

ANNEXES

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Annex 1: “Innovation express” concept: INNET Trans-European call for proposals for cooperations between technology clusters/SMEs

Rationale of the call

INNET is a project financed and supported by the European Commission, Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry, within the Sixth Framework Programme, since September 2006.

INNET is part of the PRO INNO Europe Initiative (www.proinno-europe.eu), an innovation policy initiative which aims at improving policy learning based on sharing experiences and building best practises throughout the EU, and thus improving trans-national innovation policy cooperation.

INNET is also one of the 4 projects parts of the “European Cluster Alliance” created by the European Commission, in order to foster Cluster policies.

The objective of the INNET project is to promote the interaction and cooperation between regional, national and European funding schemes, in order to facilitate cross-border co operations for both SMEs and/or technology clusters and to strengthen SMEs’ Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) activities and projects.

This call will take into account the main results of a first European benchmarking conducted within the framework of the INNET project, aiming to identify cluster strategies and needs regarding trans-national RDI cooperation activities.

Concept of the Pilot Call

The « Innovation Express » INNET Pilot call for proposals will support and fund *a set of innovation support activities in order to initiate, establish or develop European partnerships and/or trans-national technology co-operations for SMEs in technology clusters, in close collaboration with the governance of clusters. These technological partnerships may take the form of further RDI projects between SMEs and all other partners within clusters.*

- The INNET call targets mainly technological co- operations towards all European clusters and their partners (SMEs, Research and Technical Centres, Training Centres...) for the benefit of SMEs.
- It is open to all technological fields
- ***The call clearly leans on the governances of clusters***
- It aims to initiate, RDI Partnerships and Projects that will be funded with existing mechanisms (and not through INNET directly):
 - o Framework Programme 7 (FP7)
 - ERA-Nets,
 - Cooperation Programme
 - Capacities Programme : Research for SMEs and for SMEs’ Associations

- Eurostars
 - Eureka
 - Structural Funds
 - DG Enterprise and Industry CIP (Competitiveness and Innovation Programme)
 - National/regional funding mechanisms when relevant, including public/private funding.

INNET Pilot Call geography

The INNET Pilot Call is supported by funding agencies and authorities in the following regions and countries: **France, Germany, Italy, Flanders (Belgium), Basque Country (Spain), the UK, Poland and Greece.**

Two associated partners have joined the INNET Innovation Express Pilot Call 2009: CIDEM in Spain (Catalonia) and MATIMOP in Israel.

Target audience and beneficiaries

The target audience includes:

- European technology clusters and their partners (technology providers, large companies, SMEs, others like universities, research centres etc.)
- Inside or outside of the INNET funding partners' geographical area.

Beneficiaries might be :

- Individual SMEs, groups of SMEs, and/or clusters governances (or both cluster governances and SMEs depending on national/regional rules)
- Within the geographical area of the INNET funding partners.
- For a proposal there must be at least one cluster (governance) and one SME belonging to a cluster within a region/country participating in the call, to cooperate with another cluster/SME in Europe
- **The participation of several SMEs per clusters is strongly recommended**
- Academic research groups, universities, large companies, company associations and other public organisations may also participate, according to their regional/national funding rules, as long as an SME beneficiary from an identified cluster or a cluster representative organisation is leading the proposal.

There is a clear focus on participation of SMEs, understood as defined by the EC. Other enterprises are not excluded when relevant with the general objectives of the call for proposals (trans-national activities, clusters strategy, RDI context....) and with the national/regional rules from the funding partners. Large companies, however, are excluded.

Support scheme

Support will allow small duration actions –maximum one year- with an expected high impact on the innovation and RDI activity of technology clusters and SMEs in the INNET scope (around 15 k€ per SME is recommended). Funds will be allocated to SMEs, group of SMEs, clusters (governances, legal entities) (according to INNET funding partners organisations' national/regional programmes and modalities) always for the benefit of SMEs.

In some limited cases, INNET partners may support clusters/SMEs and bring an in kind contribution (expert service provision to clusters/SMEs, free of charge), but not fund them directly.

Support modalities

- The level of support and costs covered are dependent on the scope of the proposal (kind of activities, number of SMES involved etc.) and on the rules of the relevant national or regional programmes. All usual N/R programme rules apply. Applicants are recommended to discuss this with their own N/R funding agency or authority. Bilateral funding is possible in case of 2 clusters/ SMEs located in 2 INNET partners' areas, but not required.

If the national or regional agencies wish to fund the proposal which failed the INNET eligibility check, they may do so. However, the proposal will not be considered as INNET-validated (without further consequence).

Submission and Evaluation procedure

Registration + submission of proposals via www.proinno-europe.eu/INNET

1/ Submission procedure: documents required

The submission procedure includes 2 phases:

Proposals must be submitted by a cluster (governances, representatives)

1/1 Registration (Public, non confidential information)

The applicant will register and give overall information about the technological domain and activity sector of the cluster applicant and about the cluster(s) participant(s), the number of SMEs participating in the proposal, their technological domain and application sector. A short summary will be part of the registration.

1/2 Submission of documents (confidential information)

To apply, the applicant will have to upload several documents;

All « Application Forms », to be downloaded on the <http://www.proinno-europe.eu/innet>, should include the following elements:

- o Identification of **the beneficiaries**: a detailed identification of the clusters and SMES involved, and of all the participants in the proposal
- o Main issues of the **trans-national cooperation strategy** of the cluster applicant
- o An INNET **action plan** defined together by the cluster (governance), participating cluster(s) and concerned SMEs, describing the targeted objectives and how the proposed innovative activities (to be supported and funded in the frame of the INNET project) will fit with this strategy and action plan, including budget and resources (cost model).

2/ Evaluation process

- o first at European level: every month a « pre-check » of the received proposals by the INNET concerned funding partners (INNET validation) and Oseo innovation
- o **funding decision**, i.e. the level of funding and the costs covered are dependent on the scope of the proposal (kind of activities, partners involved etc.) and on the rules of the relevant National /Regional (N/R) programmes. All usual national or regional programme rules apply.

The actual implementation of the activities of the approved proposals should be done within one year following the approval of the proposal (agreement), and should be justified both by internal (operational costs, HR costs...), and external costs (such as subcontracting costs).

Please check the INNET "Innovation Express" Pilot Call for proposals homepage for the application pack including the **Application guidelines** and **Application form** for the submission of your proposal:

<http://www.proinno-europe/innet>

Eligibility Criteria

Proposals must be complete and demonstrate:

- the consistence of the proposed actions with the European strategy of the clusters and SMEs.
- a clear trans-national cooperation content and benefit for the participating clusters and SMEs
- **Call 2009: Additional eligibility criteria**
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- proposals must be submitted by the representative of the cluster (applicant cluster) and identify at least one other technology cluster (participant cluster) for trans-national co-operation
- clear expected outputs for cooperation must be identified in the proposal between the clusters involved, for the benefit of their SMEs
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Cluster governances and SMEs belonging to such technology clusters can participate in this call within the geography of the INNET funding partners. Eligibility to participate may vary as it will be dependent on the rules of the relevant national/regional funding programmes.

Note: Eligibility criteria for the provision of funding may vary from country to country, please check either the www.proinno-europe/INNET website or the relevant INNET partners' websites for full information.

Eligible Costs

Eligible costs include direct internal costs (operational costs and/or personnel costs) as well as external costs (subcontracting of innovation activities that entitle technology clusters and SMEs to approach knowledge/research/education providers/institutions/organisations, in order to receive advice and expertise and/or to initiate research collaboration with them within a research/knowledge transfer project) or other costs (travel...), and overhead costs.

For each applicant to the INNET Pilot Call for Proposals 2009, a budget for the internal (personnel costs), external (subcontracting costs) and other costs (travel costs, etc...) needs to be submitted.

Expected Impact of this INNET Pilot Call for proposals

- Support up to 500 SMEs in Europe in up to 60 clusters
- Opening of up to 100 collaboration activities between European technology clusters, SMEs and their partners in Europe
- Total budget for the INNET Innovation Express Call of about 5 Million Euro
- Leverage effect for further RDI projects/activities of up to 30 Million Euro. **More information**

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Pilot Call homepage: www.proinno-europe.eu/innet

Annex 2: Topics supported by the “Innovation Express” call: cross-border innovation activities for SMEs or for the benefit of SMEs in European Technology clusters.

<p>A) Dissemination and promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of clusters and SMEs in order to identify, initiate, prepare technology based cross-border innovation activities. - Marketing and communication activities in order to promote technology based cross-border innovation activities. 	<p>B) Technological/Innovation advise in the context of technology transfer and take-up activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technological watch - Improvement of skills to increase innovation. - Innovation business plan - Improvement of technological know-how. - Market research strategies - Support for the participation in EU programs/calls/proposals.
<p>C) Networking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support to cooperation between network members. - Matchmaking activities/workshops for RDI activities. - Company visits after identification of potential partners - Collaboration (agreements) and activity between members of the network or the cluster - Feasibility study to set-up new collaborative networks, competence poles, technological partnerships etc. for the benefit of SMEs 	<p>D) Technology Transfer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Innovation Platforms in order to support relevant suitable technologies - technology portfolios audit and diagnostics - IPR, patents, Consortium Agreement - Audit services and all other strategic issues.
<p>E) Financial Engineering linked to RDI activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - financial audits in order to prepare further RDI projects - identification of all relevant European/national funding mechanisms (FP, Structural Funds, ..) - funding engineering approach after identification of European mechanisms 	<p>F) Recruitment/Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recruitment of innovation and SMEs engineering specialists for clusters - Recruitment of innovation engineering specialists in SMEs - Education, training programs between several clusters/SMEs - Staff Exchange
<p>G) Workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - working seminars to consolidate RDI projects' preparation - Thematic workshops - Benchmarking workshops (RDI best practice/ pooling of resources-activities) 	<p>H) In depth feasibility studies prior to RDI projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building of a RDI transnational project

All these activities need to be validated through your National/Regional organisation and are adapted to national/regional specific rules.