant about all the potentials. Mrs. Marijana and Mr. Zdravko also analysed the difference between patenting and copyright and how to choose amongst them.

The participant had some questions about the legal procedures and mentor resolved participant's dilemmas explaining the procedures on concrete examples – possible patents of Tritonel Multimedia. Mrs. Marijana proposed to Mr. Zdravko to meet with his team and brainstorm about possible patents inside their company. This, as mentor said, will help to establish the draft of the patenting plan.

Mrs. Marijana used the opportunity to present all phases of patenting process in Croatia and the most important documents in this process. Furthermore, the mentor and the participant analysed the timeline of patenting process, how it usually looks like and how could Tritonel Multimedia adjust to this process. The next topic of the discussion were the costs – the mentor informed Mr. Zdravko about approximate costs related to patenting in Croatia. Mr. Zdravko immediately started to compare these costs to some other costs and their revenue, but he also emphasized the potential value for Tritonel Multimedia once the patenting process will be done.

Mr. Zdravko said that he has one question in mind and he asked the mentor how to collaborate with third parties, for example with companies and start-ups when they are developing a common project - how can IPR be divided among the partners. Afterwards, the mentor suggested some models for dividing the IPR that were successful, according to her experience.

## 6. Lessons learned

The lessons learned are summaries in the table below.

Lessons learned	Topic of assistance	No of companies with expressed topic
The companies not directly research and innovation-oriented show no prior knowledge on the potentials of IP protection	Getting acquainted with the question of IP protection	1
IT company resulted to be interested in rules about software patenting and perspectives on software licensing. They were interested in questions of copy right in case of video making. Additionally, they were interested in virtual classroom development and structure – from the IT point of view. Company developing software solution to be protected in Romania.	Get to know the potentials of IP protection to improve business performance	2
One inventor who desires to also produce his own invention is interested in protection, expressing doubts over the complexity of the patenting procedures. One company who has already filled patent claim and one company who is about to fill in the patent claim. To another company novelty search was enabled and help assured through the initial stages of patent and trademark protection process. One company discussed the cases of protecting the software developed in collaboration between university professors and students. One company was interested in protecting and exploiting innovatively developed teaching methodology. One company had a patent application pending and was interested in discussing the business model adjusted to best exploit their patented invention. One company was interested in how to protect their newly developed brand.	Discuss cases of patent filling or other form of protection: trademark, copy right or branding	8
One institution was interested in how to shape their professional relationships with another institution in terms of IP.	Knowledge of how to shape technology transfer processes among partners	2

<p>One organization was interested in shaping the patent claim relationships with its students.</p>		
<p>One company is examining the potentials in patenting their blockchain solution and develop a business plan to market the solution accordingly.</p> <p>One organisation was interested in obtaining knowledge on patenting their cloud solution and deliver the commercialization plan.</p> <p>In one case, the firm portfolio was examined and solutions with respect to patenting and commercialization were prepared.</p>	<p>Patents from the field of software with development of business plan</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>One mentee initiated the discussion on the potential spin-off from the university based on the patent protected invention he participated at.</p>	<p>Spin-off potentials</p>	<p>1</p>

## 7. Conclusions

After the much work and engagement to effectively introduce and implement the Mentoring programme we conclude the following: there are cases of SMEs and also start-ups in the Danube regions, who are serious and are willing to take time to gain knowledge to broaden their knowledge and actively seek opportunities to expand their business also based on their knowledge and developed solutions.

Within a total of 14 SMEs and start-ups to whom the Mentoring programme resulted as successful, there are 8 of such who are seriously considering or have already done the first steps in protecting their IP and are within this seriously considering on how to exploit this knowledge. Additional 2 are discussing the question of academia-industry cooperation and one is discussing the spin off potentials. 3 companies from the field of ICT were consulted a proper business plan on how to develop and manage their software with respect to proper IP protection and marketization and commercialization.

Overall, the conclusion is positive in terms of raised awareness in the field of IP and IP management in the Danube region.