

Press release

fortiss - Landesforschungsinstitut des Freistaats Bayern für softwareintensive Systeme

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 fortiss

Open Calls – Funding for SMEs Made Easy

In today's work and business world, digital technologies and know determine the competitiveness and future viability of companies. So that small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) can profitably exploit digitalization's economic potential, fortiss Mittelstand provides companies the white paper "Open Calls – Funding for SMEs Made Easy". The recently published paper offers practical guidance to stimulate investments in SMEs through the targeted funding and implementation of innovation projects.

In the on-going digital transformation, the promising development of digital product and services with new business processes and value chains is often triggered through the core competence of software-enabled innovation. The introduction of key technologies such as software, artificial intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) poses major challenges especially for SMEs since these issues are often time- and resource-intensive and involve high costs. Many managing directors are occupied with questions such as: How can digital innovation issues be implemented and financed? What digital technologies are currently available and which ones are actually relevant for my company? Who can we turn to for solid, independent expertise and concrete implementation support?

Clear view of the jungle of funding opportunities

Support for SMEs to develop new digital products and services can be of a financial nature or take the form of know-how and software technologies. SMEs can essentially obtain financial support through numerous government programs at the state, federal and European level, although they can be complex and tedious to apply for and carry out. In this area fortiss Mittelstand offers support in the initiation and execution of research projects in programs such as Bayern IuK (Bay STMWi), KMU Innovativ (BMBF), Zentrales Innovationsprogramm Mittelstand – ZIM (BMWi) and KI4KMU (BMBF).

Companies can access innovations, the latest technologies or prototypes especially through innovation centers such as the Mittelstand 4.0-Kompetenzzentren (SME 4.0 Centers of Competence), which offer information, training and education formats and demonstrators related to the issue of Industry 4.0.

Closing the digital gap

fortiss is an integral part of the Mittelstand 4.0-Kompetenzzentrum in Augsburg, where it is responsible for several areas of digital core expertise: software, AI and industrial IoT.

What has been lacking so far however is a targeted, efficient model for funding SMEs for the development of concrete digital products and services on the basis of current technology platforms.

With this in mind, the European Commission developed the Open Call model, with the active support of fortiss, in which European companies can secure both financial support for the development of new digital products, and the required

access to current know-how and technology platforms, using a competitive process. The white paper illustrates the advantages of the funding model for Bavarian SMEs.

Over the past years, fortiss has been involved in more than 60 such innovations in various roles while acquiring extensive implementation expertise. The fortiss Mittelstand team thus serves as a strong connection between industry and science, and as a point of contact for Bavarian SMEs, assumes an important coordination and consulting role in the introduction of new technologies within the companies. The members of the team help with the implementation of research and development projects, and at the same time serve as an expert point of contact for funding opportunities with the application for open calls, as well as for initiating and applying for the most promising digital product developments.

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Attachment fortiss whitepaper: Open Calls – Funding for SMEs Made Easy <http://idw-online.de/en/attachment87548>



fortiss whitepaper: Open Calls – Funding for SMEs Made Easy