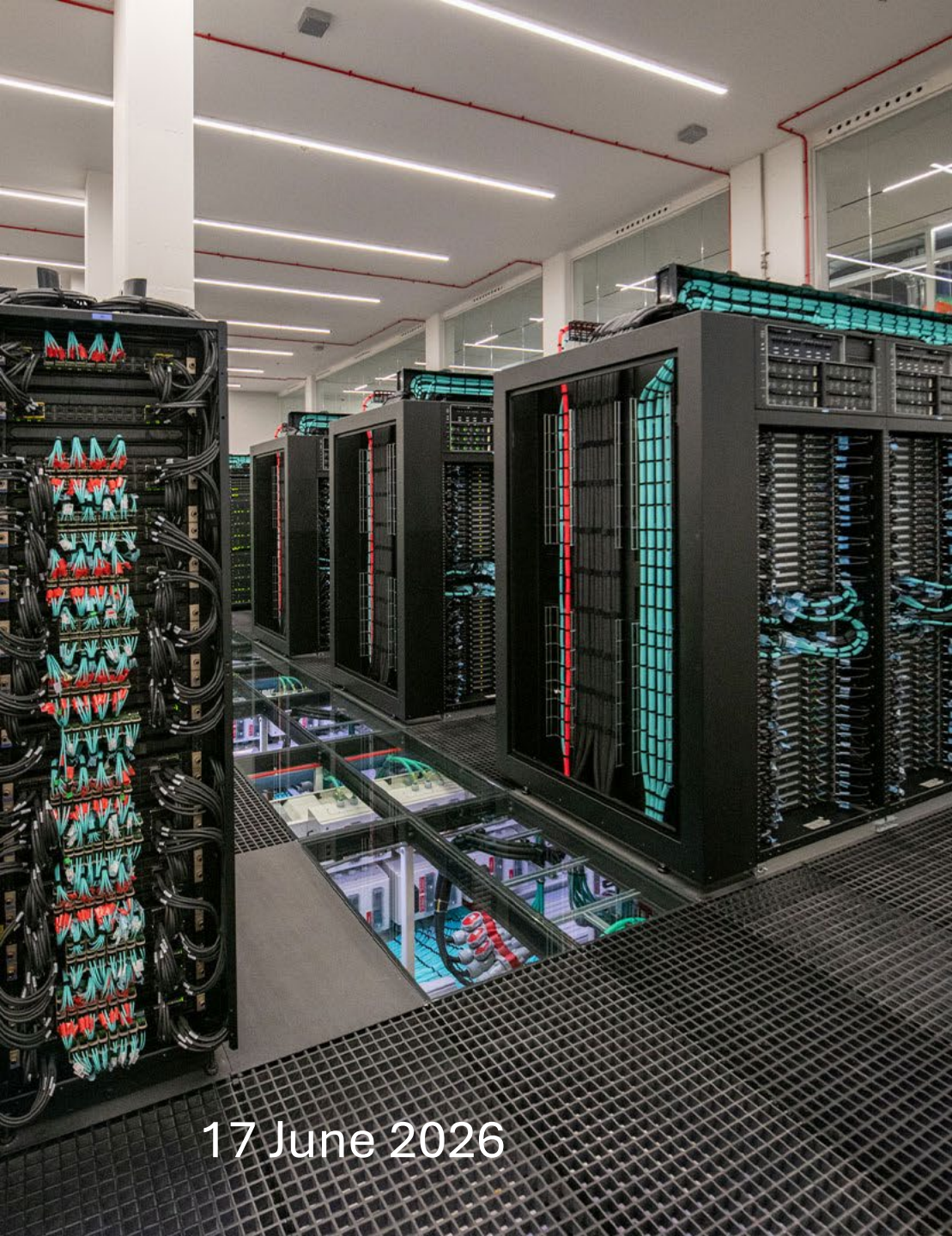




17 June 2026



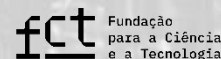
Cultural Impact on Corporate Engagement

How Moving to Europe Changed My Workflow – or did it?

Melyssa Fratkin

Stakeholder Liaison, BSC AI Factory

BSC AI Factory Partners



Affiliated entities



Agenda

- Quick introduction
- Compare and Contrast
- Industry Engagement Tips
- Final Thoughts

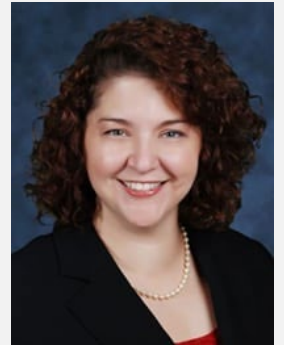
Quick Introduction

- 25+ years in high tech and HPC
- ~1 year at BSC (July 1)
- 19 Years at TACC, launching and running the Industry Affiliates Program
- Fluent in Spanish (started at age 4), now learning Catalan
 - Rutgers University
 - Universidad de Salamanca
 - University of Maryland, Robert H Smith School of Business, MBA
- Traveling, Knitting/Crocheting, Cooking



How it Started – at TACC

- Recruited to start the Science & Technology Affiliates for Research (STAR) program
- Follow the prescribed UT format for affiliate programs
- Membership grew organically -- energy companies all know each other
- Sponsored Research Projects with TACC researchers
- Increase usage of Stampede, Frontera, Lonestar
- Recruiting/student internship programs
- Funding – brought in over \$13M



TACC Industry Affiliates (STAR)

- Fortune 500 companies, tech partners, and local startups
- Mostly tech practitioners – HPC leaders who wanted access to TACC expertise
- Interesting research projects – everything from consumer products to oil reservoirs to the Orion space module
- Recruiting and student programs, Women/Diversity in HPC
- Annual Meeting, monthly newsletter
- Fundraising for projects & events, scholarships

How it's going – BSC AI Factory

- Stakeholder Liaison – coordinate Regional HPC Centers around Spain
- Create a “franchise” system
 - HPC Center staff handle recruiting startups/SMEs
 - They hire Key Account Managers and Engineers to support companies
- Increase utilization of MareNostrum5
 - New AI capabilities installing this summer
- Funding – EU/Spanish government funding, NO fundraising
- Get contracts signed – lots of Terms & Conditions!
- *Oh, and do everything in Spanish!*



What's in a Title?

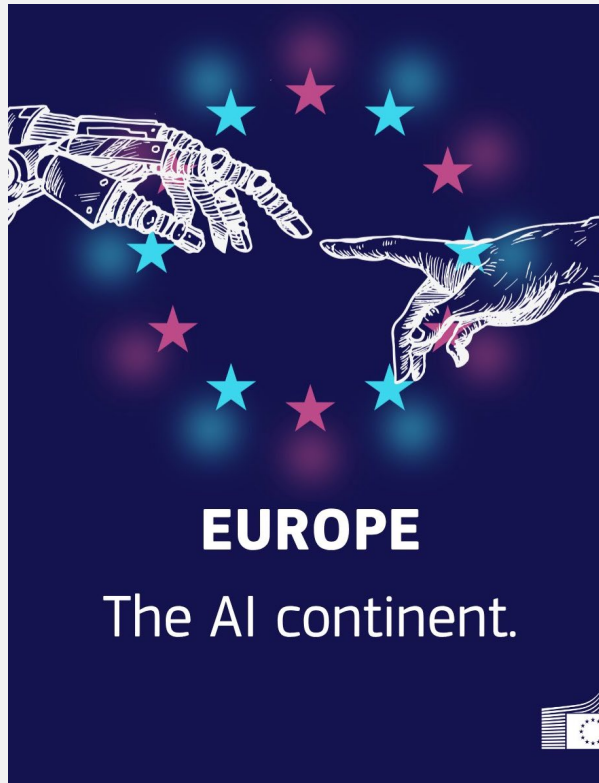
Industry Programs Director (TACC) = Stakeholder Liaison (BSC)

SAME	• Presentations ("Who we are and what we do") • Creating connections • Facilitating tech support • Shepherding contracts to be signed • Giving tours • Writing success stories
DIFFERENT	• Language(s) • Office space • Funding streams • Department size (1 → 10) • Organization size (200 → 1400+)

European AI Factories



European Vision



Europe considers AI a strategic capability for its technological sovereignty and competitiveness.

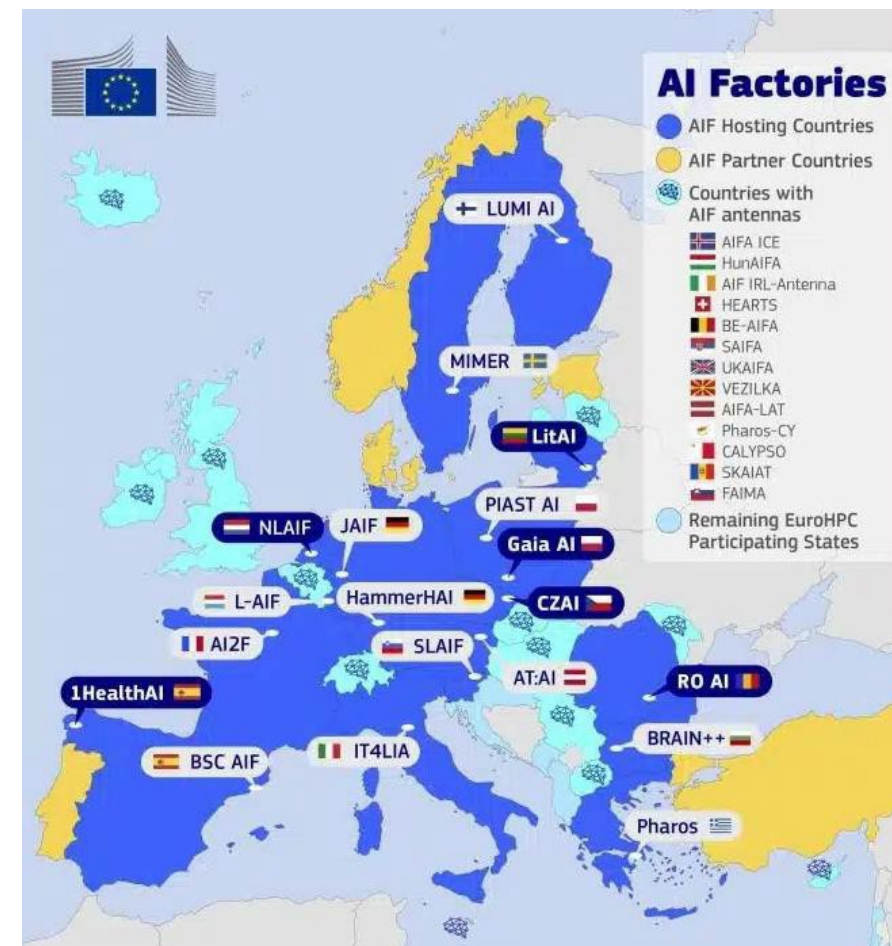
European strategy:

- Reduce external technological dependence
- Promote safe and reliable AI
- Accelerate the adoption of AI in the economic fabric

AI Factories are a key element in realizing this vision

AI Factories: Powering Europe's AI Future

- Dynamic ecosystems built around AI-optimized supercomputers
- Provide computing power and expert support to:
 - European industry
 - European scientific users
- Enable the development of large AI models that leverage Europe's AI capabilities
- Foster skills, knowledge, and innovation in AI across the EU



What is an AI Factory?



- Offers a comprehensive suite of **HPC** services with training, networking, and co-working/accelerator facilities
- Aims to accelerate **HPC** adoption across industry, especially SMEs, startups, entrepreneurs, and public bodies
- Serves the **EU** innovation community, aligned with **EU**'s evolving **HPC** needs
- Powered by an enhanced **EU** **NSF** **U Ma** **Frontera/Horizon** 5 supercomputer, using the latest **HPC** technologies

BSC AI Factory



What makes BSC AI Factory so special?

One of the first AI
Factories in
Europe

20 years of BSC's
scientific
trajectory

HPC
MareNostrum 5
& AI upgrade



Consortium partners



Spain



Barcelona
Supercomputing
Center (BSC-CNS)



Portugal



Fundação
para a Ciência
e a Tecnologia

Fundação para a
Ciência e a
Tecnologia (FCT)



Türkiye



TÜBİTAK

The Scientific and
Technological Research
Council of Türkiye
(TÜBİTAK)



Romania



National Institute for
Research & Development in
Informatics
(ICI Bucharest)

Affiliated entities



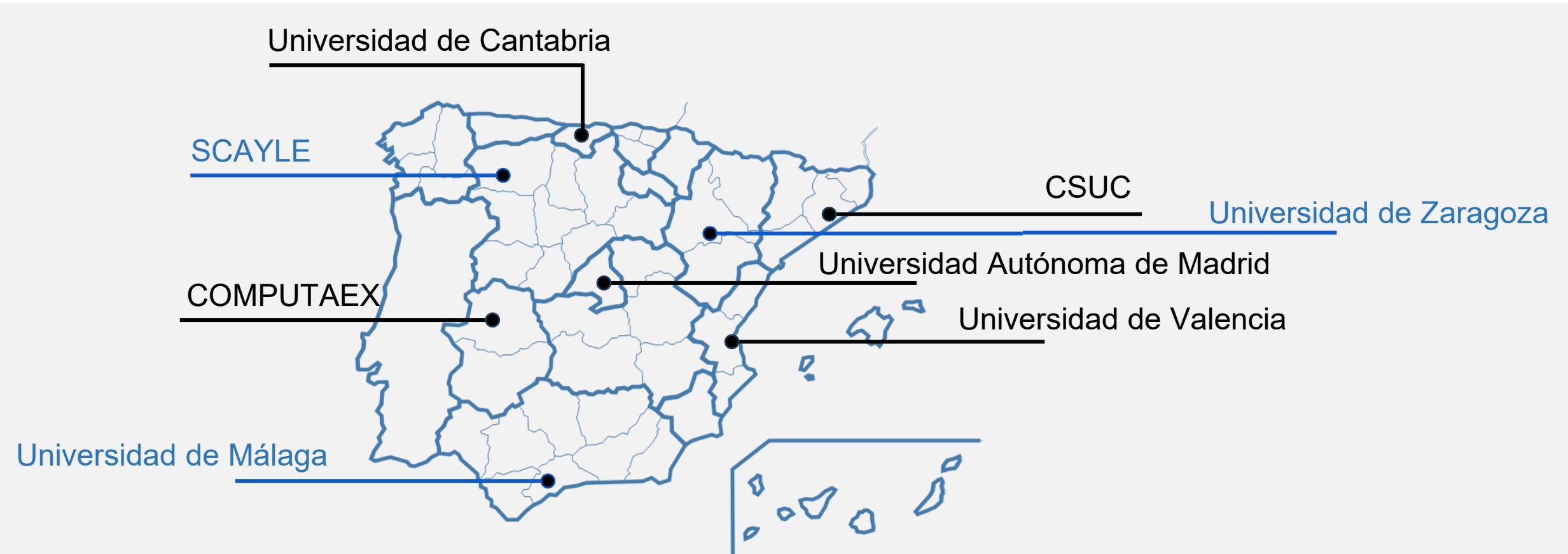
UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA
DE CATALUNYA
BARCELONATECH



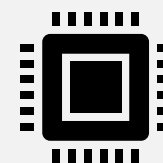
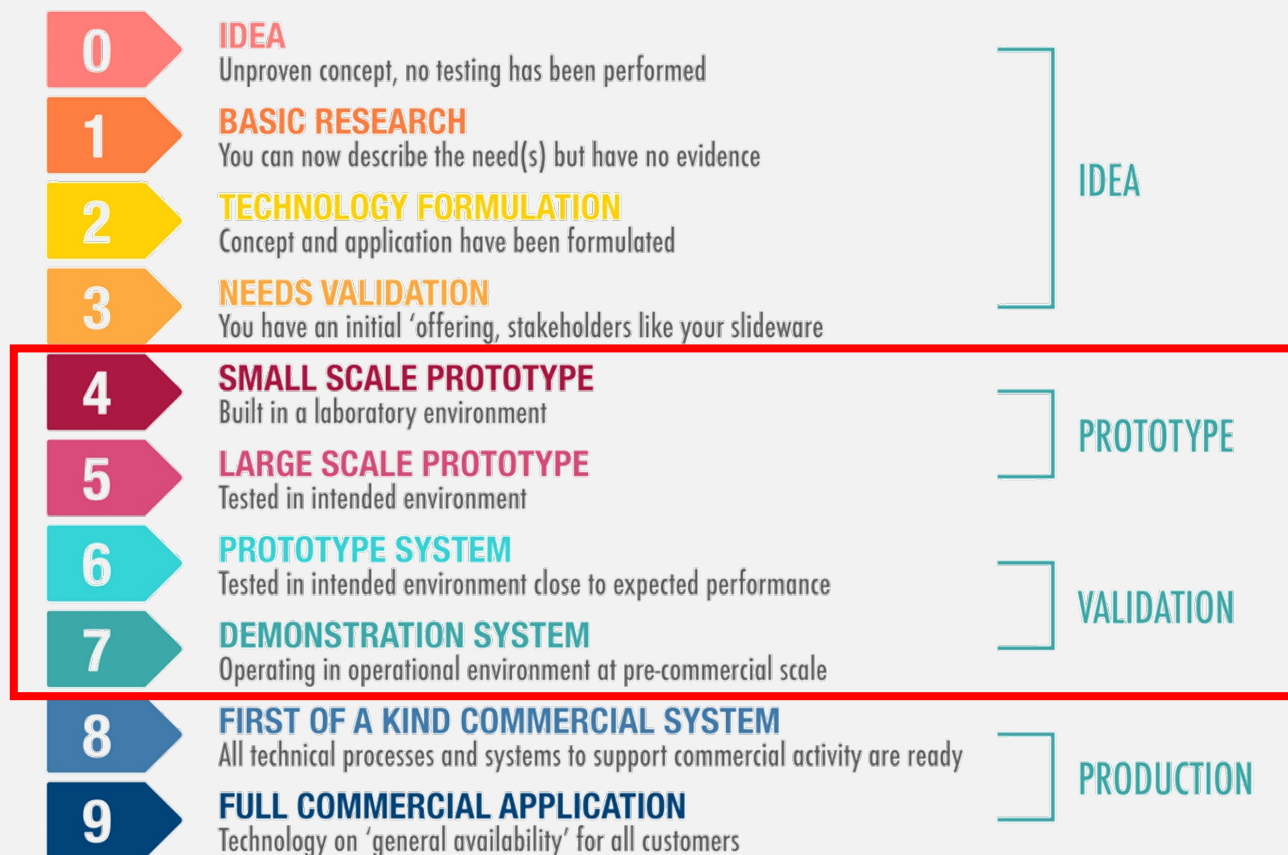
Centro Nacional
de Computação Avançada



BSC AIF Regional HPC Nodes: 8



Accelerating innovation with AI & HPC boosters



Artificial Intelligence (AI)
Supercomputing (HPC)

Target industries



Health



Climate and Agriculture



Finance



Legal



Energy



Communication & Media

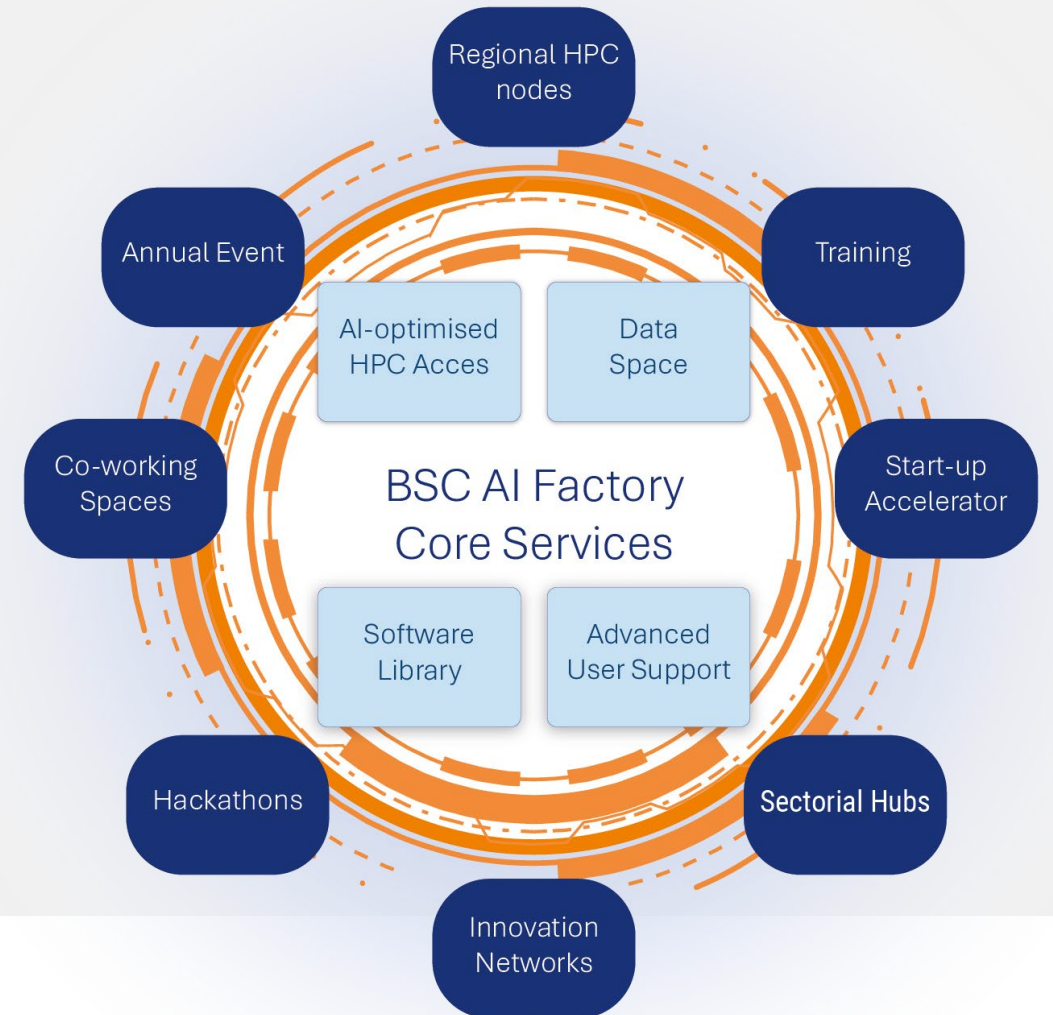


Public Sector

BSC AI Factory Services

The BSC AI Factory is designed around 4 core services and 8 support mechanisms aimed at:

- Breaking AI innovation entry barriers through HPC resources and specialised technical expertise
- Generating an AI-related innovation ecosystem by supporting networking, funding, talent development, and collaboration
- Training the next generation of experts to drive a knowledge-based, AI-driven economy



BSC AI Factory: What we ARE and ARE NOT (for Customers)

We ARE

A space where you can come with a specific goal, work with our teams and bring the solution in-house:

- ✓ With sovereign technology
- ✓ With expert accompaniment
- ✓ With real transfer of knowledge
- ✓ With operational independence for your team

.... and it's free!

We are NOT

- ✗ Not a long-term formal partner
- ✗ Not a cloud provider
- ✗ No permanent hosting
- ✗ Not for outsourcing your project

→ Not dependent on BSC; Strengthen your own capabilities

Typeform

First step: Fill out the form.

6 Please select the type of organisation that best describes your entity.*
(Only SMEs, start-ups and Public Entities are eligible to receive the BSC AIF services)

- ☐ A Start-up
- ☐ B SME
- ☐ C Public body
- ☐ D Other

OK

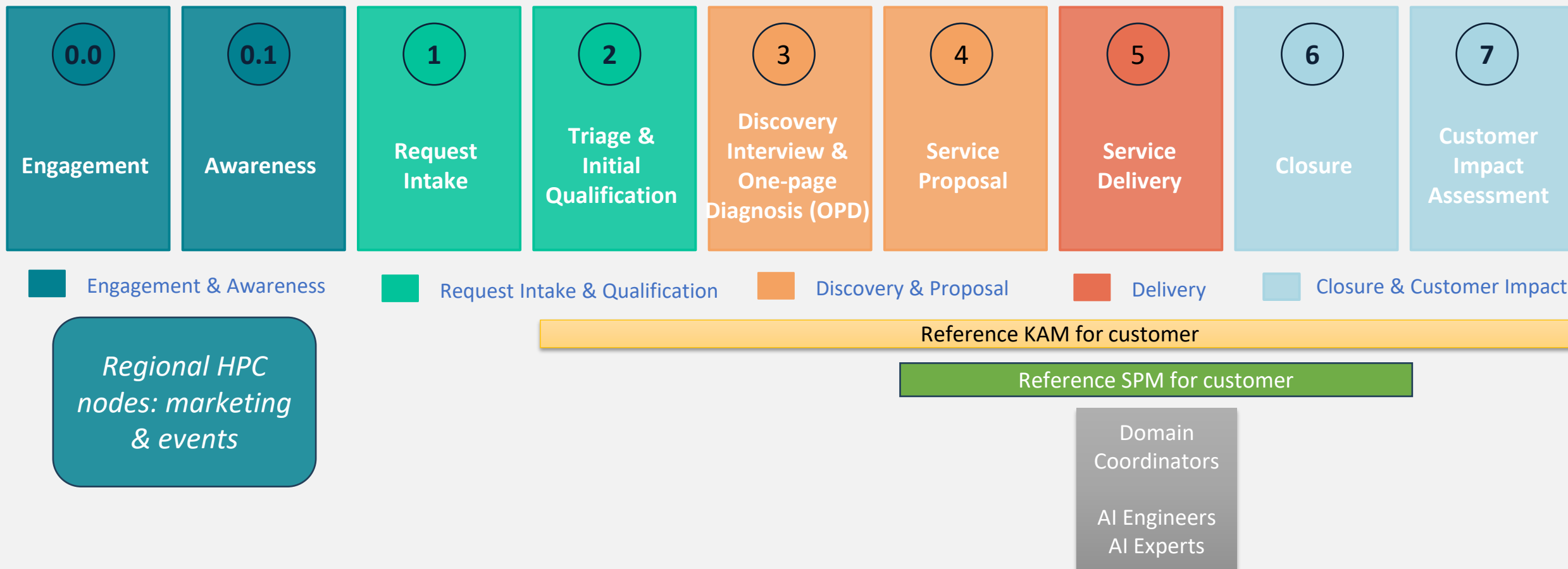


10 How did you find out about the BSC AI Factory?*

- ☐ A Via a colleague or referral
- ☐ B Through BSC website
- ☐ C Social media
- ☐ D Internet search
- ☐ E Newsletter
- ☐ F Attended a BSC event
- ☐ G MWC/4YFN
- ☒ H Regional HPC Node
- ☐ I Sectorial Hub
- ☐ J Other

OK

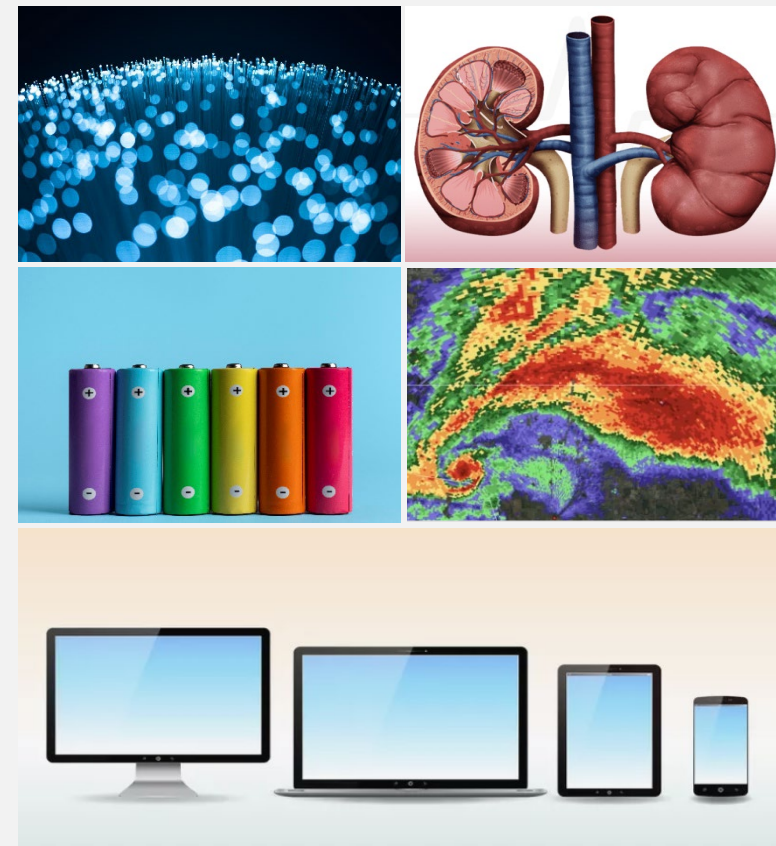
Customer Journey



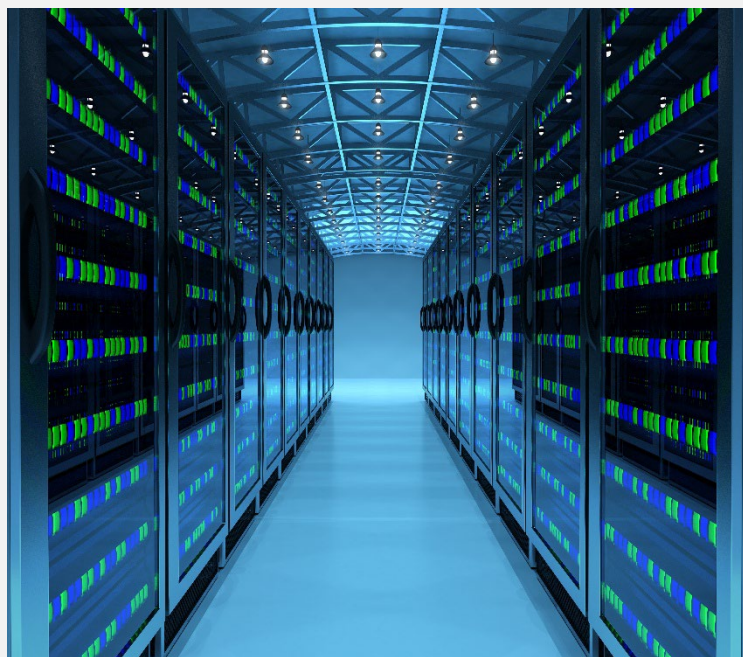
But... Why?

Academic-Industry Collaboration – Why?

- Diversify your funding streams (if needed)
- New research projects
 - Keeps research staff interested
- More public recognition
 - Public support for research is important



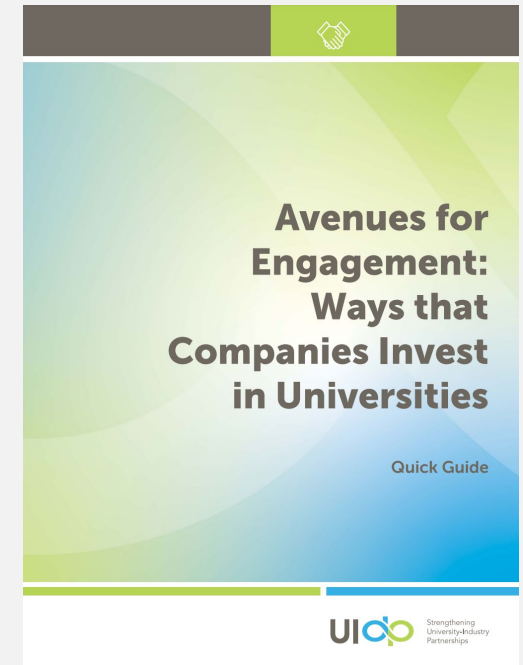
Industry-Academia Collaboration – Why?



- No capital costs for systems, or electrical/infrastructure
- No need to hire additional sysadmins
- New ideas, fresh perspective
- Support – systems, code optimization, interns, technology testing, benchmarks

Avenues for Engagement: How?

- Strong partnerships and collaborations have historically relied on **in-person communications and relationship-building**.
- **Site visits** provide time to discuss research needs and capabilities and align expectations. [Can be accomplished virtually]
- Main categories of engagement: **Events, Awards and Prizes, Research Sponsorship, and Talent Pipeline/Workforce**



<https://uidp.org/>

Finding partners



- There are lots of companies out there – large and small
- Work to your strengths
 - Engineering? Visualization? Chemistry? Physics?
- Start local – what industries are in your area?
 - TACC: Energy companies
 - NCSA & Ohio: manufacturing
 - San Diego: entertainment
- Small companies/startups
 - Interesting problems, but they need more help and have no money

Challenges to HPC Adoption

Council on Competitiveness study in 2005:

- Cost of “big iron” vs. quarterly earnings – ROI?
- Parallelized software & Legacy Codes
- Workforce who can use HPC (education & training)

Similar concerns about NSCI in 2016

- Who can afford big iron (outside the government)
- Modernizing code to run at scale
- HPC Workforce (competing with start-ups)



Challenges to AI Adoption

- Systems
 - Bridging the gap from Prototype to Production
 - Trust, Explainability, and Regulatory Compliance
- Codes
 - Data Challenges – Quality, Bias, Scarcity, Privacy
 - Long-Term High-Risk Innovation
- People
 - Talent shortage/Skills Gap
 - Cultural and Organizational Barriers





Best Practices for Industry-Academic Collaboration

Addressing the cultural gap between academia and industry

Most Important Best Practice: Take Industry Seriously

- Ensure industry support is part of the center's mission
- Consider industry requirements for systems and services
- Hire experienced business personnel to lead the partnership program
- Focus on the domains that your staff know well

Key Success Factors for Collaboration



- Clear problem definition
- Mutual respect & IP clarity
- Interdisciplinary teams
- Focus on transfer
- Long-term horizon

Closing thoughts

- AI startups need help as much as the companies using HPC did four or five years ago
- European AI Factories are at the forefront, pushing EU sovereignty in data, LLMs, and agentic AI
- Academic centers can offer talent, theoretical insights, and responsible, long-term innovation
- ...While maintaining humans in the loop to reduce risk (and minimize hallucinations)



Yes, AI made this image for me.



Spain vs Texas

They say “Everything is bigger in Texas”

	Texas	Spain
Size (square meters)	★	
Population		★
Supercomputing Power	★	★
Cost of Living	\$\$	
Politics	🤪	



Come Visit Us!



¡Gracias!

Questions?

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