

LAPPEENRANTA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Faculty of Technology

**The First and Second EU-Russia Innovation Forum
Highlighting the Results**

M.Sc. (Tech.) Dmitry Andreev

2012


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Highlighting the Results**

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Appendices

1. INTRODUCTION

This report examines the results of the first and second EU-Russia Innovation Forum. It contains data related to the collection of information from forum participants with a questionnaire and an analysis of the data.

The first EU–Russia Innovation Forum was held on 25–27 May 2010 in Lappeenranta, Finland, with the strong support of the Prime Minister of Finland and key innovation policy makers and stakeholders. The Forum was the first high level innovation event between the EU and Russia.

The second high level innovation forum between the EU and Russia was held on 25 and 26 May 2011 in Lappeenranta, Finland. The event was organized by the City of Lappeenranta in cooperation with Lappeenranta University of Technology (LUT).

The purpose of this survey is to investigate the relevance of the first and second EU-Russia Innovation Forum for European and Russian companies, understand what the most important benefits were for the forums participants and examine the outcomes and other results. This survey might help to enhance understanding of business needs and expectations with regard to future EU-Russia Innovation Forums, but also to support the design and organization of other ambitious events for business-oriented interaction and match-making between Russian and Finnish/European entrepreneurs, facilitators and policy-makers.

2. SURVEY STRUCTURE

2.1 Goals of the survey

The goals of the study on the first and second EU-Russia Innovation Forum are to highlight the results or benefits of the forums for Russian and European companies. This report might help to understand what could be improved for the future EU-Russia Innovation Forums.

2.2 Structure

The survey consists of three parts:

1. The creation of the questionnaire in English and Russian, a list of respondent companies and the cover letter (1 February 2012-29 February 2012).
2. Sending the questionnaire via Webropol 2.0 and collecting the responses (1 March 2012-30 March 2012).
3. Analysis of the responses received and writing the report (1 April 2012–30 April 2012)

The questionnaire was sent in two languages, English and Russian, to European and Russian companies. An exact copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1. Webropol 2.0 survey software was used for the survey.

3. SURVEY ANALYSIS

The questionnaire used for the purpose of this survey is presented in Appendix 1.

3.1 Participants

The questionnaire was sent to 1 300 European and Russian participants. From this amount of participants, only 40 responses were received. It is important to note that the majority of participants came from Europe and more particularly from Finland (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2). Due to long period of time that has elapsed since the first and second EU-Russia Innovation Forum were held, some companies refused to answer the questionnaire and other participants just ignored it. The share of countries which took part in the first and second EU-Russia Innovation Forum can be seen in Figures 3.1 and 3.2.

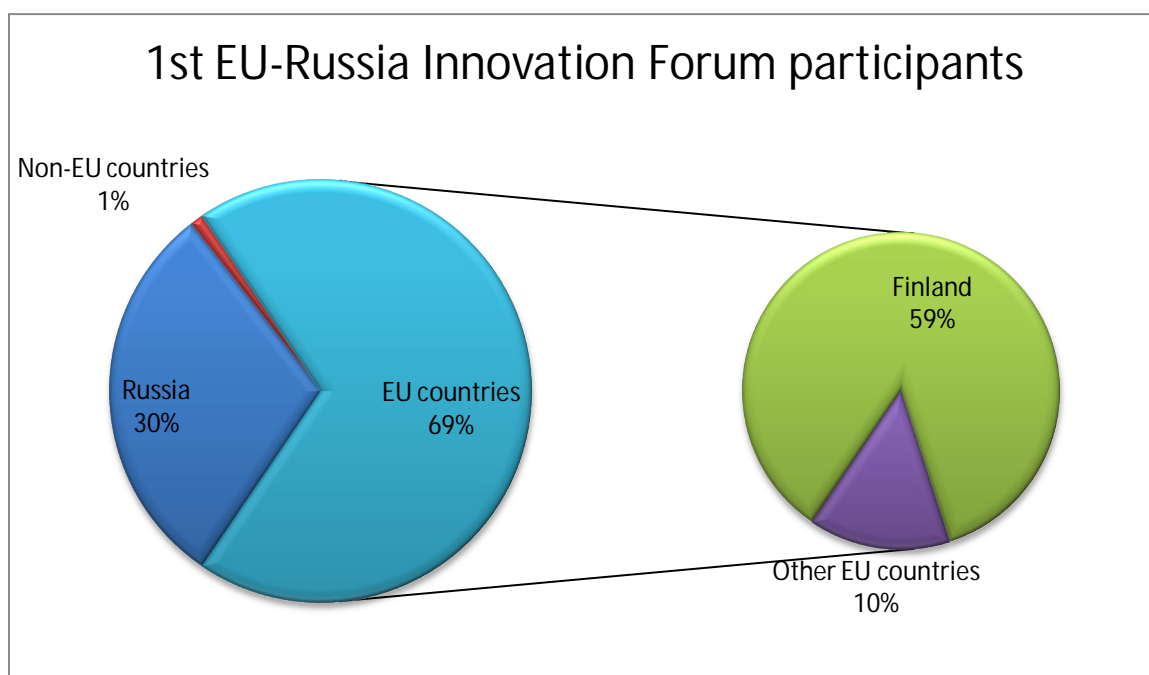


Figure 3.1. Share of participants according to their county (1st EU-Russia Innovation Forum).

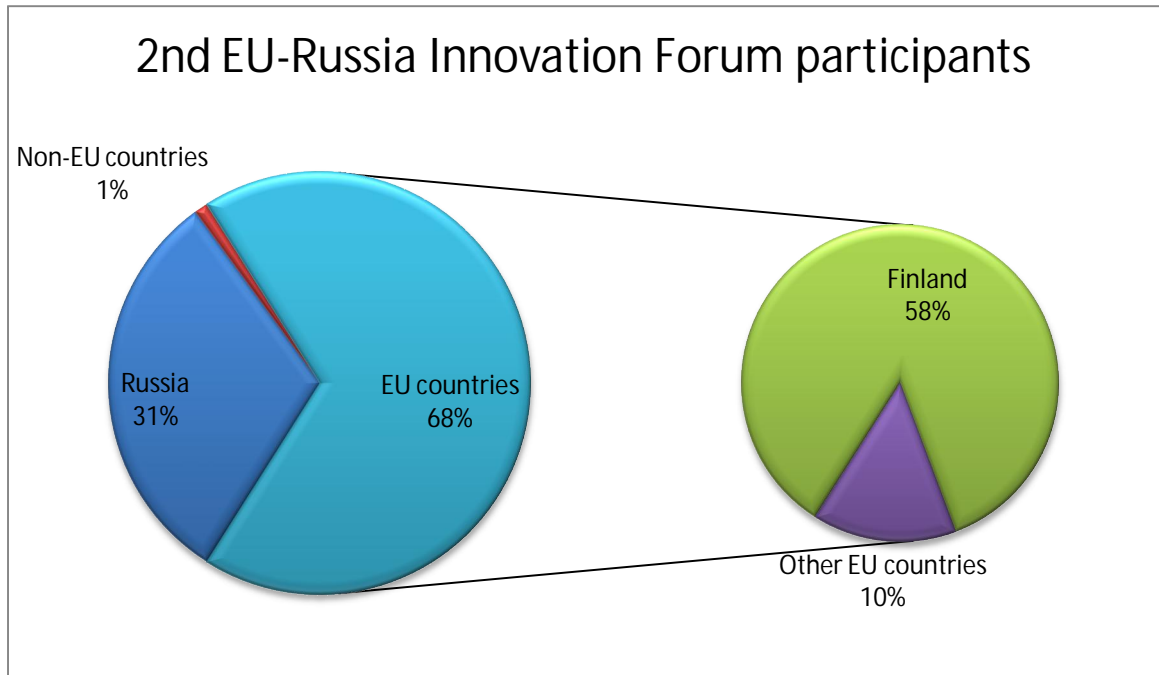


Figure 3.2 Share of participants according to their county (2nd EU-Russia Innovation Forum).

As we can see from Figures 3.1 and 3.2, the share of Russian and Finnish participants is nearly the same in both events: 30% and 69%, respectively, for the first EU-Russia Innovation Forum, and 31% and 68%, respectively, for the second EU-Russia Innovation Forum. However, the total attendance of the second EU-Russia Innovation Forum is higher and amounts to 710 participants (the first EU-Russia Innovation Forum had 550 participants).

A total of 40 responses were received to the 1300 questionnaires sent (20 from European and 20 from Russian companies). The number of responses is low, probably due to the delay of the investigation (project); almost two years had passed since the first EU-Russia Innovation Forum, and one year since the second EU-Russia Innovation Forum.

3.2 Gained data

In this section, the answers to the questionnaire will be analyzed. The answers are divided into categories, which are listed below.

Company expectations

Perhaps the most important survey question in the analysis of the first and second EU-Russia Innovation Forum is the question as to what are companies' perceptions of the extent to which their expectations are met. The results are divided into two categories: European and Russian companies. Companies' expectations and how they were met are shown in Figure 3.3 for European companies and in Figure 3.4 for Russian ones.

According to the responses, the most common goal of the companies was searching for new contacts for business or finding new clients or investors.

The most interesting responses are (direct quotes, grammar not corrected):

“To meet representatives of small and middle sized enterprises, particularly those whose aim is to export products from Finland to Russia. The expectations were somehow met in the first forum, however, in the second SME's were in practice absent. Furthermore, one reason may be that the preconferences in the second forum were complete failure.” - Finnish industrial representative

“To get new contacts expectation met 7 out of 10 - to find information about newest trends and programs in innovation cooperation between EU and Russia expectation met 6 out of 10 - to promote own services and receive new clients for FDI services expectation met 4 out of 10 - to learn about the event and see how it organised expectation met 8 out of 10.” - Finnish industrial representative

“I succeeded to receive new contacts with Finnish companies. But Eu-Russian Innovation Forum is very whimsical name. In fact it was Finnish-Russian Forum. I didn't find any other contacts among European countries except Finland.” - Russian industrial representative

“My company was satisfied by the Eu-Russian Innovation Forum. We wanted to receive new, modern partners for further cooperation. Additionally to that it was a good opportunity to improve positions on the market.” - Russian industrial representative

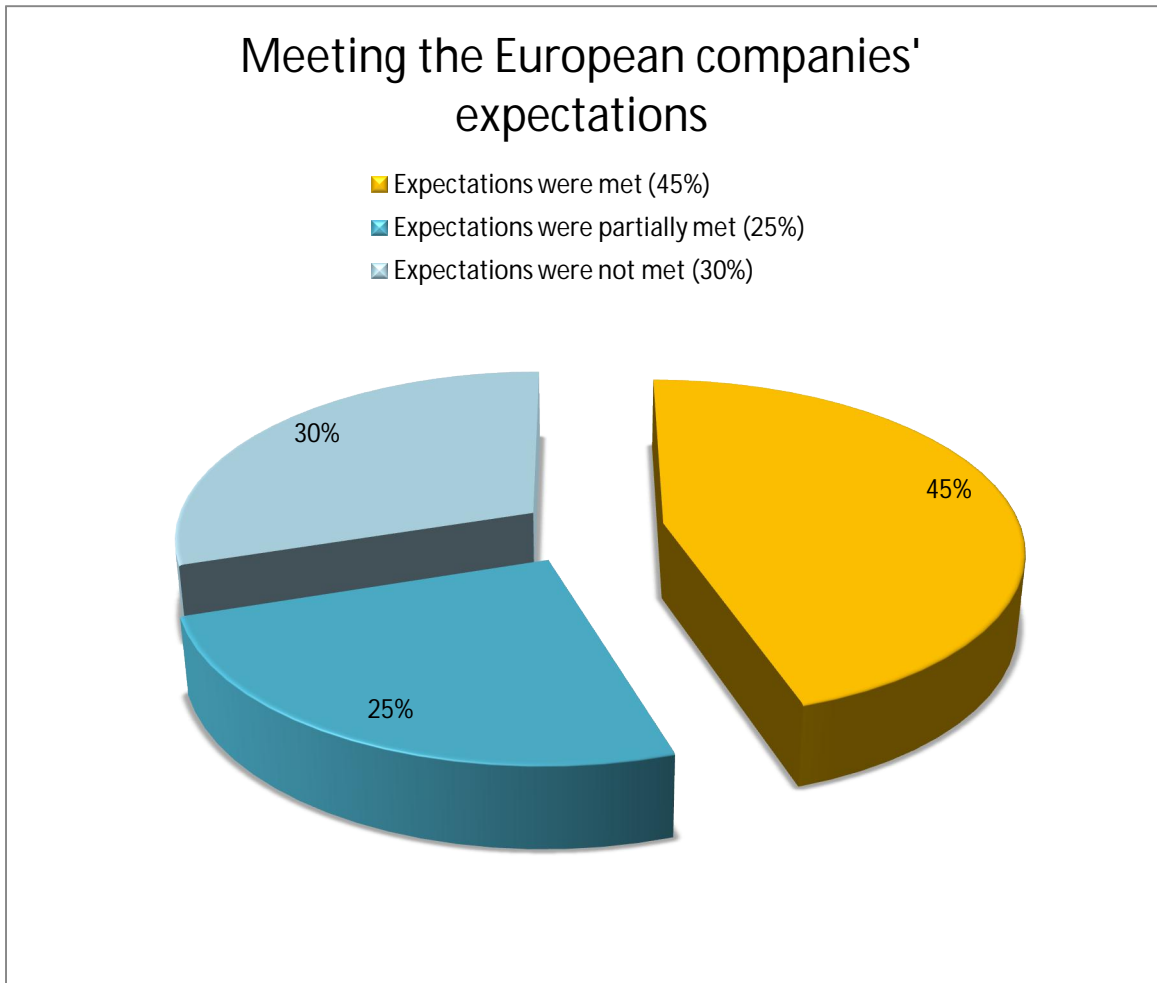


Figure 3.3. Meeting the European companies' expectations.

As can be seen from Figure 3.3, the expectations of much more than half (70%) of the European companies were met either fully or partially. These are the combined results for the first and second EU-Russia Innovation Forum. In order to compare the expectations regarding both EU-Russia Innovation Forums, the last two questions from the questionnaire are examined. According to this information, overall score for the meeting of expectations is 3.64 (out of 5.00) for the first EU-Russia Innovation Forum and 3.05 (out of 5.00) for the second. Thus, it can be seen that satisfaction with the first EU-Russia Innovation Forum is higher among respondents.

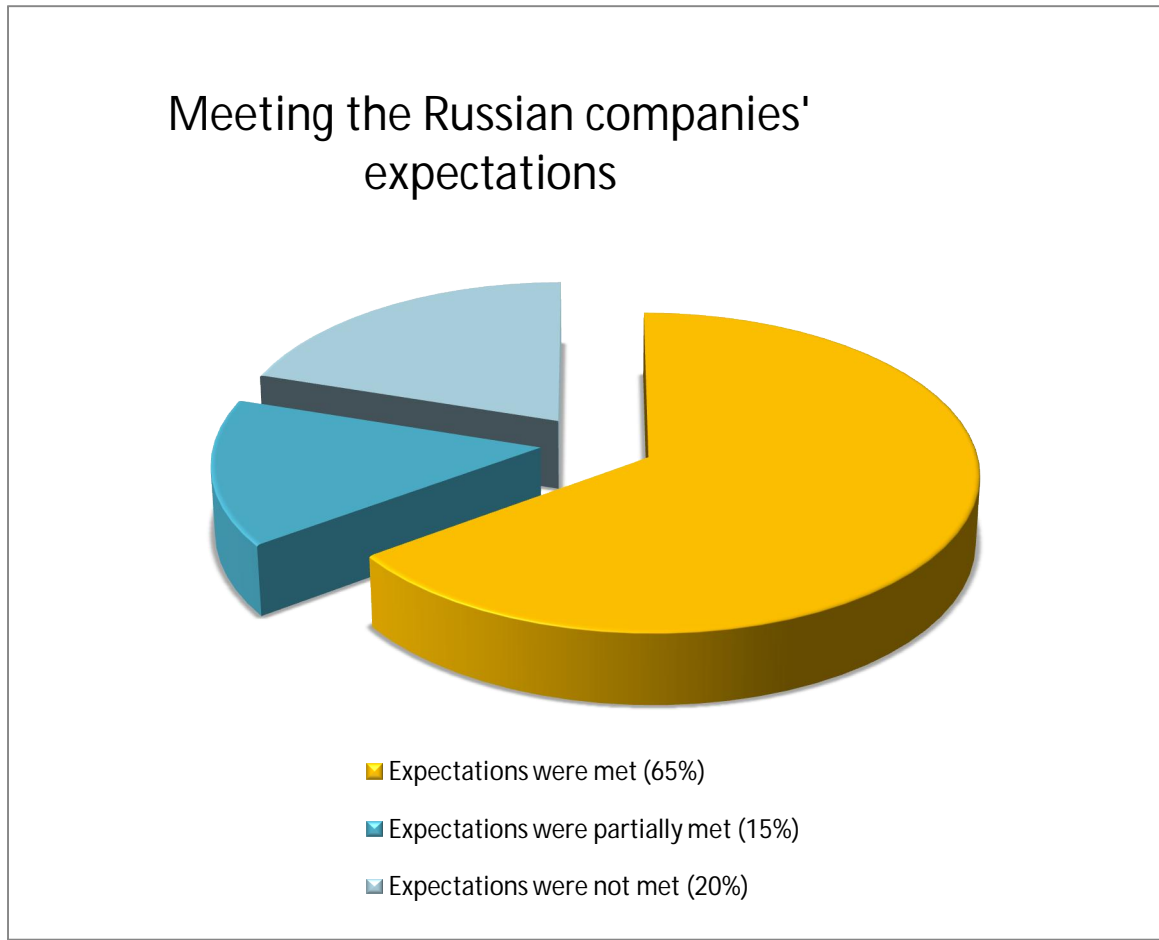


Figure 3.4. Meeting the Russian companies' expectations.

For the majority (80%) of the Russian companies, expectations were met either fully or partially, as can be concluded from Figure 3.4, which represents the combined result for the first and second EU-Russia Innovation Forum. To compare the data on expectations regarding both EU-Russia Innovation Forums, last two questions from the questionnaire are examined. According to this information, the overall score for the meeting of expectations is 3.43 (out of 5.00) for the first EU-Russia Innovation Forum and 3.67 (out of 5.00) for the second. Thus, it can be seen that satisfaction with the second EU-Russia Innovation Forum is higher among respondents.

According to the survey results, Russian companies were more satisfied with the second EU-Russia Innovation Forum, and European companies more satisfied with the first one.

New projects or cooperation (outcomes) between European and Russian companies

One of the next main assessment categories of the EU-Russia Innovation Forum is the launch of the new international projects between European and Russian forum participants. The responses from European and Russian companies are illustrated in Figures 3.5 and 3.6 and divided into three categories:

- 1) cooperation started (companies found partners for joint projects or received new customers or suppliers);
- 2) no cooperation at all;
- 3) cooperation is planned or delayed.

In this report, cooperation means any type of work performed between two different companies from different countries. Some companies which attended the forums have different targets, but most of them wanted to find suppliers, customers, partners or just to receive some useful contacts. Thus, the word cooperation covers all aspects of interaction between companies.

As both EU-Russia Innovation Forums and company attendance in them were studied, it was difficult to divide and classify the results according to the cooperation started (some companies attended both forums, whereas others only the first or second).

The most interesting responses are (direct quotes, grammar not corrected):

“Yes, those mentioned startup companies. Also Kulikov Innovation.” - Finnish industrial representative

“Some existing ideas has been developed.” - Finnish industrial representative

“Line of projects are on the development stage.” - Russian industrial representative

“Contract was discussed and signed later.” - Russian industrial representative

“No, we have our permanent engineering. Our Focus is mainly to find contact to Russia.” - Finnish industrial representative

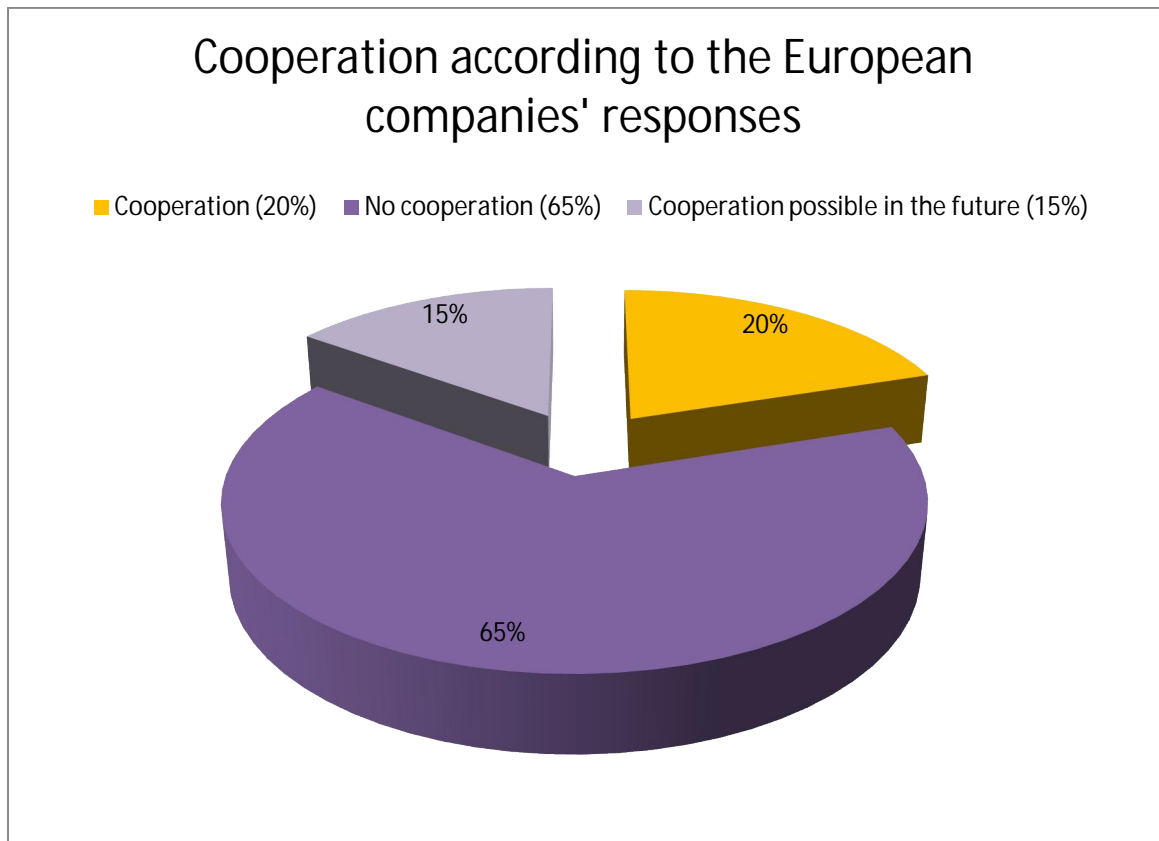


Figure 3.5. Cooperation of European and Russian companies after the first and second EU-Russia Innovation Forum. Share of projects started (cooperation).

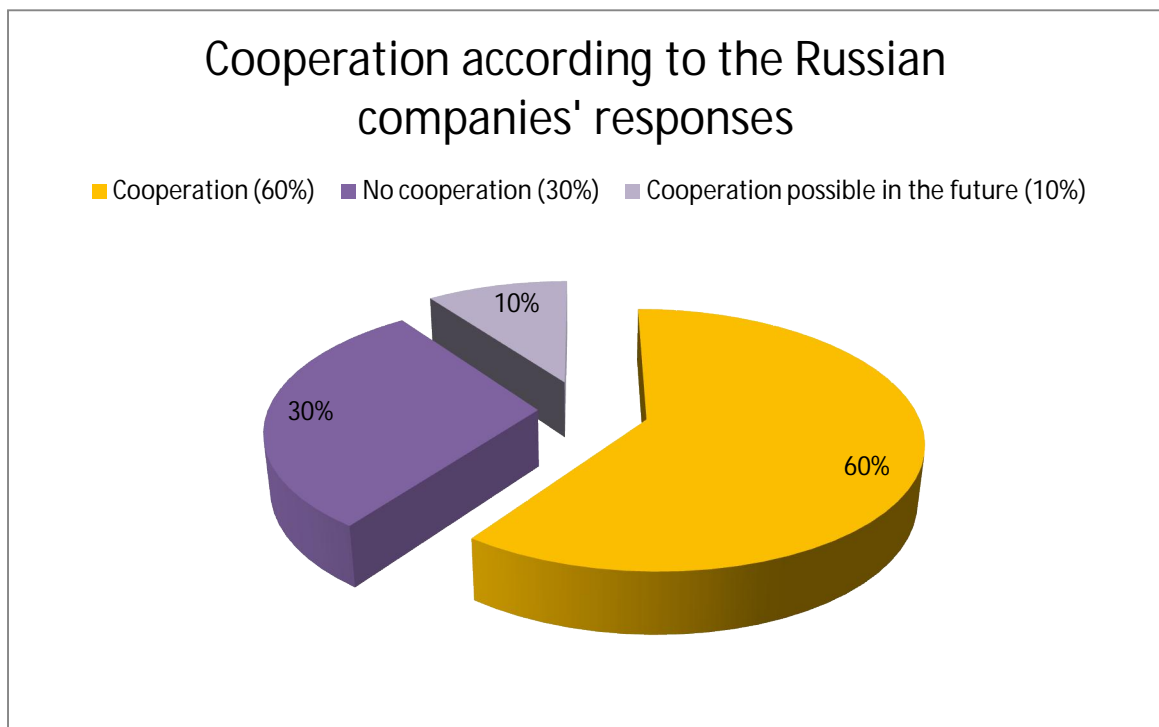


Figure 3.6. Cooperation of European and Russian companies after the first and second EU-Russia Innovation Forum. Share of projects started (cooperation).

As can be seen from Figures 3.5 and 3.6., a total 20% of the European respondent companies claimed to have started cooperation (projects) with Russia. In contrast, 60% of the Russian respondent companies stated that they had started cooperation (projects) with Europe (mostly with Finland). The low percentage of projects started from the European side may be caused by the fact that the number of Russian companies was half the number of European companies.

3.3 Assessment of the first and second EU-Russia Innovation Forum by European and Russian companies

An overall assessment of the first and second EU-Russia Innovation Forum was obtained with questions number 11 and 12, and the result is showed in Figure 3.7 for the first EU-Russia Innovation Forum and in Figure 3.8 for the second.

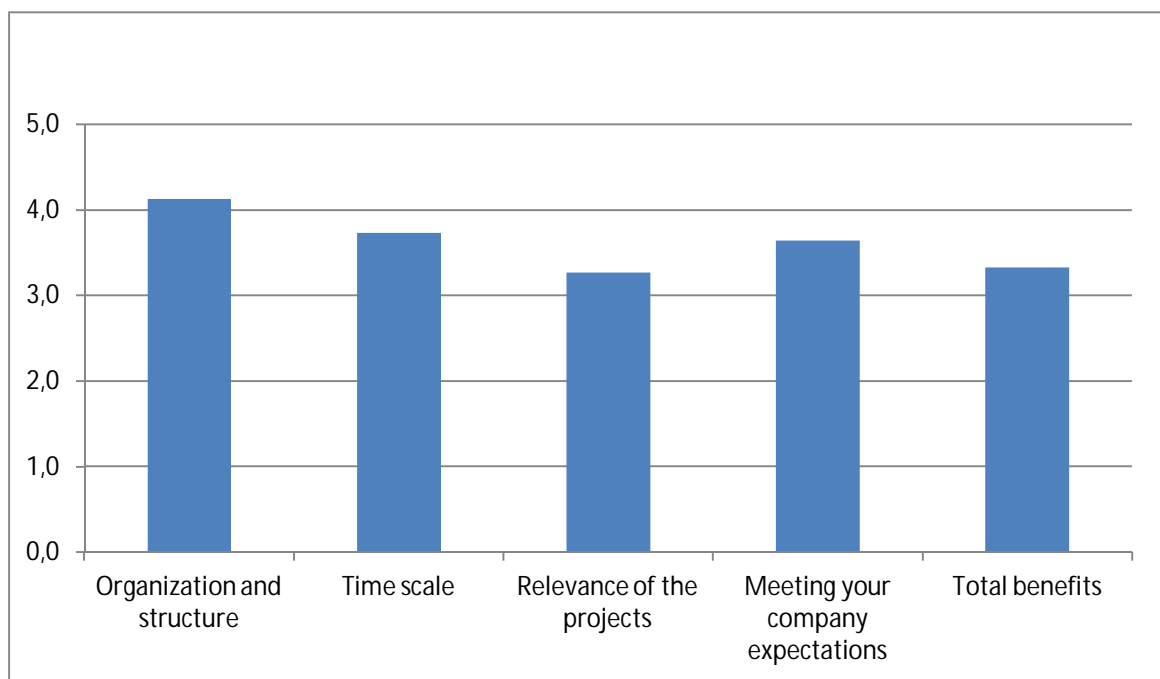


Figure 3.7. Assessment of the first EU-Russia Innovation Forum by European companies.

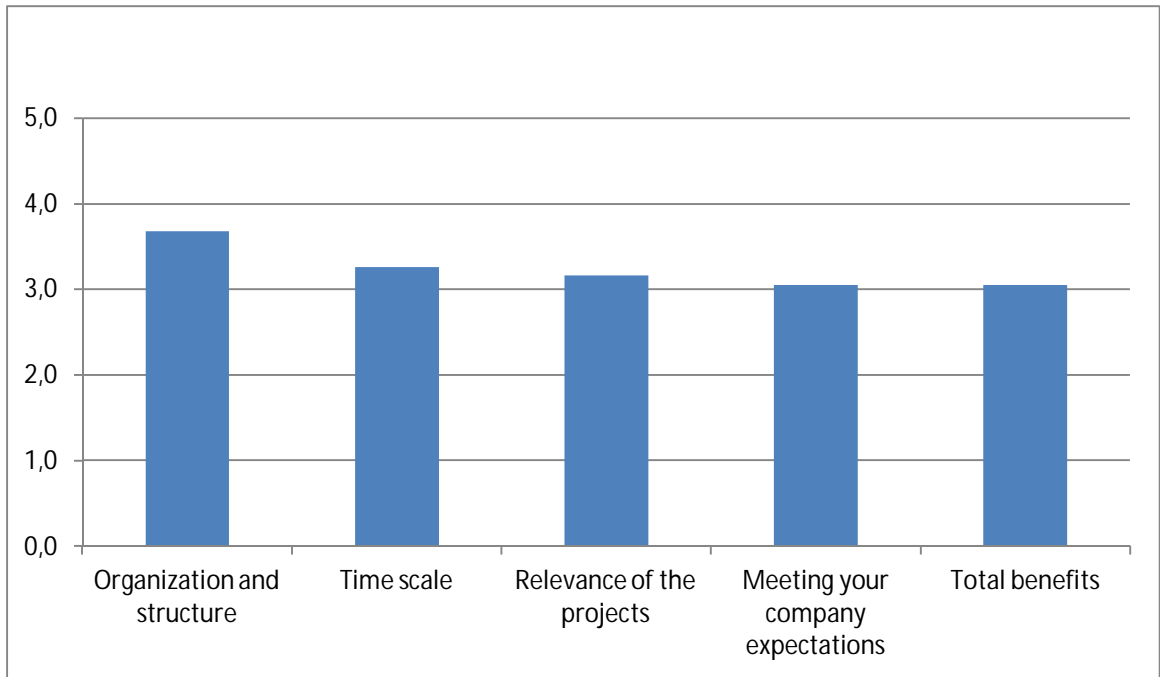


Figure 3.8. Assessment of the second EU-Russia Innovation Forum by European companies.

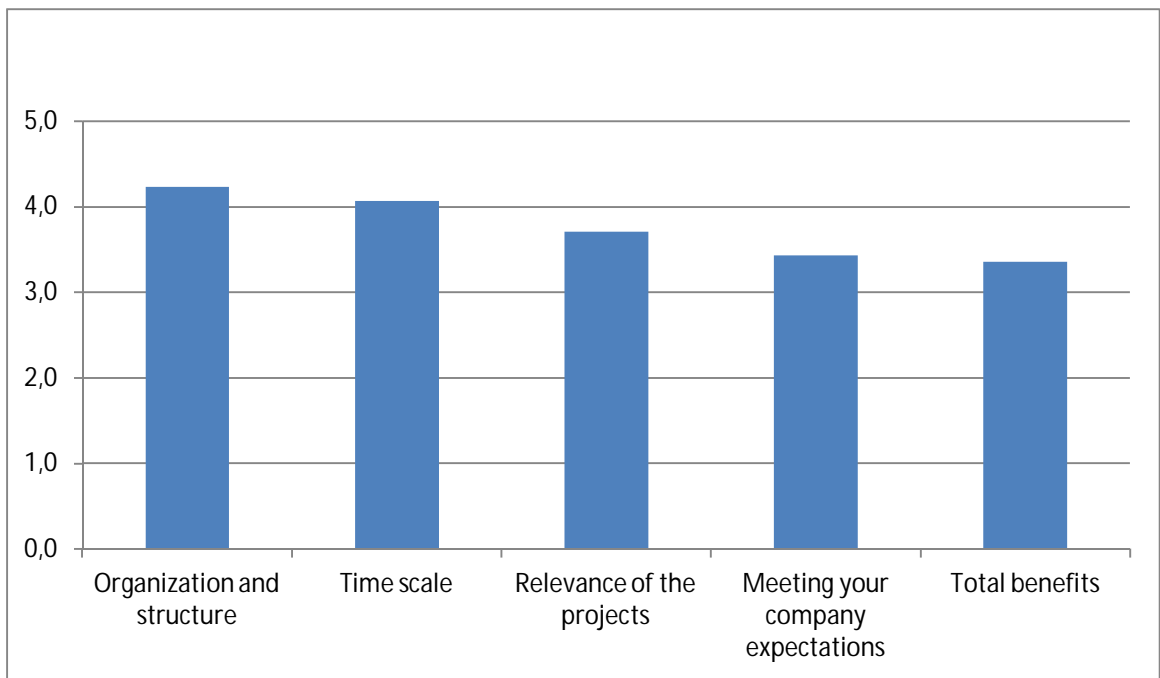


Figure 3.9. Assessment of the first EU-Russia Innovation Forum by Russian companies.

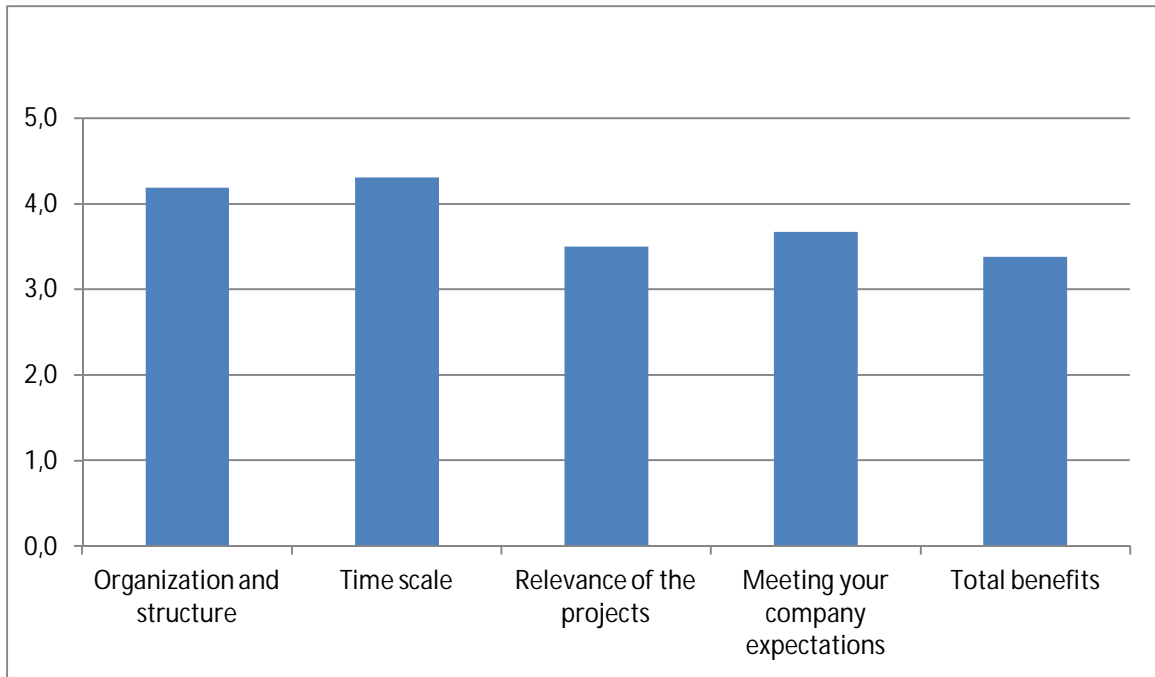


Figure 3.10. Assessment of the second EU-Russia Innovation Forum by Russian companies.

A total of 13 companies responded to questions regarding the first EU-Russia Innovation Forum, and 16 gave responses regarding the second one.

As can be seen from Figures 3.7–3.8 for European companies, the second EU-Russia Innovation Forum was not as effective as the first forum. The scores were lower for all of the categories: organization and structure, time scale, relevance of the projects, meeting company expectations and total benefits.

On the other hand, the Russian companies considered the second EU-Russia Innovation Forum more effective, which can be seen from Figures 3.9–3.10. Contrary to European companies, the Russians give higher scores to the same categories – organization and structure, time scale, relevance of the projects, meeting company expectations and total benefits.

3.4 Analysis of the results and ways to improve the third EU-Russia Innovation Forum

According to the data based on the 40 responses from European and Russian companies, the European companies were not as satisfied with the forums as the Russian companies. However, there are a number of projects which started after participating in the first and second EU-Russia Innovation Forum, and new projects are still being planned. Thus, according to the respondents, the forums had a favorable outcome for the companies.

However, this survey is not as reliable as it could have been with more respondents. Moreover, the time scale of the survey is not perfect: two years have already passed since the first EU-Russia Innovation Forum was held in Lappeenranta, and some companies may have forgotten details regarding the events or contact information may have changed.

The most frequently voiced criticism by the Finnish and Russian companies was that they wanted to see more international companies, not only Finnish and Russian ones.

The respondents also suggested other ways to improve the forum:

- Shorter and less parallel sessions;
- More Western (EU-based) innovations;
- The sponsor reward was quite low. Better pre-conference events and other events that would attract SME's;
- More targeted matchmaking – smarter planning of the physical location and time in the program;
- Fewer political innovation-related speeches. More concrete examples of the cooperation. The matchmaking event should be held also during future EU–Russia Innovation Forums;
- The program should address a certain business area more specifically;
- A special banquet for companies could promote interest in the event in the future;
- More attention should be focused on the speaker selection.

4. Conclusion

Unfortunately, the response rate was low and only 40 answers to the questionnaire were received. However, it was enough to examine the forum's outcomes in outline.

Enhanced cooperation between the EU and Russian companies was achieved after participating on the first and second EU-Russia Innovation Forum. The Innovation Forums were the most advantageous for small and medium-sized companies; some of them received useful contacts and found new partners or realized what they need to do to enter the international market. Thus the first and second EU-Russian Innovation Forum have been very important development instruments for EU and Russian companies aiming for expansion and international cooperation. However, it is important for companies to define their own targets with regard to the Forum.

According to the participants' responses, certain improvements could be made in future EU Russian Innovation Forums, as described in section 3.4.

Based on the data collected, it could be claimed that the first and second EU-Russian Innovation Forum were successful, but that some points require further improvement. The greatest opportunity to improve the event is to invite more EU countries to future EU-Russia Innovation Forums because many companies did not find useful contacts, excluding those who were searching for contacts with Finnish companies.

Almost all respondents gave a mid-range score for the forum's organization, which can also be considered as a successful point.

Appendix 1.

Questions on the I and II EU Innovation Forum:

1. Please specify your company/organization and your position.
2. What expectations did your company have of the first and/or second EU-Russia Innovation Forum? Were the expectations met?
3. Did your company achieve the expected goals? Which of them were achieved?
4. What were the results your company gained after taking part in the EU-Russia Innovation Forum?
5. Have any new projects been started in your company as a result of the first and/or second EU-Russia Innovation Forum?
6. Did your company establish any useful contacts after participating in the first and/or second EU-Russia Innovation Forum?
7. Has your company used those contacts? How?
8. If yes, has this cooperation led to positive outcomes?
9. What other beneficial outcomes did your company gain from participating in the first and/or second EU-Russia Innovation Forum, if any?
10. What could be improved for the third EU-Russia Innovation Forum?
11. Please assess the following characteristics related to the first EU-Russia Innovation Forum. (From "1" to "5": "1" is the lowest rating/ "5" is the highest rating.)
12. Please assess the following characteristics related to the second EU-Russia Innovation Forum. (From "1" to "5": "1" is the lowest rating/ "5" is the highest rating.)

	1	2	3	4	5
Organization and structure					
Time scale					
Relevance of the projects					
Meeting your company's expectations					
Total benefits					
Overall score					