

Innovative solutions to improve quality of life for the elderly

The AAL Call 2017 is now open for project proposals aimed at the innovative integration of existing ICT solutions or the development of new ones to support the ambient assisted living of the older adults. Representatives of the joint financed programme, from the European Commission and the participating countries including Hungary, held a two-day meeting on 9-10 April at the NRDI Office in Budapest, on the financial and coordination tasks of this year's call and further directions of the programme.

Societies are fundamentally interested in ensuring, through an advanced social network, that the elderly stay actively engaged in everyday activities, and feel less lonely and more secure at home both physically and mentally. To this end, in 2008 the European Commission and the participating countries launched the [AAL \(Active and Assisted Living\) Programme](#), which was extended in 2014. The programme aims to promote the development of innovative ICT solutions for improving the quality of life of older adults. Such products and services should be commercialised within two years so that they ensure fast and effective solutions for the everyday problems of the elderly. The submission deadline of the 2017 call is 24 May 2017, and the maximum amount of funding is EUR 2.5 million per project.

According to Ágnes Divinyi, National Contact Point (NCP) of the NRDI Office, the meeting was dedicated to the discussion of interim experience and further directions of the programme. (Each country participating in the Horizon 2020 Programme operate a [Network of National Contact Points](#), Hungary's host organisation is the NRDI Office). The programme was assessed positively by every participant of the interim review. However, it was also concluded that participating SMEs are undercapitalised for operating the large scale networks of the programme (involving wide range of non-profit institutions, elderly care organisations, health institutions and social experts), that is why even the marketing of already existing innovative solutions faces difficulties. According to the experts of the programme, there is a clear need for the involvement of large companies.

It should be noted that calls under the AAL Programme are partly financed from national funds, while the European Commission provides co-funding in the framework of the H2020 programme. Project proposals have to be submitted by consortia including at least three independent institutions (SMEs, large companies, higher education institutions, nonprofit institutions) operating in the given AAL partner state. Based on the national eligibility criteria, funding may only be provided to projects involving at least one profit-oriented Hungarian company. Hungary allocates HUF 150 million (approx. EUR 490,000) to the AAL Programme from domestic sources every year. In 2014 four projects with six partners, in 2015 three projects with six partners, in 2016 one project with three partners won national and EU funding. Hungarian partners contribute to many AAL projects. Bay Zoltán Nonprofit Kft. has partnered with the Budapest University of Technology and Economics and the IT Foundation for the Visually Impaired to develop a door-to-door navigation solution which assists the transport of visually impaired people in an urban setting. Pannon Business Network Association participates in a project which aims to make communication and information exchange easier between older adults living independently and their caregivers; whereas Andrásy Gyula University is building a platform connecting older people's expertise with actual demand.

The agenda of the Budapest meeting also included the planning of the 2018 call, and it was agreed that the next meeting would be scheduled for early October in Coimbra, Portugal in the framework of the AAL Forum where an exhibition and a series of presentations will address the topic and present the latest programme results.