



FIWARE, iSHARE and FundingBox Launch the i4Trust Initiative that will Mobilise 5.8 Million Euros to Boost Data Sharing and Facilitate SME Innovation Capability Through the Creation of Data Spaces

- The collaborative initiative will contribute towards building the foundation for Data Spaces, thereby facilitating trustworthy and effective data sharing;
- i4Trust's value proposition will be validated via 32 incubator projects involving hundreds of SMEs and dozens of Digital Innovation Hubs, spanning across a variety of regions and sectors in Europe;
- The three organisations leading the project will provide SMEs with the tools, coaching, mentoring and financial support needed for the creation of such Data Spaces;
- Thanks to new B2B data sharing ecosystems, SMEs will work more efficiently and cost-effectively as well as collaborate with other parties to build innovative services around data value chains;
- The tools for the creation of these Data Spaces are centered around standard-based building blocks, together with common data models defined for multiple application domains.

Joint Press Release

Berlin, Rotterdam, Madrid, December 15, 2020 — Imagine a world in which organisations can gain convenient and secure access to whatever data they need, in an easy and safe manner. This is one of the many ambitious — yet realistic — goals of the [i4Trust Initiative](#), a new partnership announced today between [FIWARE](#), [iSHARE](#) and [FundingBox](#). By teaming up, these organisations will provide small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) — across various sectors and locations in Europe — with the tools, coaching, mentoring and financial support needed for the creation of Data Spaces, thereby facilitating trustworthy and effective B2B data sharing. As a result, SMEs will be able to work more efficiently and cost-effectively, whilst also reducing their carbon footprints. They will also be able to collaborate with other parties from multiple sectors to build innovative services around data value chains.

Breaking down barriers to data sharing

In the current digital age, the use of data has become essential for decision-making and the automation of processes across both the public and private sectors. Hence, data sharing is becoming increasingly important and offers numerous benefits. Whereas the practice is gradually growing over time, organisations often face significant barriers that prevent them from further benefiting from data sharing.

The lack of universal agreements for identity and access management, data publication, exchange and trading means that organisations are forced to draw up tailor-made data sharing agreements time and time again. This makes each data connection or integration a time-consuming and costly effort, often leading organisations to abandon their data sharing attempts altogether. Moreover, the exchange of specific information between various IT solutions increasingly gives rise to important questions about data security among citizens and organisations alike, such as 'who can see my data?', 'can I trust them?' and 'how can I retain control over my data?'. With the right tools, education, coaching and initial funding, the i4Trust initiative will help remove such barriers.

Standard-based building blocks and common data models at the forefront of this initiative

The tools for the creation of Data Spaces comprise standard-based building blocks from the FIWARE and iSHARE frameworks, together with common data models defined for multiple application domains. These building blocks provide the foundation for the core functionalities in every Data Space, namely data exchange, data publication, and data trading, supporting the necessary trustworthiness. Combined with commonly adopted data models, all these building blocks bring the means to support full interoperability among parties and core concepts such as loose coupling (in which the involved participants may have specific, but more limited knowledge about each other), as well as reusability and replaceability of data sources and applications. Since all the tools are standard-based and supported by open source reference implementations, organizations that are sharing data through Data Spaces — based on such references — will avoid vendor lock-in scenarios.

The FIWARE Context Broker building block supports effective data exchange among parties by using the standard NGSI-LD API. FIWARE Data Marketplace components, on the other hand, based on relevant global industrial recommendations and data catalog (DCAT) standards, bring support to data publication and trading, including the monetization of data. *“The i4Trust’s main goal is to create an ecosystem in which companies will be able to share data in a trustworthy and effective manner. The initiative aims to break down ‘data silos’ through the sharing, re-use and trading of data assets, boosting the creation of innovative services in different sectors”* — **Juanjo Hierro**, Chief Technology Officer, FIWARE Foundation.

Additionally, the iSHARE scheme brings the foundation for trustworthy exchange among parties based on well-established security standards and robust legal frameworks. *“The inefficient use of data is unnecessarily costing SMEs all over Europe valuable time and money. They frequently end up having to request, collect and transmit data again, even though it is already available elsewhere such as on a data hub. iSHARE and FIWARE will provide SMEs with the necessary means to create trusted and efficient data sharing environments – commonly referred to as Data Spaces – to remove current barriers to data sharing. The i4Trust initiative will help them to understand and quantify the value of data, adopt a new way of working, establish data sharing partnerships and identify concrete use cases”* — **Gerard van der Hoeven**, iSHARE Foundation’s Director.

The proposed building blocks are in line with recommendations from the European Commission's [Connecting Europe Facility \(CEF\) program](#), a pillar instrument materializing the Digital Single Market by means of creating cross-border Digital Service Infrastructures that enable the flourishing of innovative digital services across all the EU member states. The mentioned compatibility is achieved thanks to FIWARE Context Broker technology already being a [CEF Building Block](#). Additionally, the iSHARE scheme is also compatible with [eIDAS](#), the CEF Building Block that electronically identifies users from all across Europe. This will facilitate the integration with CEF Building Blocks, such as the [European Blockchain Service Infrastructure](#) (EBSI), in a later phase, enabling trusted digital audit trails, automated compliance checks and data integrity proofs.

A wider range of experts are fronting the initiative

The project execution phase benefits from a network of lean experts in data sharing, who have deep roots in the European Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH) Network. FIWARE Foundation is supporting the growth of innovation ecosystems with its global [FIWARE iHubs Network](#) and also contributes with in-depth expertise in FIWARE technology and CEF Building Blocks. At the same time, iSHARE Foundation adds in-depth knowledge and experience of operational, technical, legal and governance issues related to B2B data sharing. Much of this was accumulated during the research and development process related to the launch of iSHARE, a neutral trusted data sharing network originated by the Dutch government.

Finally, FundingBox provides the largest European deep tech ecosystem consisting of know-how, tools and networking opportunities to support the i4Trust initiative. Additionally, the company is a member of six DIHs and a partner of another 37 DIHs, all across Europe. The platform Fundingbox Spaces, in which the i4Trust community will gather virtually, is a dynamic and multi-way communication space that will allow members to contribute to i4Trust’s community of practise (CoP).



Incubator projects

i4Trust kicked off on October 20, 2020 and its value proposition will be demonstrated through 32 incubator projects involving at least 150 SMEs and 32 DIHs – across various regions and sectors in Europe – mobilising over 3,2 million of euros for funding. The selection process will take place in Q3/2021. The initiative will help them to understand the demand for data, establish data sharing partnerships and identify concrete use cases relying on trusted and effective sharing of data. Ultimately, SMEs and DIHs will be supported in adopting the user-friendly and proven technologies for data sharing based on CEF-compatible iSHARE and FIWARE Building Blocks, which cover all the operational, legal, technical and governance aspects related to data sharing. The initial phase of i4Trust is funded by the Horizon 2020 programme — the EU's nearly €80 billion research and innovation programme for 2014-2020 — will run for a period of 3 years and includes the creation of a sustainable community for the creation of such Data Spaces in Europe.

About FIWARE

FIWARE drives the definition and encourages the adoption of open standards — implemented using Open Source technologies — that ease the development of smart solutions across domains such as Smart Cities, Smart Energy, Smart AgriFood and Smart Industry, based on FIWARE technology. FIWARE Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation promotes the adoption of the FIWARE technology and has 370+ international members, including major industry players **Atos, Engineering Ingegneria Informatica, NEC, Red Hat, Telefónica, Trigyn Technologies**. For further information, visit fiware.org and follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Youtube](#).

About iSHARE

iSHARE is a uniform set of agreements or schemes that enables organisations to give each other access to their data. Since they all work with the same identification, authentication and authorisation methods, they do not need to keep making new agreements on these topics every time they want to share data. Together, the partners who participate in the iSHARE scheme create a 'network of trust', within which they can share data effortlessly. iSHARE is an initiative of the Dutch government's Logistics Top Sector, and has so far achieved high international recognition and uptake.

About FundingBox

FundingBox supports entrepreneurs at every stage of their growth journey with adapted public and private funding opportunities. Besides, FundingBox helps corporates and VCs to find the perfect startup and scale-up match so that they can boost their innovation processes and maximise their return on investment. And since it is not just about the amount of money but also how it is invested that makes a difference, the deep tech communities that are present in the FundingBox platform benefit from over 30,000 funding stakeholders, who share experiences and knowledge and thus trigger exponential growth. More information at www.fundingbox.com.

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