



Industry Interaction Case Study ITAPPE Workshop

“Everything was presented in the best possible format for discussion. I am very pleased.”

**Sergei Valev, Director,
Honeystone Ltd.**

Engaging industry to inform and shape academic research

The EPSRC Centre for Innovative Manufacturing in Large-Area Electronics (CIMLAE) works to support two-way communication and collaboration between industry and academia. One of the platforms on which this plays out are centre-led workshops which gather topically-relevant industrial representatives and create a space in which industry can shape research priorities and ensure that research is aligned with industry needs. **This process of using workshops to incorporate industry guidance into project development has featured in all currently running CIMLAE research, and it is clear why.**

On September 12, 2017, CIMLAE hosted a workshop centred on the research progress of the ITAPPE project. This workshop provided the project researchers with an opportunity to interact with relevant industry representatives, to inform them of potential improvements on the horizon but also, critically, to allow industry input and experience to steer

future research. The day was well received by all involved and the productive exchanges by various organisations with shared interests were invaluable for the researchers and ITAPPE project.

The day started with short presentations summarising current state of the art techniques, the ITAPPE project context, technical details, progress and ideas for the future. The following Q&A session took off straight away, with everyone getting involved in back-and-forth discussions. The questions and answers were very much collaborative, with each contribution adding to the previous statement or question, there was a lot of agreement over shared experiences, and academics passed questions over to those in industry for fuller, practical answers.

Input from industry followed the lines of “from what we saw..”, “this is something we deal with a lot..”, “talking from a practical point of view..”, “if you go to industry with that, this is what they will ask..” – exactly the type of industrial engagement needed for refining research objectives and maximising the commercial impact of the project.

In small groups everyone then worked through questions aimed at identifying the strengths, weaknesses and commercial applications of this new technology, as well as technical targets for the next research phase, and how industry can partner with the project to scale-up the process.

The day prompted such interest and discussion that it continued after official proceedings finished. People stayed to share ideas,

samples, demos and to discuss partnerships and specific work examples and challenges.

Back in the office after the event, project representatives from each discussion group shared the answers, concerns and advice voiced around their respective tables. These points, alongside feedback questionnaires and the Q&A discussion topics, and are now being taken into account as the project investigators plan the next stages of research – potentially in partnership with some of the attending institutions who expressed interest in working with the Centre to further develop this technology.

Guangbin, a project investigator on the ITAPPE project concluded his presentation by saying that it has been “a joy to work with these [current collaborating] companies and the Centre.” There are a variety of ways industry can engage with CIMLAE research, from low-commitment termly advisory meetings or phone calls, to specially commissioned sub-projects tailored for a company’s specific needs. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact the Centre.

“The ITAPPE Workshop had a constructive format where everyone participated to shape the future direction of the research work.”

**Steve Riches, Director,
Tribus-D Ltd**