



## HOW TO DETECT THE TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION NEEDS OF THE SOCIAL PROFIT SECTOR

**FLANDERS Context – Cera Award case**

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## 1. FLANDERS Context – Cera Award case

Cera Award is Flemish program that stimulates technological innovation in the social profit sector. It is a joint program of the cooperative Cera and RVO-Society. RVO-Society coordinates the program, Cera is the programs main sponsor. The mission of the Cera Award program is to stimulate technological innovation in social profit. See also Annex 1: General Info fiche Cera Award

Cera Award is as mediator/facilitator between schools (students) and social profit organizations. We bring these two together from an educational and societal perspective. Both can help each other in fulfilling their needs in the light of technological innovation.

### 1.1 Main goals of the Cera Award program:

- To learn students to be more communicative and social in a job with societal relevance. To make them aware of the growing need of their technological profiles in the social-profit sector and the difference they can make there for helping people.
- To help the social profit sector with taking steps towards technological innovation. Social profit organizations can offer projects for the students to work on: this is always about a technological problem they encounter and cannot solve yet. With a student working on a project, first steps are taken towards a solution. Next to this social profit organizations become more aware about the advantages of technological possibilities.

So what do we do?

- ⇒ Ask social profit organizations to create project offers of real technological needs they have at the moment
- ⇒ After evaluation promote these projects with the schools and students of technological courses

How can we convince social profit organizations to participate?

- ⇒ Often there is no budget to hire someone to solve their innovative needs: a student will work for free on this.

Do we create a leverage for innovation?

- ⇒ Cera Award doesn't promise a solution but first steps towards a solution will at least be taken. In the best case scenario there will be a final solution achieved as project result.
- ⇒ Making organizations aware of the advantage of technological innovation can also implicitly create budget by making organizations choosing their priorities differently.

## 2. Cera Award recurring steps

There are different recurring steps in the general organization of CERA Award:



1. Call for proposals of the social profit sector
2. Evaluation of proposals to universities/high-schools/students
3. Promotion of proposals to universities/high-schools/students
4. Elaboration
5. Jury
6. Organization Cera Award and Senior Cera Award online election
7. Award ceremony and event

**In this train the trainer we will focus on the call for proposals, and some aspects of the evaluation, elaboration, jury, online elections and event**

### **2.1 Call for proposals : the keywords are partnerships and low-treshold**

Cera Award launches twice a year (October and March) a call for proposals from social profit organizations. This call is published on all communication channels of the Cera Award program and its main partners. In the communication we focus on See annex for an example Social profit organizations are requested to enter their project proposal in the Cera Award website.

#### **Communication channels**

We try to gain attention for the call through different means/channels:

- Cera Award own communication channels:
  - CERA Award website <http://www.Cera-award.be>
  - CERA Award newsletter
  - Social media: Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/CeraAward>
    - => Publishing of successful innovative projects on CERA Award website/Facebook.
      - o Events and networking: contacts in social profit sector/local government/... (see also our own event)
      - o Visiting with social profit organizations
      - o Mailing list: we keep as much as possible relevant email addresses so we can use them for further mailings. It's possible that a NO can become a YES a year later.
- Communication channels of RVO-society
- Communication channels of our partner Cera (website, facebook, magazine, newsletter,...)
- And last but certainly not least: the communication channels of our partners in the social profit sector (website, facebook, magazine, newsletter,...)



### ***Timing and frequency***

Cera Award launches twice a year (start of September and March) a call for proposals from social profit organizations. We've experimented with the number of calls: in the past it has been a yearly call only as well as three calls a year. We feel that twice a year works best as well as to draw attention to the call, as to promote them to schools and students. Projects entered in September can potentially be chosen by students/schools that year for short student projects, projects entered march will typically be chosen by students/schools to start the next academic year.

The project call in September is also announced at the Cera Award event and award ceremony (typically end of September) and mentioned in the press releases of the successful projects that obtained an award. A successful project is often the best publicity. See also Award ceremony and event.

The concept of CERA Award is also becoming more known in general. An important intermediary is the media. If you can get news - in for example magazines - about accomplished projects this creates positive publicity enhancing future interest from organizations and students.

### ***Low threshold: our website is our most important tool!***

Social profit organizations are requested to enter their project in our database via our website. We aim at making this as easy as possible:

- Easy accessible to input proposals without too many formal requirements.
- Organizations can use the website to present their projects without the hassle of putting together a complicated project file.
- We only ask for a description of the project with template kiss: the need they have, the problem they encounter, framework. They can choose quite freely to input information.

We believe that the low threshold for entering projects is one of the key success factors of the Cera Award program.

### ***Criteria for our projects***

On our website and the dedicated webpage for social profit organizations we describe the criteria for a Cera Award project as follows ([Cera-award.be/organisatie](http://Cera-award.be/organisatie))

“These are our **criteria**:

1. Are you a social profit organization?
2. You are a non-profit organization (= *Belgian legal structure, in our case a requirement*)
3. You do not have the people or means to find a solution to your technical-scientific question.

If you answered yes three times you can enter a project.



But not any **project**...

Cera Award accepts only

1. Technological questions,
2. Flemish and Brussels area projects,
3. That are/can be a leverage for technological innovation,
4. Where students can develop creative, social and communicative skills
5. By getting to know the target group of your organization, or the social profit sector in general and your organization specifically

Five times yes? You can enter your project!”

### *The essential role of partnerships in the social profit sector*

The partners we work with play an important and necessary role in making CERA Award a success. Partners offer resources, connections and knowledge which will help from the start to have a strong foundation to build upon. Representative organizations as a partner will reach your target audience in ways you cannot through events, website, communications they can send out. Their connections are invaluable.

Cera Award is a joint program from RVO-Society and Cera. Both our organizations complement each other in this program. RVO-Society, as an educational organization based at Imec, a leading nano-electronics research center, has strong contacts and experience in education and technology. Cera as a cooperative investing in social projects has large network in the social profit sector.

The next essential partner in Cera Award is [Verso](#), the flemish umbrella organization for employers in social profit. We also work together with other major umbrella organizations in care and wellbeing in Flanders.

- Vlaams Welzijnsverbond <http://www.vlaamswelzijnsverbond.be/>
- Zorgnet Vlaanderen <http://www.zorgnetvlaanderen.be/>

**We highly recommended you to find similar umbrella organizations in social profit in your country as a partner.** Representative organizations as a partner will reach your target audience in ways you cannot through events, website, communications they can send out. Their connections are invaluable. There are multiple win-wins possible, visibility, working together in projects, ...you will deliver a service for their members (technological innovations).



We involve our partners in the social profit sector at different stages in our program to create commitment:

- They communicate the call for projects through their communication channels
- They communicate as well about other events in the scope of Cera Award the results, the online elections for organisation award and senior award, ...
- They participate in the Cera Award advisory board
- Partners are represented in the jury that evaluates which students will obtain an award.
- The yearly Cera Award event (award ceremony) is often a collaboration/shared event with partners. As an example a reference to the organization of the event in 2011 with as title "how technology takes care of us"

<http://www.zorginnovatie.be/?action=nieuwsdetail&nieuws=71&titel=Hoe+techniek+voor+ons+zorgt!+-+4+oktober+2011>

### **A word on the Cera Award advisory board**

The Cera Award advisory board comes together once a year to give advice on how the program should evolve in the future. It contains members of educational institutions, representatives of ex-students, and, representatives of (umbrella organizations of) social profit organizations: one member of Verso and two members of two different social profit organizations. These two organizations represent different social profit subjects (in our case elderly care and care for people with disabilities) and are geographically separate. One of the organizations that is represented in our advisory board is Dienstencentrum GIDTS <http://www.gidts.be/> which is one of the largest institutions in the field of care for people with disabilities in Belgium: they combine support on different domains of wellbeing, education and work. They have a school for children with special needs and disabilities, a supervised workplace, a workplace where they adjust tools and devices. They can make aids. They have support for a range of disabilities, going from minor to severe. With such a broad range of domains and target groups they have an umbrella perspective. Dienstencentrum GidTS and its associate services propose each year a number of projects.

### **2.2 Evaluation of proposals**

Each proposal for a project needs to be evaluated, before we publish it on our website and make it accessible to students and promoters. The project needs to be relevant enough to the educational purpose as well to the societal purpose. RVO-Society does a first screening ('is this a social profit organization, is this 'innovative', have we perhaps seen this request before,...) If necessary we group similar project proposals. If good solutions exist to our knowledge we will direct the organization towards these available solutions.



A more indepth evaluation is done by evaluators who will answer questions as 'for which students is this project suited'. Our template evaluation document can be found in Annex 4. Evaluators are in general staff and professors at universities. We try to find relevant people who are willing to evaluate voluntarily.

### **2.3 Promotion to universities/high-schools/students**

Promotion of the available projects to different universities and high schools is an important aspect of our job. As for all other steps, our website is crucial here: we have a growing number of students and professors/teachers that use our database as a resource for projects of their interest. However intensive promotion to the different educational institutions is still necessary. We aim at proposing those projects that have a link to the (research) focus of to the university/research group/ high-school. We do this mainly by visiting and mailing specific project proposals to our network.

### **2.4 Elaboration**

When the student and the organization agree on working together on a project we as RVO society play a minor role. We follow up the evolution but mostly things are out of our hands. The student and the organization they work with make arrangements and continue from there by themselves.

### **2.5 Jury**

At the end of each project there will be an evaluation. A Cera Award partner (usually an associate of Cera) will visit with the organization to report on the collaboration between the student and the social profit organisation, with special focus on the interaction, the communicative, social and creative skills of the students. The student on the other hand makes a reflection on his accomplishments in which he/she elaborates especially the part of social and communicative participation necessary for successfully finalizing his project. Based on the students reflection and the report from the visit students that have realized successful collaborations are invited for the Cera Award Jury where they will present, together with the social profit organization, their collaboration. Cera Award does not judge the technological qualities of the obtained result, that is done by the school. Students who can convince the jury of their communicative, social and creative skills and the positive collaboration with the social profit organisation will be rewarded with a Cera Award. As explained in the section on partnerships jury members come from partner organizations.



## 2.6 Creating visibility: Organization Cera Award and Senior Cera Award online election

Visibility of our program is essential in creating awareness for the huge potential of technological innovation in social profit as well in the social profit sector itself as out of it.

Cera Award organizes also a yearly online election for the Organization Cera Award and Senior Cera Award.

### *Organization Cera Award*

The Organization Cera Award is an award for a social profit organization that is an excellent example on technological innovation for the sector. The nominees are nominated by the main partners (Cera, RVO-Society and Verso). An online election form on our website lists the nominees with a brief description their mission, and their technologically innovating Cera Award projects.

<http://www.cera-award.be/genomineerden/organisatie>

A media campaign (mailings, websites, newsletters) creates visibility to this election, but the organizations and their staffing will in general request their entire network to vote for them, generating even more attention for technological innovation. The winner (and their Cera Award projects) often receive quite some media attention.

The timing of this online election is just before the event with the award ceremony and just before the open call for proposals.

The award for the winner is an award plate for their front door.

### *Senior Cera Award*

At the same moment we organize also an online election for Senior Cera Award, for (master in) engineering professionals who incorporated community service in their careers. These professionals serve as a role model to our students and show that science and engineering studies can focus on the care for people and society.

This election and the winner create in the same way media attention and awareness as the Organization Cera Award.

<http://www.cera-award.be/genomineerden/senior>



## 2.7 Award ceremony and event

The Cera Award program (co-)organizes a yearly event that focusses on technological innovation in social profit. The event serves as the award ceremony for the Cera Awards (the students), the Organization Award (for a social profit organization) and the Senior Cera Award.

The format is different each year but usually we have inspirational lectures or panel discussions on the theme of technological innovation in social profit.

The award event is the moment where all the stakeholders can gather together so it has importance for publicity, networking and therefore creating commitment.

At this event we will also launch the call for entering projects.

After this event we will launch press releases on all projects and organizations that obtained an award.

This event is another important moment for creating awareness for the topic of technological innovation in social profit. We believe that creating media attention for successful projects stimulates other organizations to enter projects as well.

Commitment of all stakeholders to the goals of our project CERA Award is key to success.

## 3. Value chain approach - things to consider

The Cera Award program has been successful in identifying social sector needs, and in stimulating students to take up such a project. However Cera Award projects remain student projects, the partners involved are schools and social profit organizations. As a result the (economic) valorization of the project is often missing. In these cases the organization is not really “helped”, sometimes even the contrary: they assigned staffing to work together with the students, but the result e.g. a prototype is not yet useful to them ...

You should consider whether you consider your educational mission your main objective or if “helping social profit organizations” is of equal importance.

At Cera Award we have decided that we want to realize multiple impact. Both for the students and the social profit organizations. We want to put more focus on the valorization of the projects. Cera Award therefore aims at partnerships with

- business schools
- entrepreneurs and their umbrella organizations

in order to organize support for project teams that would like to go to (economical) valorization.



Furthermore we will work on two themes, and try to identify projects where we will engage the entire value chain as early as the start of the project. We consider our traditional request for real needs within social profit still very important. But from 2014 onwards we will, besides our traditional way of working, work on “Ageing” and “Toys adapted for children with disabilities”. In 2014 we will, with a small number of partners, organize round table conferences on these themes in order to identify good projects with a serious plan on how we can valorize the results.

#### **4. Contributing to other programs**

RVO-Society is part of other programs that have a similar vision and mission and takes each available opportunity to raise awareness on the huge potential of technological innovation in social profit. RVO-Society is partner of the living care lab in elderly care in the Leuven region, [www.zorgproeftuinen.be](http://www.zorgproeftuinen.be), is partner in a student program bringing together students in health care and technology, contributes and speaks wherever invited (well almost) e.g. at the European project Health4Growth.

We believe that our involvement in all these projects helps creating awareness for technological innovation in social profit.

#### **5. Questions you might ask**

##### **1. Do we need a mediator like RVO-Society, can't we organize this ourselves at our university?**

Of course you can organize a call for proposals at your university. You probably have already an outreach service of some kind. If you have staffing, internet, a computer, a phone and a roof above your head, you can start.

However a mediator like RVO-Society that works for a larger region and is independent of a university does have benefits like:

- Nationally organized umbrella organizations consider us a real (national) partner
- Social profit organizations often tell us we are the entrance to schools/universities they do not have direct contacts with. And vice-versa. Students of a university in the east of Flanders will work for an organization in the west of the country.
- We probably see more project proposals than an individual university and try to keep track of evolutions and recurring requests

##### **2. What are the key succesfactors in identifying social profit needs?**

If you ask us, as you do, there are two: low treshold and partnerships:

- Don't make entering projects too difficult, limit the overhead for an organization.



- Make partnerships with organizations that have solid communication lines with your target audience

3. **Can we use your film/photo/...material?**

If you ask us first. We will probably request that you mention Cera Award when you make public use of material.



## **Annex 1: General Info fiche Cera Award**

### **general description**

Social profit and technology: two worlds that often are unfamiliar with each other. The social profit sector, as any sector, can benefit largely from technological innovations: if only they knew the possibilities in this high-speed technologically evolving world, if only they had more people with technological skills, if only they had the means. At the same time it is clear that engineers and masters in engineering can make an enormous difference in the quality of life for many people. But they usually don't know about the scientific and technological challenges in the social profit sector, or about the difference technology can make in social inclusion, healthcare and wellbeing... Cera Award builds bridges between those two worlds.

The Cera Award project brings together social profit organizations and engineering students to develop innovative solutions to technical problems. The social profit organizations are situated in Flanders in healthcare, wellbeing, socio cultural sector, performing arts, customized employment, education and social security. Cera Award has a network of about 1500 organizations which contribute to a wish list of desired technical innovations.

### **activities**

Twice a year Cera Award makes a call to the social profit sector for technological projects, questions or challenges that would solve a real concrete need in their organization and would be suitable as a project for a student in engineering or engineering sciences. After evaluation of the question Cera Award offers and promotes these projects as master theses, design projects, etc. for students in engineering and engineering sciences.

Cera Award shows to students that studying engineering sciences can lead to careers that focus on the care for people and society. The students are students in civil- and bio- and industrial engineering and all technical and scientific bachelor disciplines. Yearly an estimated number of 400 students are contacted with a proposal for their final work. On average 25 students will choose a Cera Award project.

A network of 200 promoters within academic institutions participate actively in Cera Award. In close collaboration they define, research, and develop technical prototypes that improve the quality, security, accessibility, durability and cost of service, for the benefit of all people.

### **results**

Cera Award runs in 2013-2014 for the fourteenth year in a row. It has been successful in calling out for projects, making real ideas visible and in creating leverage for technological innovation in social profit organizations. 150 ideas have been realized over the years and a new post-graduate course 'community service engineering' has been created. Each year on average 60 projects are submitted by the 400



students that have been contacted, 40 are accepted and 15 of these projects are executed. It is a proven and original concept that effectively creates a leverage for technological innovation in social profit on the one hand and on the other hand demonstrates to young people that engineering studies can lead to careers that focus on care for people and society.

## Annexe 2 – example of mass mail call for project proposals

### Dutch version



**Onderwerp:** “Daar moet toch iets op te vinden zijn...” - Dien jullie project in bij Cera Award voor 24/10

Wetenschap en technologie, het evolueert razendsnel. Er is zoveel mogelijk. Ook in de social profit kunnen technologische vernieuwingen een wereld van verschil maken. Denken jullie regelmatig: “Daar moet toch iets op te vinden zijn...” Zien jullie in jullie organisatie een technologische uitdaging, maar ontbreekt het jullie aan de juiste mensen?

Al twaalf jaar brengt Cera Award socialprofitorganisaties samen met studenten industrieel en burgerlijk ingenieur en technische bachelors. De studenten werken in het kader van hun eindwerk, ontwerpopdracht of stage aan innoverende projecten met een hart. De socialprofitorganisaties kunnen zo technologische vernieuwingen doorvoeren op hun maat. Voorbeelden van de talloze geslaagde samenwerkingen vind je onder [www.cera-award.be/innovaties](http://www.cera-award.be/innovaties).

### Geïnteresseerd?

Op de website [www.cera-award.be/organisatie](http://www.cera-award.be/organisatie) vind je de procedure en alle informatie om een project in te dienen. Indienen kan nog tot en met woensdag 24 oktober 2012.

### Vragen?

Aarzel dan niet om ons te contacteren!



Vriendelijke groeten,

## English version

**Mail subject:** There must be a solution for this... Enter your project with Cera Award

Science and technology, it evolves so fast. So much is possible. Also in the social profit sector technological innovations can make a huge difference. Do you often think “There must be a solution for this!” ? Do you see a technological challenge in your organization, but do you lack the right people to solve it?

Cera Award brings together social profit organizations and (master in) engineering students. The students work in the scope of their master thesis, final work, design assignment, or internship... at innovating projects with a heart. Social profit organization can thus innovate at their pace. Examples of successful collaborations can be found at [www.cera-award.be/innovaties](http://www.cera-award.be/innovaties).

### Interested?

On the website [www.cera-award.be/organisatie](http://www.cera-award.be/organisatie) you will find the procedure and all information to enter a project. You can enter a project until xxx

### Questions?

Don't hesitate to contact us!

Kind regards,

## Annexe 3 available video material for project calls

### The mystery man

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isbhMx3tn9A>

### Compilation video of Cera Award projects

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sg5\\_0PUgxgl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sg5_0PUgxgl)



## Annexe 4 Template Evaluation document

**Project Title**

### **EVALUATION DOCUMENT**

#### ***Social Profit Organization***

Data from the social profit organization:

Name:

Legal entity/legal form:

Domain in which your organization operates (short):

Address:

P:

F:

E:

Data from the applicant / contact person of the organisation:

Function/Department:



P:  
E:

Are you as petitioner also the internal supervisor of the student?

If not, who is?

Name:

Phone:

E-mail:

Function/Department:



### *Evaluator*

Evaluator name:

Educational institution name:

Email address evaluator:

The evaluation should make clear:

- For **which disciplines/courses** this project is suitable
- What the **workload and difficulty** will be for the student in this project
- Which are the different course components that can be addressed
- The possibilities for active and creative contribution of the student
- Opportunities for the student to make contact with practitioners or target groups from the social profit sector
- The sustainability of the project



**Technological scientific project (filled out by social profit organization)**

Describe as detailed as necessary the **technical-/technological-scientific research question** of your project.

How did this question arise? Locate **context/background** of the question. How is the situation now? Have you **already made efforts** to solve the problem? Were there already **external companies** contacted? What were the possible solutions? Is there **information/documentation** available for the student in the elaboration of his thesis?

During the development, where will possibly lie the **greatest difficulties**? What do you expect as a **final result** of the thesis and how you want to use the results of your query? **Who** will **benefit** from the result?

Can you offer students opportunities to get acquainted with the target group in your project? Will they communicate with each other and how?

Can you offer students opportunities to get acquainted with your employees in this project? Will they communicate with each other and how?

To what extent are you able to **contribute** to the expenses that go hand in hand with the development of the project?



?

Cera Award will be a leverage for technological innovations in the social profit sector. A Cera Award project picked up by a promoter and a student is a **best efforts obligation**. Cera Award cannot guarantee results. Do you agree?

- Yes
- No

Do you agree that the **results** of this project are public and **published**? Remark:

- Yes
- No

**Any other comments/additions.**

**Signature contact person organisation**



### Final judgment evaluator

**Evaluator xx** concludes that project above is suitable for a student master (bold what fits) from the program / specific specialization within the framework of a final dissertation assignment / design project / master thesis (bold what fits and/or enter additional info).