D6.4 – ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2

WP6 - Dissemination, Annual Conferences & iPOP

April 2021 (M24)

Project information

Project Acronym:	iProcureNet
Project Full Title:	Innovation by developing a European Procurer Networking for security research services
Grant Agreement:	832875
Project Duration:	60 months (May 2019 - April 2024)
Project Coordinator:	MININT
Contact:	contact@iprocurenet.eu

Deliverable information

Deliverable Title:	D6.4 – Annual Conference 2
Deliverable Nature:	Report (R)
Dissemination Level:	Public (PU)
Due Date:	April 2021 (M24)
Submission Date:	28/04/2021
Deliverable Leader:	ARTTIC
Reviewers:	iProcureNet Steering Committee

Revision Table

Issue	Date	Comment	Author
V0.1	12/04/2021	Initial draft	Christiane Abele, Rosila Farret, Audrey Bretaud Kelle, Paul Crompton, ARTTIC
V0.2	19/04/2021	Review	WP leaders
V0.3	20/04/2021	Final draft and QA	ARTTIC
V1.0	28/04/2021	Final approval and submission	Souade Nacer, MININT, Project Director

Executive Summary

The first iProcureNet Advanced Security Procurement Conference took place online on 9-10 March 2021, gathering 84 participants.

After presenting the iProcureNet project and its main outputs, lively discussions between panellists and the audience took place on how to organise collaboration between end users and procurers, how to best identify needs and how to strengthen the role of procurers in the innovation update process.

This deliverable includes an introduction to the event concept and agenda (section 1), a summary of presentations and discussions with key insights from all sessions (section 2) and a recap of dissemination and follow-up activities as well as participant statistics and some of the feedback received (section 3).

Table of contents

Table of figures

List of acronyms

JCBPP	Joint cross-border public procurement
JPP	Joint public procurement
LEA	Law Enforcement Agency
WP	Work package

1   Introduction

After the cancellation of the 2020 conference due to the COVID19 outbreak, the first iProcureNet Advanced Security Procurement Conference finally took place online on 9-10 March 2021.

1.1   Concept

The first iProcureNet Advanced Security Procurement Conference took place online on 9-10 March 2021 (2 x 0.5 days). It was symbolically hosted by the Portuguese Criminal Police under the Portuguese presidency of the European Council.

The conference was announced as follows:

iProcureNet 2021 Advanced Security Procurement Conference

Identifying and anticipating unmet needs.

Innovation and procurement are not goals in themselves. They are a response to unmet needs, that need to be identified and anticipated in collaboration with prescribers and end-users.

The iProcureNet Advanced Security Procurement Conference aims to highlight the importance of procurement in facing the challenges of an uncertain future and ensuring resilience through innovation.

1.2   Agenda

Tuesday, 9 March	
Joint Cross-Border Procurement	
14:30	**Welcome & Opening**
	Luisa Proença, Portuguese Criminal Police / iProcureNet
14:40	**Introduction**
	David Rios-Morentin, European Commission – DG HOME
14:50	**Introduction to iProcureNet**
	Etienne Genet, French Ministry of Interior / iProcureNet
15:05	**Identifying needs in public security and procuring jointly**
	Raul Savimaa, Estonian Border Police / iProcureNet
15:20	**Introducing the iProcureNet Toolbox**
	Filomena Vieira, Portuguese Criminal Police / iProcureNet
15:35	**Break**
15:40	**Joint cross-border public procurement: Experiences, obstacles, pitfalls**
	Jozef Kubinec, Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Slovakia / iProcureNet
16:00	**Procurement as key issue for innovation uptake**
	Expert roundtable with
	• **Clive Goodchild**, BAE Systems / ENCIRCLE
	• **Bartosz Kożuch**, Polish Platform for Homeland Security / i-LEAD
	• **Kevin Humphreys**, Irish Revenue & **Trevor Francis**, UK Border Force / PEN-CP

	Chair: **Thierry Hartmann**, French Ministry of Interior / ILEAnet
17:00	**Wrap-up**
	Host: **Luisa Proença**, Portuguese Criminal Police / iProcureNet
	Wednesday, 10 March
	Towards Security Services of the Future
14:30	**Welcome**
	Etienne Genet, French Ministry of Interior / iProcureNet
14:35	**Keynote: Procurement for an Uncertain Future**
	Stéphane Conty, French National Procurement Agency
14:55	**Identifying Unmet Needs**
	Key insights from
	• **Georg Melzer-Venturi**, Eutema & **Cristina Picus**, AIT / FOLDOUT
	• **Evaldas Bružė**, L3CE / iTree Group / SPARTA-NAAS
	• **Marie-Christine Bonnamour**, PSCE / BroadWay
15:40	**Discussion & Questions from the audience**
	Discussants:
	• **Jorge Garzon**, French Ministry of Interior / iProcureNet
	• **Jozef Kubinec**, Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic / iProcureNet
16:30	**End of conference**
	Host: **Jorge Garzon**, French Ministry of Interior / iProcureNet

The event was organised via the Gotowebinar tool.

2   Summary of sessions

2.1   Day 1 – 9 March

Download all slides [here](#).

The conference was hosted and introduced by **Luisa Proença (LP)** (Portuguese Criminal Police / iProcureNet).

2.1.1   Introduction

David Rios Morentin (DRM) (Policy Officer, European Commission – DG HOME) explained that iProcureNet has been funded under Security Policy and Research and Innovation policy where the project is expected to deliver results which will contribute to improve the security of European citizens. He also underlined the interest of DG Home to learn more what public procurement can do to improve the uptake of innovation the EU is currently funding.

2.1.2 Introduction to iProcureNet

Etienne Genet (EG) (Deputy Director of National Procurement Strategy and Performance, French Ministry of Interior / iProcureNet) presented the main objectives and methodology of the iProcureNet project.

2.1.3 Identifying needs in public security and procuring jointly

Raul Savimaa (Police expert, Estonian police and border guard board, iProcureNet) explained how the iProcureNet project identified common needs and security segments as a potential basis for joint procurement across EU country borders.

2.1.4 Introducing the iProcureNet Toolbox

Filomena Vieira (FV) (Public procurement and privacy lawyer, Portuguese Criminal Police / iProcureNet) presented the iProcureNet Toolbox which will deliver key steps and a methodology on joint procurement in the security sector (first public release in summer 2021).

Discussion

Q1: DO YOU NEED A LEGAL BASIS TO ESTABLISH EUROPEAN BUYER'S GROUP OR DO YOU CONSIDER THAT THE EXISTING BASIS IS ALREADY SUFFICIENT AND CLEAR ENOUGH TO ESTABLISH SUCH A GROUP?

- (FV) The European Buyers' Group will be created based on the project results. The best way for JCBPP is still under study since there are **many legal issues** (applicable law, investment plan questions, different national laws…).

- (EG) The work done so far in iProcureNet has already identified **many risks** especially regarding review proceedings as the applicable law is not always clear.

Q2: DID YOU CONSIDER EUROPEAN AGENCY JOINT UNDERTAKING AS A POTENTIAL INSTRUMENT FOR CONDUCTING JOINT CROSS BORDER PROCUREMENT?

- (EG) European agencies' actions are **limited by mandate** and the applicable laws for agencies are not the same as for state members. The existing agencies that have a mandate to make joint procurement, such as Frontex for instance, have been identified and options are currently studied.

- iProcureNet also explored the idea of **creating a specific agency** knowing that this would require some important political decisions and raise legal issues. Another option might be the centralization of purchasing bodies. The health sector has already made experiences of joint procurement through centralised purchasing bodies.

2.1.5   Joint cross-border public procurement: Experiences, obstacles, pitfalls

Jozef Kubinec (JK) (Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic / iProcureNet) presented key insights from a European online survey conducted by iProcureNet last year to collect examples of JCBPP (Joint Cross-Border Public Procurement) and identify not only experiences and good practices but also pitfalls and mistakes that were made and any consortium must be aware of.
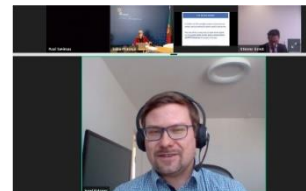
LIVE POLL

A live poll was run among participants to find out how common JCBPP is in current procurement practice. To the question of "Have you already taken part in a joint cross-border public procurement", participants gave the following answers:

⇨ **8% have taken part in a JCBPP**

⇨ **92 % have not**

Discussion

Q1 (WIL VAN HEESWIJK): DOES JCBPP REQUIRE ONE MEMBER STATE AUTHORITY TO TAKE THE LEAD?

- (JK) That **depends on the method chosen**. In the case where the institutions use the services of a central procurement body from one of the member states, the partners do not need to agree on one member state authority to take the lead. The national provision of the member state where the central procurement body is located are used. In the case where several institutions jointly award a public contract, there must be one leader because the **tender needs to be done according to a given jurisdiction**.

Q2 (DRM): TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THE EXPERIENCES WITH PCP RELEVANT FOR OTHER TYPES OF PROCUREMENT TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT PCP IS EXEMPT FROM THE DIRECTIVE?

- (EG) The main problem is linked to **timing**. LEAs want results immediately. Unfortunately, innovation processes happen on a pluriannual basis and it is sometimes difficult to convince the management to dedicate important sums of money to innovative solutions that might be available only five years later.

- **Multi-public funding European tools** can be the answer to solve this issue to show the decision makers that they will get some extra resources if they accept this long-term process.

- In general, some experience with PCP can be relevant also for other types of procurement procedures under the Directive, e.g. **good practices in managing the consortium and managing the procurement procedure**, such as deciding on the evaluation of tenders.

Q3 (DRM): HAS FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AMONG PUBLIC BUYERS OR OWNERSHIP OF PROCUREMENT RESULTS BEEN STUDIED? ARE THEY CONSIDERED OBSTACLES TO JCBPP?

- (LP) **IP rights** are an issue that has been studied in the analysis. If for example they join with a European Agency, there is an obligation for the ownership of the IP rights for the concerned

agency. The EU Commission guidelines also have to be considered especially when it comes to innovation.

- (EG) In the case of a PCP, questions related to the results ownership are important if one wants to go through a normal procedure afterwards because the **equal treatment of potential candidates** needs to be respected.

Q4 (DRM): CONCERNING THE THREE EXAMPLES ON DEFENCE AND SECURITY: WERE THEY DONE UNDER THE TERMS OF THE DIRECTIVE ON PUBLIC PROCUREMENT FOR DEFENCE AND SECURITY, OR DOES THIS ONLY REFER TO THE APPLICATION OF GOODS AND SERVICES PROCURED?

- (JK) It applies only to the goods and services that were procured. Two were examples of PCP which were exempt from the EU Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement; one was done according to the Directive.

2.1.6　Expert roundtable: Procurement as key issue for innovation uptake

The last part of Day 1 was dedicated to a roundtable moderated by **Thierry Hartmann** (French Ministry of Interior / ILEAnet). Four experts (end-users and suppliers) were invited to present their networks and assess their possible interaction with procurement.

- **Clive Goodchild (CG)** (Technology planning manager, BAE Systems / ENCIRCLE)

- **Bartosz Kożuch (BK)** (Project manager, Polish Platform for Homeland Security / i-LEAD

- **Kevin Humphreys (KH)** (Higher Executive Officer, Irish Revenue) **& Trevor Francis (TF)** (Technical Manager, UK Border Force / PEN-CP)

Bartosz Kożuch introduced the i-LEAD project which is a consortium of LEAs, research centres, standardisation institutes and industry representatives and industry links. The aim of the project is to foster dialogue between Law Enforcement Agencies.

Clive Goodchild introduced the ENCIRCLE project. ENCIRCLE aims to promote innovation and business development in the CBRN sector by creating an open and neutral European CBRN cluster and providing integration with platforms through standardized interfaces and future EU standards to integrate CBRN technologies and innovations from other H2020 projects.

Trevor Francis and **Kevin Humphreys** presented the PEN-CP project, the network of customs practitioners. 13 customs administrations and four research and administration organisations are involved in this project where six thematic areas are covered, including detection technologies, risk management and big data.

Thierry Hartmann presented the ILEAnet project, the network of Law Enforcement Agencies. ILEAnet engages practitioners within research projects to monitor research and innovation, identify common requirements as regards innovation and indicate priorities in standardisation. ILEAnet starts from end-users' needs and gaps analysis to seek solutions. ILEAnet also develops tools in close interaction with innovative solution providers and procurers.

Discussion

Q1 (TH): WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN YOUR NETWORK TO GET THE TOOLS THAT YOU NEED TO CARRY OUT YOUR JOB? WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IN ORDER TO BUY IN THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY WHAT IS ON THE SHELF?

- (TF) We need to encourage the development of things that we don't actually have in our hands yet. This is where **standardisation** and **defining user requirements** is a good approach. Technology from the marketplace might need a lot of the time but once they identify that there are other administrations who have similar needs, it **creates a larger voice to the market** and a better way of influencing how technology is developed. A larger market for innovations leads to more investments. Innovation shouldn't just wither.

Q2 (TH): HOW TO IDENTIFY THE MOST RELEVANT SOLUTIONS IN A FRAGMENTED MARKET? HOW TO ALLOW END-USERS TO IDENTIFY ON THE SHELF SOLUTIONS, BUT ALSO INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS?

- (BK) As an end-user, the best solution is to meet and talk. In i-LEAD, once the LEA from different European countries exchange their needs and the solutions they would like to have, **it quickly turns out that the needs are quite common**.

- (CG) The ENCIRCLE platform allows users to find innovations. The challenge is that there are too many platforms. it would be good to **consolidate all existing platforms** to see what the true need and **what the true market is**.

Q3 (TH): HOW YOU ARE DEALING WITH UPTAKE OF INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS WITHIN YOUR PROJECTS? WHAT KIND OF ISSUES DID YOU IDENTIFY WHEN BUYING INNOVATION?

- (TF/KH) Currently for PEN-CP it is all about **incremental small-scale development** – trying to push technology further so it becomes more visible and attractive to a wider audience. Our main goal is to build a network that lasts beyond the end of the project. In our areas people move on or retire. It is a big problem especially for smaller agencies to keep themes running through the years and in terms of innovation there is a lot to do. PEN-CP is seeking to support universities and small SMEs, as they are the ones that will innovate. It is like **building a social network that will be resilient for customs as the years go by**.

- (CG) It is very hard to get new innovations. There is reluctance to buy latest technology. It is important to **get innovations involved in training exercises** so that users can get familiar with new technology. **Standards will help a lot, but they take a very long time to be put in place.**

- In addition, the major blocking point in innovative projects is language because all the projects are written in English. There should be a **bigger emphasis to get multilingual projects** so people from all Europe can have projects in their national language.

Q4 (TH): DO YOU HAVE SUCCESS STORIES IN YOUR DOMAIN SHOWING THAT PROCUREMENT OF INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS IS POSSIBLE?

- (KH) In 2015, a **fuel fraud** happened in Ireland and England: Diesel is usually marked with a dye when it is used for agriculture and attracts a lower rate of tax than the normal diesel. Criminal groups set up some laundering to dye and sell the diesel back to the public to make a lot of money. It was easy to launder with very simple filter methods. So we came up with a

solution by putting a new chemical in the dye that would be laundry-resistant. The problem was to help detect that chemical in the fields for our frontline officers who might be inspecting patrol stations and people's vehicles to see if they were using this agricultural diesel. We then did a joint tender between the UK and Ireland where we went in the market looking for a machine that could detect this quickly and reliably in fields with a flame spectrometer. Several companies put forward their solutions. As the project was very large, we were looking to buy fifty of these machines at the cost of nearly £100,000 each.

- The benefit was cheaper maintenance and cheaper costs with six or seven companies trying to detect these compounds to be injected into the fuel. It was complicated but very beneficial, and we are still using those machines today. We needed to do a joint procurement because it was a cross-border issue between the Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. But **joint procurement makes perfect sense in terms of lowering costs**.

- There is a collaborative Law Enforcement procurement programme between England and Wales. The UK Home Office reports every year the percentage of cheaper prices they can get for both English and Welsh police.

- (BK) The PREVENT project will start their PCP next year, so hopefully some success stories will come from there.

- (CG) In CBRN projects, very large demonstrations were organised around Europe and number of partners managed to exploit technologies from these projects at a national level.

2.1.7 Summary: Key insights from Day 1 discussions

Standardisation and identifying common needs create a larger voice to the market and thus influence technology development.

**Networks of practitioners are a resilient way of federating (common) needs over time.**

Innovations need to be used in training exercises so that users can get familiar with new technology

An emphasis on multi-lingual projects may un-block innovation.

2.2 Day 2 – 10 March

Download all slides here.

Jorge Garzon (JG) (French Ministry of Interior / iProcureNet) welcomed participants and launched the Conference. He was designated as moderator for this second day and last day.
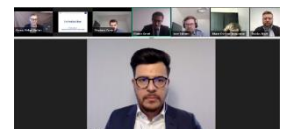
Etienne Genet reminded about iProcureNet outcomes in the domain of security services. He went through the agenda and provided a short description of the following speakers' profiles.

2.2.1 Keynote: Procurement for an Uncertain Future

Stéphane Conty (SC) (French National Procurement Agency) held an inspiring keynote reinterpreting the role of the procurement officer in the innovation process.

- Innovation in procurement is not optional: it should be **Plan A, not Plan B**. The question is not: "shall we?", but "how?":

- We must develop, find and implement new technologies and adapt the ways we are organising our work, to prepare for future unknown threats.

  o Preparing the future also means exchanging with end users, being aligned with the world.

  o In the public sector, we must also work on value creation for employment, for SMEs; making sure that public money prepares industry, networks, suppliers and community leaders for the future.

  o As soon as we do that, we have the chance to develop a positive attitude, to actually have fun with innovation; and to be proud to have a useful impact on the world.

- Procurement is not an isolated island. As procurers, we have the best job in the world: **being the gate to the outside world**!

  o Procurement officers are not just "the ones who know how to conduct the procurement process" (or worse: the ones who place orders); they are more than just paper pushers, but **strong and reliable business partners**.

  o They are outside resource managers; knowing what is required *inside* and how to connect this to the resources *outside*. **They are the suppliers' voice**.

  o They need to **spend enough time *outside***, and this needs to be foreseen in organisational structures. Their gate position requires

    ▪ Time and anticipation;

    ▪ Management support (your management must accept that you spend half of the time outside!);

    ▪ An interest in technology;

    ▪ Network management; and

    ▪ (K*ey*!) Trust from the suppliers.

- Two recommendations:

  o Establish a **roadmap** to make the procurement process a collective action;

  o **Join in the early stages** of the process. The position of the procurement department in decision-making processed is crucial. We must be aware as soon as possible of what we will be doing in the future.

2.2.2 Expert roundtable: Identifying Unmet Needs

Jorge Garzon opened the roundtable by introducing the speakers:

- **Georg Melzer-Venturi (GMV) (**Managing Director**,** Eutema Research services Austria, Training engineer in Horizon 2020 projects / FOLDOUT project)

- **Evaldas Bružė (EB) (**Deputy director, Lithuanian Cyber Crime centre of Excellence for Training, Research and Education / Project manager, Mykolas Romeris University / Partner, iTree Group Vilnius / SPARTA/NAAS projects)

- **Marie-Christine Bonnamour (MCB)** (Secretary-General, Public Safety Communications Europe (PSCE), a Brussels-based platform for practitioners, industrials and researchers in Public Safety Communications and Crisis Management / BroadWay project

FOLDOUT project experience

Georg Melzer-Venturi presented the FOLDOUT project on through-foliage detection for illegal cross-border activities.

- FOLDOUT slogan: From border guards to border guards.

  o Many border guards in the consortium to make sure we will be developing something for the people actually using it. We included **end users** (border guards) already in the proposal writing phase, during workshops. The only ones we missed were procurement agencies, and we are regretting this now…

  o FOLDOUT is based on a simple problem: Europe has hundreds of kilometres of green borders where if you are lucky there is a small fence, and if you are unlucky there are just some trees. **These borders need to be checked and controlled**.

  o It was obvious to us that **there was not going to be one "quick-and-easy-fix" system** – that we had to combine many things and also adapt the system to local conditions: requirements are different in Finland with minus 20 degrees in the winter, or in Greece with plus 40 degrees in the summer.

- We first needed to define what is the actual problem was, what the real issues were.

  o In the security area, this can get tricky: We cannot just tell everybody what our problems are, what is not working within our security services.

  o The first thing we did before we started developing anything: we had a **demo**! This demo was not about demonstrating new technology, it was about showing end users existing products from the market, let them have a look at them and tell us what is wrong with them.

  o Like that, an interesting process is initiated: If we had a solution, we could just sell it. But we don't have a solution because we don't know the problem. **It's a long back-and-forth process** between what is existing and who really needs what.

- Via the end users, you also get the **trust of the suppliers**. In Northern Europe, we were able to visit a company building command & control software. We were even granted access to the control room of the border guards.

- o We have a really good chance of actually delivering something that is useful if we spend much time with the end-users, **making sure they understand what we are capable of, and that the developers understand what the needs are**. Personal trust is crucial. How to do this remotely is of course another problem…

- The process needs to involve procurement agencies: they have to be interested in tech, understand what is going on and assist the process.

  - o If we are not careful, border guards will define what they want – then whisper it into the ears of the procurement agency – the procurement agency will understand whatever it understands and translate that into a procurement text – and things can go wrong. It is in the children's' game "Chinese whispers", **where something completely different comes out in the end.**

Discussion

Q1 (FV): I FULLY AGREE WITH THE NEED OF AN OPEN "MIND & PRACTICE" AT PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENTS, BUT HOW DO YOU APPROACH ISSUES SUCH AS COLLUSION RISKS, IMPARTIALITY AND TRANSPARENCY IF YOU DON'T DO THIS OPEN "ACTIVITY" USING PUBLIC AND TRANSPARENT MEANS??

(SC) We are not at a stage where there is a square procurement process. Things are not opposed: **you can be open to the world, and as soon as you come back to the procurement process, you are back playing the game**.

Q2 (JK): HOW DO YOU PROCEED TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL END-USERS?

(GMV) You go to all the conferences, check the website of the EC: every project is public, every project partner is public. You insist. It is just endurance. Contact them via their website/email, LinkedIn and phone calls. Call Frontex.

Q3 (JK): WOULD YOU HAVE WANTED TO INCLUDE PROCUREMENT AGENCIES – DO YOU ACTUALLY MISS THEM, OR IS IT TOO EARLY IN THE PROCESS?

(GMV) **There is no such thing as 'too early'**, and Stéphane's presentation made that very clear: if you want to do something on a national level, and it's big, it's going to be procurement. **As soon as you start thinking big, procurement agencies should be involved.**

NAAS project experience

Evaldas Bružė presented the experience of the NAAS research cluster.

- **Product adaptation curve** (General concept): Innovators first → Early adaptors (pioneers always prepared to work in the future) → Pragmatics (major market adaption) → Conservatives → Sceptics.

- Example of Digital Forensics: First introduced in market in 2006, recognised by visionaries as a necessary skill for LEAs. In 2010-2013 the need of a standard was still disputed with EUROPOL. Nowadays, it is a standard method and even included in university curriculums.

- Problem: **How to deal with disruptive challenges**?

- o **Offenders, perpetrators, criminals**: enthusiastic to use new technology for their needs. It is part of their profile that they are benefitting from using new methods and disruptive approaches. hey only need to grasp some basic knowledge of the innovation.

- o **LEAs, defence & security organisations**: due to the nature of these organisations, they are going to be very late pragmatists/conservatives (late adoption majority, following the scheme above)

    - Long validation procedures, necessity for extensive proof / fit-for-purpose

    - High need for alignment with the legal/regulatory frameworks

    - HR processes are not adapted to disruptive changes (formal learning paths)

    - Rules and structures for acquisition and procurement must be followed

- Our target must be to break this: formulate needs in such a way that LEA ecosystem and collaboration processes are structured, innovation uptake facilitated and sped up, and disruptive challenges becoming business-as-usual.

    - o Solution for Lithuania: **Introduce an intermediary step**. We need an intermediary ecosystem on the ground, uniting the public, academic, R&T organisations, industry experts, SMEs, start-ups into a **research adaption cluster** streamlining and supporting the uptake of innovative solutions and at the same time recognising the fact the majority of innovations will not happen inside one country, but on an EU or global level.

    - o **NAAS research and adaption cluster**: a targeted information security and threat detection research ecosystem focussing on innovation, that we organised also as pre-product / innovation procurement process. Criteria:

        - A trusted environment: for the security & defence community, to facilitate a **co-creation process;**

        - Not generic, but for a selected topic (fit-for-purpose)

        - An environment allowing flexibility and open-mindedness and driven by concepts of open innovation.

- Several workshops with end user organisations showed that **end users are interested not only in the product but also in thematic research**:
    - o methodological development;

    - o new organisational processes;

    - o new education & training & upskilling programmes for national education systems to staff the new positions in organisations using these innovative products.

- **Even on the suppliers'/innovators' side there is a lack of information**: How to participate in such kind of innovation calls or projects. There is a lack of references. Access to information is limited and must be improved.

- A **balance needs to be found between clearly defining the scope and allowing for some openness, which is necessary with innovation**. Lawyers and decision-makers in the LEA,

security and defence domain cannot make a decision on too abstract definitions, they need concrete definitions.

- We need a **participatory, co-creative process** which should be **iterative and agile**. However, introducing agile concepts in a procurement process to introduce agile concepts is very difficult. Sometimes it happens naturally, with several rounds of clarification.

- It is good practice to **set up an innovation policy and strategy inside end-user organisations**. This is currently very rare in police, defence or security organisations.

- We need to **allow exposure to failure and build a culture of accepting it**. The risk of failure is higher with innovation processes, which scares many people. But high-level decision makers rarely agree to go one step forward and to expose their organisations to this risk.

BroadWay project experience

Marie-Christine Bonnamour presented the BroadWay project, the first large security pre-commercial procurement project launched by DG Home.

- Aim of BroadWay:

  o enable operational mobility for public safety to enhance cross-border cooperation and provide secure mission-critical broadband communication operable everywhere;

  o improve collaboration between responders from different agencies and different countries, and enable mobility of responders between different countries, for seamless continuity of communication between first responders (police, public safety, civil protection and emergency practitioners) where communications interoperability is both a need and a gap.

- Currently used terminals are based on outdated technology → vendor lock-in. There are only a very limited number of operators in this domain. Some national PPDR organisations are migrating to broadband, but the pace is not the same in all countries. There is a need to boost innovative solutions.

- PCP process:

  o Phase 0: BROADMAP project: 1-year study to assess needs and define requirements with a large team of 14 practitioner organisations (Ministries of Interior, national police organisation, civil protection organisations...):

    - Check of requirements emanating from the previous R&D projects;

    - Massive consultation of all public safety organisations in Europe;

    - 3 months of workshops running in 18 countries in total, with 276 PPDR organisations and more than 500 practitioners to validate the needs and requirements;

    - Outcome: large database of requirements as basis for the procurement phase.

- o The requirements were transferred into specifications for the procurement → 3-phase PCP: downselecting suppliers (two in the final phase to present TRL 8-level products = very close to the market)

- o Last phase can be a PPI or another solution e.g. the creation of an organisation to continue the procurement.

- Currently phase 2: prototype evaluation. User-driven approach: 11 buyers are involved in all stages of the process: specifications for the procurement documents, validation in two teams:

  - o **Technical validation team**: check the fulfilment of the specifications by the suppliers and evaluate the proposals – very intense work over several weeks

  - o **Practitioner validation team**: evaluate the non-technical features of the solution – its usability. They will not compare what has been written in the procurement document, they will really just assess what they see during the demos.

- Success factors and Lessons learnt:

  - o Crucial to have **enough time to define requirements and specifications**. This effort should not be underestimated. 30% of PCP budget goes to the coordination, this needs to be planned to make sure time & budget do not become a limiting factor.

  - o **Long-term involvement of practitioners** is very important, despite confidentiality constraints. Try to share as much information as possible with practitioners to have this dialogue with them.

  - o You should think also about the **sustainability of the PCP process**. What do you do after the PCP? How do you cover commercialisation in the end?

  - o PCP is a very legal process, deviations are very risky, so **avoid deviating too much from the initial definitions**. This is a challenge of course for technology is evolving.

Discussion

LIVE POLL

As a Procurement Agency, how often do you see or visit the site for the procure technologies actually in use?

⇨ **(Almost) all the time: 17%**

⇨ **Sometimes: 44%**

⇨ **Rarely: 22%**

⇨ **Never: 17%**

- (GMV) This result confirms the underlying message in our presentations: **If we do not engage the Procurement agencies, they will procure around us.** They will do their homework and if we are not there to show them what we have and present the usefulness of our products, then others will.

- (JK) As a procurer, I am glad if end-users invite me to their environment and show me the things they need or discuss the products. It allows us to learn from our mistakes.

Q1 (JK): AS PROCURERS, WE SHOULD NOT BE PAPER PUSHERS BUT BUSINESS PARTNERS, BUT TO BE ABLE TO DO THAT WE HAVE TO SHOW THAT WE UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEMS. THIS CAN CREATE CONFLICTS WITH END USERS WHO ARE WRITING THE TECHNICAL DESCRIPTIONS AND ARE EXPECTING PUBLIC PROCURERS TO BUY WHAT THEY HAVE WRITTEN. SOMETIMES WE WANT TO ARGUE THAT MAYBE THERE ARE BETTER SOLUTIONS. HOW DO YOU SEE THIS CONFLICT? WHERE IS THE LIMIT TO WHERE WE CAN GO AS PUBLIC PROCURERS?

- (SC) End-users are not always exactly aware of what they need. We are all in our backyards and we don't always open the door; and the same goes for the people writing the specifications. **As procurement officers, we are the ones who know the upstream market, who can capture what might be the best solutions**. We need to organise this connection: let people debate and see what comes out. That's our job. We are sales guys.

Q2 (NIKOLAI STOIANOV): OUR JOB A PUBLIC PROCURERS IS TO TRANSFER OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS. WE DO NOT WANT TO BOTHER REAL OPERATIONAL GUYS WITH TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS. WE JUST ASK THEM: WHAT DO YOU WANT AS AN END RESULT. COULD YOU ELABORATE MORE ON THIS PROCESS OF NEEDS IDENTIFICATION?

- (MCB) In BroadMap, when discussing user and operational requirements, we had **operational partners** such as national police organisations. In BroadWay, we have either Ministries of Interior or national agencies that are providing the communication to public safety users. Both entities are always involved in a procurement process.

- In the first phase, we **transferred that big database of operational requirements into specifications for the procurement**. All buyers were involved in this transfer process. We wanted to both respect the legal check of the specifications by the buyer team and to continue to involving practitioners in the presentation and selection of solutions.

Q3 (NIKOS PANAGIOTARAKIS): BUYERS SOMETIMES PREFER USERS TO GIVE THEM SIMPLE OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS SO THEY HAVE MORE FREEDOM TO TRANSLATE THESE INTO POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS. BUT WE NEED PEOPLE TO WRITE THESE FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS, PEOPLE WHO NEED TO HAVE A STRONG TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE AND A VERY GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT. FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS ARE SOMETHING IN-BETWEEN. THEY EXPLAIN WHAT WE NEED TO BUY WITHOUT ENTERING INTO TECHNICAL DETAILS. THEY HAVE TO BE UNDERSTOOD BY BOTH END USER AND SUPPLIERS. PUBLIC ENTITIES THAT PROCURE THINGS ARE NOT ABLE MOST OF THE TIME TO EXPRESS THEIR NEEDS IN A WAY THAT WILL END UP BUYING THE PRODUCTS THEY WANT. AND THE GAP LIES IN THE FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS. HOW TO BEST CLOSE THIS GAP?

- (EB) **Writing functional requirements requires specific skills** and should happen in a closed group of communication, specialised conferences, publications... The problem is: this kind of information is not available through the usual channels of communication. It may be a special twitter channel you need to be subscribed to; it may be closed groups of communication between scientists on innovation; it may be specialised conferences, it may mean reading a lot of publications and outcomes.

- The procuring organisation should **establish a collaborative ecosystem to provide access to the right people** who are knowledgeable about innovation and know what innovators are

working on today. Short-term politics will not work. **It must be long-term collaboration**, a trusted environment where you can establish dialogue and get access to information.

- Currently, around the EU, a lot of projects are screening innovation and producing reports on specific topics. There are also industry / innovation days organised with end users. This can help define functional specifications for future innovation acquisition.

Q4 (JG): BACK TO JOINT CROSS-BORDER PROCUREMENT, BEYOND ALL THE LEGAL OBSTACLES: WOULD YOU GIVE US SOME PIECES OF ADVICE ON HOW TO WORK JOINTLY WITH OTHER COUNTRIES AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS?

- (EB) For the first one the key essence is to **get a first grasp of *what* is on the table**, what we can expect from these innovations. A good approach for this can be a **hackathon-style event**: let innovators define what their technology is all about, and then let end users into the game, to play with the concepts to understand what kind of impact, effectiveness change or improvement in the process it can bring. This will allow for early prioritisation of what is really important and what can wait or still has too many question marks.

- *How* to agree among the countries cross-border is a really difficult question. There may be certain things that all of Europe believe are important such as when criminals are adapting to new technologies, the immediate response will be top priority. But otherwise, priorities vary from region to region. Maybe **sub-groups for certain regions** can be a solution.

- (MCB) Some examples for close cross-border cooperation or successful joint tender across two or three regions maybe be found among the projects funded by the **INTERREG-programme**.

- (JK) There is also the legal question. In 2016, a joint analysis by the Austrian central procurement body (BBG) and the EC pointed out that one big influence factor for successful JCBPP is the **close relationship of legal regimes**.

- (FV) When addressing a new contract procedure, it can be useful to **have a view of the history in that area**. If we have a previous contract on the same segment, we can check them to identify possible improvement. That is one way to think of innovation.

- Using **variant proposals** in public tenders can be a very good way to boost innovation. In the years before the 2004 EU Directive and before the 2008 crisis, variants were used a lot in Portugal. This means that suppliers can respond directly on our requirements; but if they understood what we wanted and think they have a better idea to answer our needs, they can give us another proposal as a variant.

- (JK) In Slovakia, we are not using functional specification of variants because of the risks involved: no methodology is given on how to evaluate this, and they represent a possibility for the suppliers who are not happy with the results to question our validation. This needs to change and one way is to **give public procurers more discretional power**.

Q5 (JG): HOW DID THE INDUSTRIAL PARTNERS REACT AND HOW DID YOU MAKE SURE THEY DID NOT EXPECT YOU TO BUY THEIR SOLUTION?

- (GMV) The key is **expectation management**. We have to explain that we are not looking for a system where we can stick on all available material. We are looking to define a problem in a set scenario where we will test certain material.

- What helps, obviously, are the end users, such as the Finnish border guards helped us keep our feet on the ground. "You want to put stuff up there on the arctic circle? Good luck! We're not going there to fix it when it's broken." That is the **control function of the humanoid, who is doing the actual work**.

Q7 (JK): YOUR PROJECTS ARE ALL PCPS WHICH MEANS IN THE END YOU SHOULD HAVE 2 OR MORE SOLUTIONS, WHICH PREVENTS VENDOR LOCK-IN. BUT HOW DO YOU PREVENT VENDOR LOCK-IN IN LATER PHASES? DO YOU CONSIDER THIS AS A PROBLEM? AND HOW DO LOOK AT IT IN YOUR PROJECTS (IF YOU LOOK AT IT)?

- (GMV) **We embraced anti-lock-in**. We said: the key function of our system is that we have **open interfaces**. We are not going to invent every camera, detector or sensor system, especially when we are looking at specialised systems for the arctic or for French Guyana. There are **standardised interfaces in our product that prevent vendor lock-in** by being proactively open. We are planning to invite other suppliers towards the end of the project, to see how to integrate their products into our system, how to enable those interfaces.

- (SC) From my previous experience in the defence industry, that was one of the nightmares we tried to tackle from the beginning. You have to keep in mind that you get two things: you get the product and its TRL, and you get the system – and the system may be completely new. **You need to put all your attention in the system to make sure you will not be locked in it.** It is like a puzzle: you get a piece of the puzzle that should be as much on-the-shelf as possible. *How* you arrange the puzzle can be quite specific – as long as you get the IP (and you can manage the IP properly), that's OK. There is also the duality of the product: The security market is quite a niche. Try to open up your eyes and look for products coming from other markets, e.g. culture. As soon as you are **managing the system, not the product** and **reposing on the duality of the product**, somewhere you should be in quite a comfortable position. Easier to say than to do of course…

- (MCB) In BroadWay, we are also quite careful about **standards**. The solutions presented should be using approved standards. In the broadband migration we'll also use commercial products, and not only the ones specific to security. In the PCP process, we also saw a **big involvement of SMEs**, which is very positive. Each team of 10-15 industry players includes several SMEs, which means you are mixing competencies and expertise.

- (EB) Very often people are selling company profiles who look very nice, but the actual delivery is done a mixed team which may lack expertise. So next to the functional specifications, it is important to **think through what kind of a team we expect to deliver the services**, the development or the innovation rollout.

2.2.3   Summary: Key insights from Day 2 discussions

Procurers should consider themselves as a gate to the outside world, as strong and reliable business partners, and as the voice of the suppliers.

Procurers need more discretional power and be involved in the early stages of decision processes. There is no such thing as 'too early': As soon as one starts thinking big, procurers should be involved.

Needs identification is a long back-and-forth process to define what is existing and who really needs what. End users need to understand what developers are capable of, and developers must understand what the needs are.

Despite confidentiality constraints, the involvement of end-users throughout the process has a key control function and can act as a gate-opener to industry.

Trust and long-term collaboration are crucial.

The process of translating functional into technical requirements needs to be monitored to avoid the "Chinese whispers" effect, where something completely different comes out in the end. Procurers need to be tech-interested.

Current barriers for innovation uptake include:

- **Security-related organisational culture, strict procedures and high level of regulation ("conservative late adopters");**
- **Lack of (access to) information even on the suppliers'/innovators' side;**
- **Difficult balance between clear definition and openness of scope in procurement;**
- **Lack of innovation policy and strategy inside end-user organisations;**
- **Lack of a "culture of failure" and risk acceptance.**

Co-creative, agile and iterative methods are needed, for example via research adaption clusters or hackathon-like events – also because technology is constantly evolving.

Writing functional requirements requires specific and comprehensive skills: a dedicated position within an organisation with privileged access to innovation communication channels.

Among the success factors for joint cross-border procurement are

- **the close relationship of legal regimes,**
- **a view of the contractual history in the concerned segment and**
- **the use of variant proposals.**

Strategies to avoid vendor lock-in include

- **standardised interfaces,**
- **managing the system, not the product,**
- **reposing on the duality of the product and**
- **involving SMEs.**

3   Dissemination, turnout and feedback

3.1   Dissemination

Registrations opened in early February 2021 and were shared via social media, newsletter and EU communication channels.
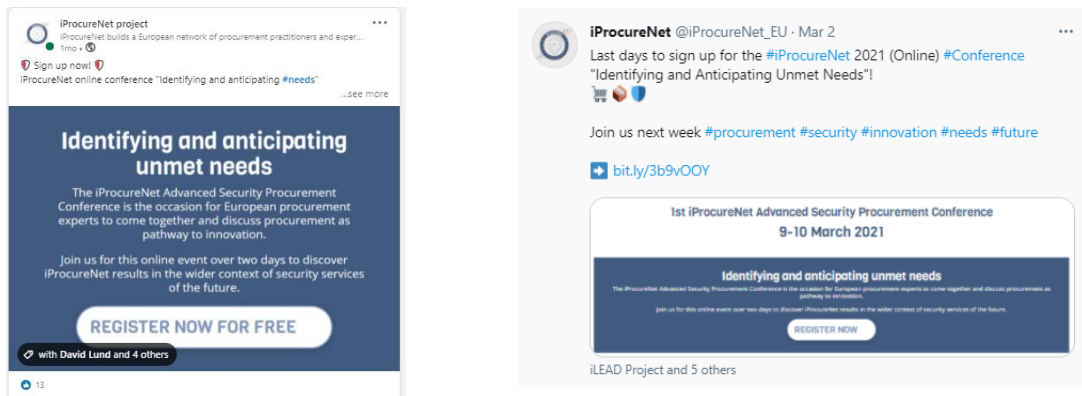
Figure 1: Examples of event announcements on social media
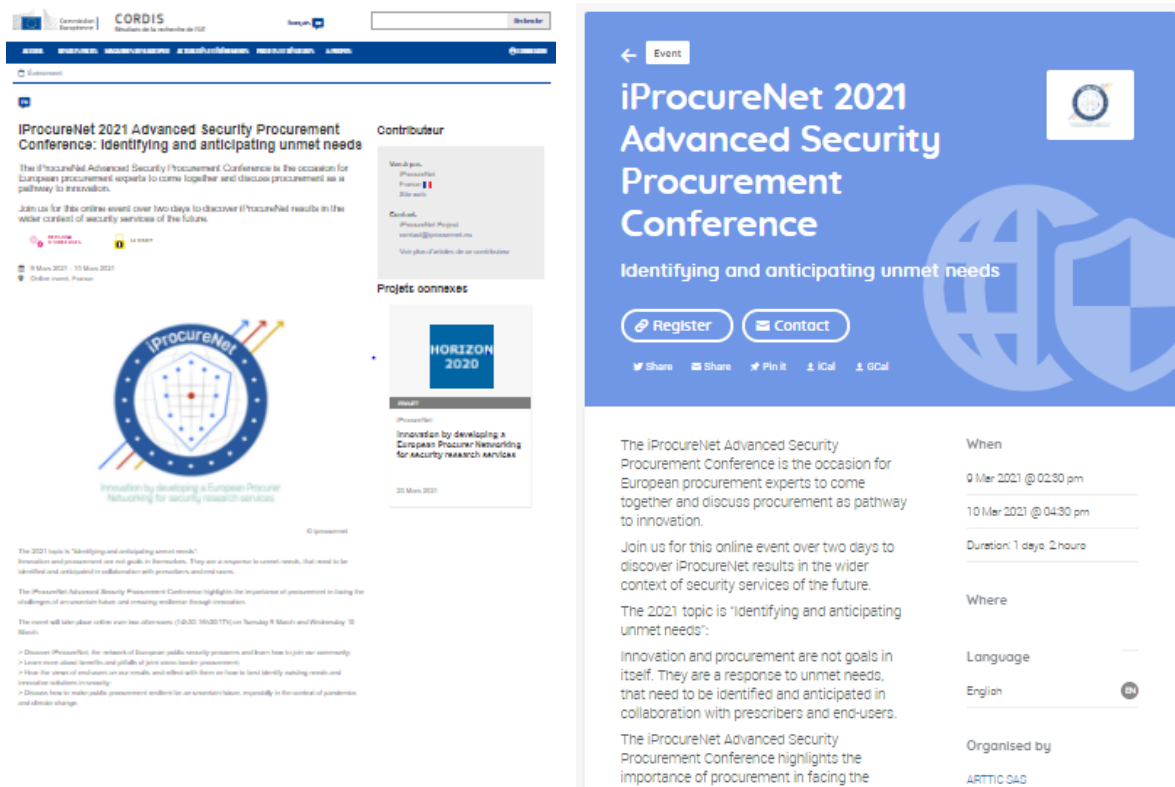
Figure 2: Event posts on CORDIS and EU Agenda

The newsletter campaign for the conference sent in February 2021, can be found in Annex I.

3.2   Participation

A total of 106 registrations were received, out of which 84 attended either one day or both days of the event (79% attendance rate).

19 participants attended only Day 1, 15 attended only Day 2 and 50 attended both days.

Figure 3: Share of attendees / registrations
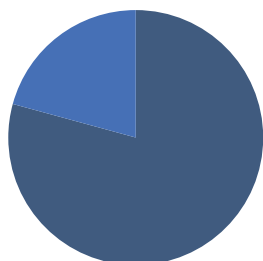
Legend: ■ Attended ■ Didn't attend

Figure 4: Perseverance of attendees
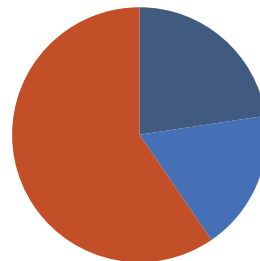
Legend: ■ Only day 1 ■ Only day 2 ■ Both days

30 attendees were consortium members, 4 were project external advisors, 10 were speakers (non-consortium members) and 40 were externals.

Attendees came from 24 different European countries. The most represented countries were Slovakia (14), France (14) and Romania (8).
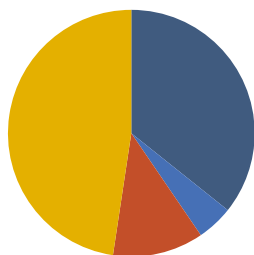
Legend: ■ Consortium ■ Advisors ■ Speakers ■ External

Figure 5: Type of attendees

A total of 52 registered persons signed up to the iProcureNet newsletter and another 52 joined the iProcureNet community platform iPOP.
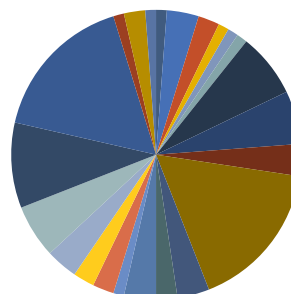
Legend:
■ Austria ■ Belgium
■ Bulgaria ■ Croatia
■ Cyprus ■ Czech Republic
■ Estonia ■ EU org
■ Finland ■ France
■ Germany ■ Greece
■ Iceland ■ Ireland
■ Lithuania ■ Netherlands
■ Poland ■ Portugal
■ Romania ■ Slovakia
■ Spain ■ UK
■ Ukraine

Figure 6: Origin of attendees

3.3   Follow-up and feedback

A follow-up survey was sent to participants to collect feedback on the event. Only 6 responses were collected. The event was rated 4.1 out of 5 on average. Comments received during the event and the survey include:

"Thank you all, these two days were inspiring and interesting :)"

"I liked the session and the discussions about experiences/obstacles/pitfalls regarding joint cross-border public procurement most."

"the sessions related to JCBPP were interesting and highly informative"

"The experience as a whole was really interesting and appealing, and I am looking forward to future conferences / webinars."

"thank you for the impeccable organization!"

"I had expected a bit more dynamic discussions amongst the participants in between a block of presentations."
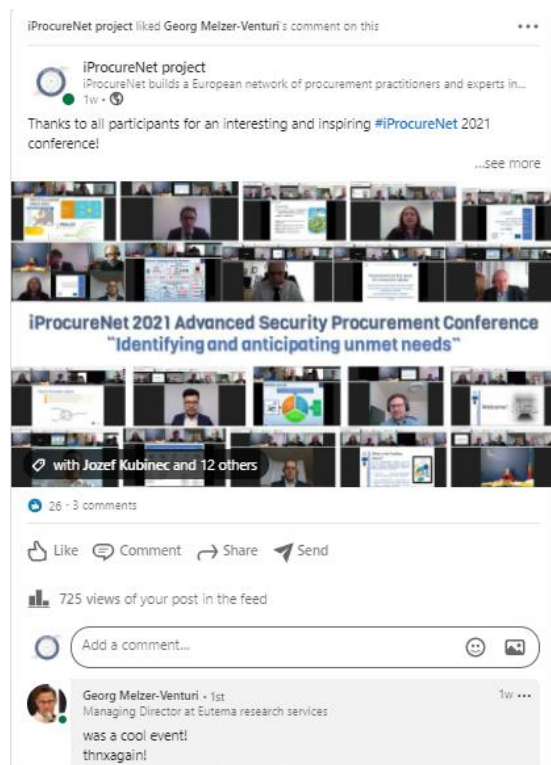
Figure 7: Follow-up post on social media

All conference slides have been made available for download on the iProcureNet public website.

4   Conclusion

The first iProcureNet Annual Conference has succeeded in giving visibility to the iProcureNet results and establishing dialogue with other security practitioners to prepare future collaboration. At the same time, the event has launched an interesting debate on the role of public procurers in innovation uptake processes, taking into account the specificities of the security sector. Feedback from and engagement with the audience has been positive.

Future events are likely to continue and bring together the two strands of the debate which are cross-border joint procurement and the role of procurement in innovation uptake. We are hoping to be able to organise future conference as physical events to allow for even more interactivity.

Annex I. Newsletter campaign, Feb. 2021

Figure 8: Newsletter campaign I, sent 17 February 2021