



**EN**

## **Horizon 2020**

### **Work Programme 2018-2020**

#### *7. Innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises*

**Important notice on the Horizon 2020 Work Programme**

**This Work Programme covers 2018, 2019 and 2020. The parts that relate to 2019 and 2020 are provided at this stage on an indicative basis. Such Work Programme parts will be decided during 2018 and/or 2019.**

*(European Commission Decision C(2017)7124 of 27 October 2017)*

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## **Introduction**

Europe's entrepreneurs have always been at the cutting edge of innovation and invention. And this is all the more true in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Europe's human capital, deep science culture and solid technological base hold great potential for delivering major progress in fields of societal and economic relevance. Exploiting this potential has become more challenging than ever however, in particular for many SMEs. The globalisation, the high degree of interconnectivity and new technological advances have forced many SMEs to reinvent not only their products and services, but also their business and organisational models, in view of staying competitive in a fast-paced economy.

In the last years, Horizon 2020 has helped to develop a more performant SME innovation ecosystem through a series of capacity-building, network and other support actions. But there is ample evidence – including from the Horizon 2020 interim evaluation – that it could do more to help SMEs to innovate and grow. Many SMEs continue to struggle to adopt the right strategy, business process, skills, or other resources.

For these reasons, many of the Horizon 2020 measures designed to strengthen the dynamism and the resilience of the SME innovation ecosystem will be continued in 2018-2020 in the frame of the "Innovation in SMEs" activities. And they will be strengthened through new initiatives on advice regarding intellectual property right protection, and on Key Enabling and distributed ledger technologies. Together with the SMEs, also the innovation agencies who work with them will be supported to innovate and evolve.

The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) will continue helping SMEs to enhance their innovation management capacity. Helping SMEs to adopt the right innovation strategy, to better manage their innovation processes and to improve the efficiency of the innovation expenditure will lead to increased profitability. It will in that respect also continue to provide valued Key Account Management services to support coaching services extended to the beneficiaries of the SME Instrument.

In addition, this part of the Work Programme also continues to financially support the EUREKA/Eurostars-2 Joint Programme that is aimed at helping R&D performing SMEs to raise their knowledge and research intensity in order to expand their business activities into larger markets including at international level. Through its contribution to Eurostars-2, the EU supports SME-led transnational projects intended to develop innovation that is ready for commercial exploitation within two years after project closure. Although R&D performing SMEs must take the lead in Eurostars-2 projects, they can team up with relevant other actors of the innovation chain, and are free to develop the innovation they choose, provided their project proposal complies with the objectives of Horizon 2020 and remains limited to civilian purposes.

The recent Commission Communication on start-ups and scale-ups<sup>1</sup> has taken a joined up policy approach to the needs and challenges faced by start-ups and SMEs more widely, be they regulatory barriers, access to finance issues or access to commercial partners and markets. A core part of this has been the decision to initiate a pilot supporting the possible creation of a [European Innovation Council \(EIC\)](#). The EIC pilot will support innovation-driven SMEs with grants and support extended through bottom-up and mission-oriented support schemes (like the SME instrument under Horizon 2020) that will enable companies and other innovation-driven actors to propose innovative solutions potentially cutting across different sectors and technologies. More than ever, the ambition is to create more opportunities for innovative entrepreneurs and greater value-added and return on investment for the European economy and citizens. Both the EEN and the network of National Contact Points are well placed to help SMEs make the most of these and catalyse synergies between the EU and national or regional levels. Possibilities for synergies between Horizon 2020 and other European Union funds, such as those addressing environmental protection and cohesion, will also continue to be explored.

These initiatives will be further reinforced with the help of regulatory efforts through the implementation of the Better Regulation agenda, including the Innovation Principle, and through the offering of appropriate existing access to finance schemes, as provided e.g. under the demand-driven InnovFin – EU Finance for Innovators (Horizon 2020) or COSME. These provide debt and equity finance to companies of all sizes all along their innovation and growth cycles, as does the Investment Plan for Europe, which has been successful in ramping up capital investments and investor trust in European SMEs, with the first signs of recovery and new growth clearly visible.

### **Open research data**

Grant beneficiaries under this work programme part will engage in research data sharing by default, as stipulated under Article 29.3 of the Horizon 2020 Model Grant Agreement (including the creation of a Data Management Plan). Participants may however opt out of these arrangements, both before and after the signature of the grant agreement. More information can be found under General Annex L of the work programme

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/?uri=COM:2016:733:FIN>, COM (2016) 733 final, *Europe's next leaders: the Start-up and Scale-up Initiative*.

## **Call - For a better innovation support to SMEs**

***H2020-INNOSUP-2018-2020***

*(The first part outlines the topics for 2018 and 2019 and the second part those for 2020)*

Small, innovative, companies create the majority of new jobs in the European economy. Technological advances are making it easier and cheaper to start enterprises with limited own resources - but SMEs often struggle to scale up and create new jobs, including recruiting talent.

There is a wide range of public sector support through grants, subsidised loans, equity, and innovation support services. Yet SMEs are often dissatisfied with these, while at the same time the public expects a higher return from the support provided.

The following call for proposals is one element of a broader action to address these challenges and develop the ecosystem of innovation support to SMEs in Europe. Generally, the actions are designed to provide opportunities to Member States and regions to enhance their services through collaboration, and peer-learning. The emphasis is on further testing new approaches for better innovation support, such as blockchain technologies, workplace innovation, a network for Open Innovation, training on advanced manufacturing, experimentation in innovation agencies and a tool for investors in financing SMEs. These large pilot actions will consolidate the results and provide recommendations for the preparation of the next framework programme. The Enterprise Europe Network, the National Contact Points (NCPs) and the Member States are expected to continue playing an important role in implementing these pilot actions and transferring the result 'in-real-time' to their regions and managing authorities of their European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds).

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

### **INNOSUP-01-2018-2020: Cluster facilitated projects for new industrial value chains**

Specific Challenge: To develop new cross-sectoral industrial value chains across the EU, by building upon the innovation potential of SMEs. The EU needs to support the development of emerging industries, which will provide the growth and employment of the future. The reindustrialisation of the EU's industrial base has to focus on the development of long-term internationally competitive goods and services that require combining different competences and innovative solutions. The development of new industrial value chains calls for the collaboration and integration of different innovation actors, including large enterprises and especially SMEs, across different sectors towards the implementation of a joint vision.

SMEs need help to generate, take up and better capitalise on all forms of knowledge, creativity, craftsmanship and innovation - including for the application of existing cross-cutting or emerging technologies, advanced manufacturing, ICT, eco-innovative and resource- efficient solutions, new business models, service innovation and design. The

potential of clusters - that represent favourable ecosystems for innovation and entrepreneurship - need to be better exploited in this respect.

Scope: Cross-border and cross-sectoral collaboration, innovation and entrepreneurship across different regions and value chains shall be promoted. The coordination and facilitation shall be led by cluster organisations and other intermediary organisations, by following a systemic approach that combines different resources, tools and instruments. Innovation actors, especially SMEs with mutually reinforcing competences, shall be supported in view of creating new industrial value chains that foster the development of emerging industries in Europe.

To this end, proposals shall outline a strategic vision for building new industrial value chains across the EU Member States and Associated Countries. They shall specifically focus on integrating and supporting groups of SMEs in collaboration with other innovation actors in addressing specific problems and challenges. Cluster organisations or other SME intermediaries shall be invited to set up collaboration and networking activities for SMEs and create a favourable "open space" for cross-sectoral fertilisation and value chain innovation to take place. Each proposal should demonstrate the capacity to:

1. validate ideas for structured innovation projects driven by SMEs from different sectors and countries in collaboration with other innovation actors and facilitate the coordination towards new industrial value chains through this collaboration space.
2. support innovation activities and/or channel a mix of different targeted entrepreneurial and innovation support measures (such as mentoring, coaching, innovation and technical assistance vouchers, etc.) directly to the innovation actors of the validated innovation projects to further support their development, integration and large-scale demonstration in a strategic manner. At least 75% of the total proposed budget shall be allocated to support innovation in SMEs directly, whereby the SMEs benefit by either participating in the consortium or by receiving financial and/or other support as a third party (enterprise) in line with the conditions set out in General Annex K of the work programme.

Background information and guidance on the systemic approach and strategic focus to be envisaged is provided to applicants at the EU Cluster Portal<sup>2</sup> and in the background note<sup>3</sup> being part of this call. Synergies will be sought with other measures that are supporting such large-scale demonstration projects, in particular under the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) and COSME. This includes the thematic Smart Specialisation Platforms<sup>4</sup> - notably the one on Industrial Modernisation, European Strategic Cluster Partnerships, the European Cluster Collaboration Platform and the European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change as well as partnerships under the pilot action for interregional partnerships

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<sup>2</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/cluster/>

<sup>3</sup> Available on the call page at the Participant Portal under "Topic conditions & documents"

<sup>4</sup> <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/s3-thematic-platforms>

for innovative projects<sup>5</sup>. These synergies will be actively encouraged in the applicants' project partnership building and project implementation, notably through the engaged SME intermediaries. "Large-scale" does not necessarily refer to the amount of financial support provided for a particular project but to the extent of the roll-out of a staged process of experimentation and implementation with accompanying support that reaches out to groups of mutually reinforcing SMEs. This approach aims at "demonstrating at large scale" the potential impact of innovative solutions to specific challenges, rather than supporting isolated projects or SMEs.

For the first stage of the submission procedure, applicants should provide a concept note (of max. 10 pages), which should include a clear description of the ideas and objectives for an innovation action towards the development of new industrial value chains as well as an explanation of the main activities, implementation modalities (including for financial support to third parties, if applicable, and how to achieve the target of allocating at least 75% of the total proposed budget to support innovation in SMEs directly) and expected results foreseen (please refer to the grant conditions for this topic).

The concept note should further describe how the proposed systemic approach and strategic focus promises significant impact on economic growth and job; demonstrates a European dimension and added value; and has the potential to act as a catalyst by contributing to and/or leveraging other activities supported, for instance, under the European Structural and Investment Funds, e.g. in the context of smart specialisation strategies.

An estimate of the total costs of the proposed action and contribution to be requested from the Commission shall also be provided. Only proposals that pass the evaluation threshold for the first stage will be invited to a second stage of submission for a full proposal with a detailed description of the budget and activities planned to be undertaken.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of between EUR 2.5 and 5 million would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected Impact:

- Strengthen industrial leadership in the EU Member States and Associated Countries by reinforcing value chains that integrate innovative solutions in SMEs, along and across existing value chains.
- Stimulate the creation of new globally competitive industrial value chains across the EU Member States and Associated Countries to accelerate the development of emerging industries, which will boost industrial competitiveness and underpin future economic growth, jobs, and progress towards a resource-efficient economy.

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<sup>5</sup> See: [http://europa.eu/rapid/attachment/IP-17-1995/en/SmartSpecialisation\\_PilotActions.pdf](http://europa.eu/rapid/attachment/IP-17-1995/en/SmartSpecialisation_PilotActions.pdf)

- Further leverage and complement support for innovation in SMEs and other funding, which may be provided by national or regional authorities (including under the European Structural and Investment Funds) and/or by private investors (upfront or as follow-up investments), including in relation to the European Fund for Strategic Investments.
- Contribute to the implementation of regional and national research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation strategies (RIS3), modern cluster policies as well as of strategic inter-regional collaboration under thematic Smart Specialisation Platforms and cluster partnerships supported by the European Cluster Collaboration Platform and the European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change by capitalising upon concentrated and complementary competences for the development of new industrial value chains and emerging industries with a clear EU added-value.
- Provide a clear and measurable contribution to the innovation performance of the supported SMEs in the short-term - as revealed by indicators such as numbers of new or significantly improved products (goods and/or services), processes, new marketing methods, or new organisational methods -, and to its impact on resource efficiency and/or turnover. A wider impact is also expected in the medium-term.
- Improve the business environment of the supported SMEs by establishing open collaboration spaces that can involve innovation actors from different sectors and countries. This will lead to the creation of new ideas for innovation and new collaboration partnerships, which will be subject of further development and with the potential for further impact on business turnover.

Type of Action: Innovation action

***The conditions related to this topic are provided at the end of this call and in the General Annexes.***

**INNOSUP-02-2019-2020: European SME innovation Associate - pilot**

Specific Challenge: The lack of access to skills, to latest knowledge and capacity to manage innovation processes effectively, have been identified as major barriers for innovation in SMEs. Individual SMEs are at a disadvantage to recruit specialised knowledge as they often lack Europe-wide networking connections and do not tend to have established brands as large enterprises. Enterprise-led mobility programmes, supporting enterprises in recruiting expertise, show a high level of satisfaction and return on investment. This methodology is not currently used at European level and this enterprise-led approach is to be further developed and tested, using the first experiences of this pilot action financed by the work programme 2016-2017. This action complements Marie Skłodowska Curie actions (MSCA) which focus on developing research careers, by providing additional work opportunities for experienced researchers in innovating SMEs.

This action is a continuation of the pilot action which is part of the Innovation in SMEs work programme 2016-2017. The first "innovation associates" supported by the 2016-2017 pilot are

expected to start working in SMEs from September 2017 onwards. The detailed provisions and the conditions of the action in 2019-2020 are therefore subject to revision based on the conclusions from the first pilot, including the findings of the accompanying study to INNOSUP-02-2016 that will be conducted in parallel to INNOSUP-02-2016.

Scope: This SME-led pilot is an innovation capacity building action to provide a grant at European level to visionary<sup>6</sup> SMEs who can demonstrate that the skills required for a particular innovation idea are not within reach for them at national level (for example because the required skills are not available or not affordable for SMEs). SMEs are supported to employ a highly-skilled experienced researcher (referred to as an 'innovation associate') for a continuous period of one year. The innovation associate's task will be to explore, during the course of his/her contract, the potential of their innovative idea and turn it into an innovation project.

SMEs are highly encouraged to publish a vacancy notice for highly specialised skills before submitting a proposal. SMEs deciding to do so must use the EURAXESS portal for this purpose. Any other relevant platforms and media are optional. This will help them liaise with potentially interested specialists and to assess the attractiveness of the proposed package in order to fine-tune their application to the pilot. SMEs would indicate in the vacancy notice their intention to apply for support under the Innovation Associate action<sup>7</sup> and, if applicable, any conditionality of the job offer on the award of a grant. SMEs are free to sign a contract to recruit immediately interested specialists; this would however prevent them from receiving a grant under the pilot action.

The evaluation of proposals will focus on the demonstrated benefits of recruiting transnationally i.e. the impact for the SME to get access to skills not available on the national labour market; the excellence and impact of the innovative idea, as well as the coherence and effectiveness of the recruitment plan which should offer the same opportunities for male/female candidates.

SMEs that will receive a grant will be obliged to advertise their vacancy on EURAXESS, unless a contract with an innovation associate has already been signed in line with the provisions above. They are also encouraged to publish the vacancy notice on any other relevant platform or media, with a clear indication that the grant was awarded.

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<sup>6</sup> Vision: 'A statement about what the organisation wants to achieve in terms of innovation. The vision should set a direction and a challenge that can inspire persons to commit and work towards, be sufficiently ambitious and not constrained by the organisation's current abilities, provide a target against which progress can be measured.' See Innovation management standard CEN/TS 16555-1 (July 2013)

<sup>7</sup> On EURAXESS, such vacancy notice will be in the form of a 'call for expression of interest' and will be made available both at the 'Jobs & Funding' section of the EURAXESS portal and its 'Partnering' one, which promotes the matching between EURAXESS users' offer and demand of collaboration (in multiple forms). It will outline clearly the type of contract, and the employment package (salary and conditions, relocation support).

SMEs who are awarded a grant are obliged to employ an "innovation associate" for a continuous period of one year<sup>8</sup>. The innovation associate's tasks shall be to identify the potential of the company's innovation idea with the objective and turn it into an innovation project and - hopefully - a continuation of the employment of the innovation associate.

During these 12 months of employment, every associate is requested to participate in a core training programme on industrial innovation and business management<sup>9</sup>. Also during that period, SMEs get financial support to implement a training and development plan specifically for the associate, tailored to the needs of the associate and the enterprise to make the associate fully operational in the company. Proposals shall outline how the proposed tailored training contributes to this end and why it is necessary within the context of the innovation idea and the tasks of the innovation associate.

In line with the orientation of the action and with the aim to accelerate the integration of the associate in the company's staff, the following costs shall be eligible for reimbursement under the grant:

- Personnel costs of the associate.
- Relocation costs of the associate, which may include removal cost, travel cost of the associate and his/her immediate family (if applicable) to the new place of employment, visa cost (if applicable), translation cost of certificates (if applicable), a temporary transition allowance to cover extra cost upon arrival in the place of employment, as well as other clearly justified expenditure directly related to relocation.
- Travel and subsistence costs of the associate to the core training programme and travel and subsistence for tailored training (as described in the personal development plan). Travel cost and subsistence for the supervisor may be eligible for up to two training sessions.
- Travel and subsistence cost for the innovation associate and the supervisor in the enterprise to one kick-off meeting in Brussels (one day), organised by the European Commission<sup>10</sup>.
- External cost for the tailored training of the associate (for example course fees or other cost required to implement the training and development plan). Activities that fall under normal induction training<sup>11</sup> for any new employee in a company will not be eligible under this call.

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<sup>8</sup> Subject to agreement between the SME and the innovation associate, the employment contract may exceed 12 months. However, the grant awarded under this action will only cover the first 12 months of the employment, starting from the entry into force of the grant agreement.

<sup>9</sup> See in 'Other actions'

<sup>10</sup> The organisation of such a meeting is subject to confirmation by the European Commission at a later stage.

<sup>11</sup> For example, team building, introduction to the company's IT tools, structures, personnel cost of existing SME staff acting as mentor, etc.

Other costs like recruitment costs or travel costs to action-specific workshops by the supervisor in the enterprise are covered by the flat rate indirect cost.

Any cost not directly related to the employment and training of the innovation associate - for example cost of research, dissemination or promotion activities and other cost relating to the actual implementation of the innovation idea/project - are not eligible under this call.

It is intended to support an indicative total number of 115 assignments from the indicative budget. These will be spread over two cut-offs, one for projects starting in 2019 and one for projects starting in 2020.

The following criteria will have to be met by the associate: i) PhD holder, ii) an expertise in line with the job requirements as outlined in the vacancy notice; iii) compliance with transnational mobility criteria as defined in the mobility rule of the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA)<sup>12</sup>.

As the purpose of this pilot is to test the concept with a variety and diversity of SMEs, SMEs which have received a grant under the previous pilot action carried out in 2017/2018 (work programme 2016/2017) are not eligible under this call.

The preferred start date of the innovation associates' employment is in September of the year following the call opening in order to align the timing of the action with the academic year. The execution of the action will start on the starting date of the associates' employment (exact date to be determined during the grant preparation phase).

In case of non-execution, the Commission reserves the right to terminate the grant agreement according to the provisions of the General mono-beneficiary grant agreement for the Horizon 2020 programme.

The innovation associates are expected to be offered employment contracts or equivalent by the hosting SMEs. In return, the innovation associates must commit to a full-time position, for the full duration of the grant.

To promote the pilot, innovating SMEs experiencing skills shortages will be contacted by Enterprise Europe Network innovation consultants who are able to provide assistance in formulating a vacancy notice to address the identified skills shortages.

An accompanying study<sup>13</sup> will evaluate the impact of the 2016-2017 pilot action and the satisfaction levels of awarded SMEs and associates as well as of a sample of SMEs who were not awarded a grant. The study will provide outcomes and recommendations for this second phase of the pilot, based on the factual evidence from benefiting SMEs and associates in the first phase.

Expected Impact: Test that:

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<sup>12</sup> Reference to the MSCA mobility rule will be provided at call opening.

<sup>13</sup> As part of the 2016-2017 workprogramme;

- An idea can be transformed into an innovation strategy and a subsequent research and innovation projects once SMEs have access to the right skills;
- Public intervention at European level, can support innovating SMEs to overcome challenges in accessing scarce skills through a transnational mobility mechanism, increase their innovation potential;
- Experienced researchers develop appealing career opportunities in SMEs

Type of Action: Coordination and support action

*The conditions related to this topic are provided at the end of this call and in the General Annexes.*

### **INNOSUP-03-2018: Blockchain and distributed ledger technologies for SMEs**

Specific Challenge: Blockchain and other distributed ledger technologies (DLTs) enable parties who are geographically distant or have no particular trust in each other to interact and exchange value and information on a peer-to-peer basis with fewer to non-existent central intermediaries. Beyond well-known applications in the financial sector, new developments are emerging in other fields. The broader potential of DLTs to change how businesses operate at industrial and market levels for instance, in particular how they produce and deliver goods and services, is swiftly becoming a tangible reality.

DLTs' ground-breaking properties allow immutable, near-tamper proof, decentralized and real time mechanisms for enabling, storing and securing nearly any type of data-based transaction or process. DLTs provide opportunities in terms of communication, efficiency, security, reliability and transparency, such as helping to reduce fraud and counterfeiting, lowering operational costs, enhancing safety and efficiency of transactions, or automating digital manufacturing operations.

Some applications are already being developed in the fields of B2C (business to consumer) and B2B (business to business), where they are illustrating the potential of radical organizational shifts towards more collaborative and automated processes. But, at the same time, such deployments within these and other business or industrial fields are also presenting a number of challenges which may impede the uptake of DLTs by SMEs, ranging from interoperability, standards and intellectual property to liability, data protection, algorithmic accountability and reliability of automated systems.

Scope: The Action will be a piloting scheme for the uptake of DLTs by SMEs. It will aim at testing in real conditions the opportunities, challenges, risks and necessary conditions associated with DLTs in different context and sectors. Thereby it will stimulate (i) the uptake of DLTs by SMEs and inspire others to follow, and equally (ii) it will sensitize intermediaries to develop their expertise in this respect and (iii) it will help draw lessons for policy makers and regulators.

It will include and make use of financial support to third parties to allow for 20-30 SMEs to test concrete applications of DLTs in their respective field with technology suppliers (budget for each third party not exceeding EUR 50,000). The selection of entities involved in the pilots, the match-making process, the monitoring of each case as well as the management of the financial support to third parties will be ensured by the coordinator. At least 50% of the total proposed budget shall be allocated to financial support to third parties (please refer to the grant conditions for this topic).

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 1.5 million would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected Impact:

- More SMEs take advantage of the opportunities offered by DLTs.
- More intermediaries are familiar with DLTs and equipped to assist SMEs in this field.
- Improved framework conditions for the uptake of DLTs and the mitigation of related risks.

Type of Action: Coordination and support action

***The conditions related to this topic are provided at the end of this call and in the General Annexes.***

**INNOSUP-04-2019: Workplace innovation uptake by SMEs**

Specific Challenge: Workplace innovations are non-technological innovations related to business structure and organisation, employee engagement and Human Resources management, managing internal process and decision making, development and planning of organisational strategies and methods, relationships with clients and suppliers, the work environment itself.

Workplace innovations improve motivation and working conditions for employees, both men and women, which leads to increased labour productivity, innovation capability, market resilience, and overall business competitiveness. Workplace innovation helps companies to anticipate and adapt faster and better to changing economic environment. This type of flexibility is even more important in the context of a new industrial revolution and quickly changing technologies and business models. Being able to react to changes rapidly requires continuous feedback from customers and users. Employees working at the customer interface have an important role in producing this information. Workplace innovation also improves learning capabilities and diffusion of knowledge, which are important for keeping workers' skills up-to-date. Finally, non-technological innovations are an integral part of the successful implementation of technological innovations.

Despite obvious benefits still not many companies, especially SMEs, implement this type of innovation. Implementing workplace innovation and facing challenges related to new industrial revolution requires right managerial skills. That is often not the case for SMEs, which do not have enough knowledge resources.

The experience of the 2013-2016 European Workplace Innovation Network pilot project shows the difficulties in promoting one specific model of workplace innovation. Successful implementation of this type of innovation depends on the national, economic and cultural context (related e.g. to the entrepreneurship and managerial culture).

Scope: The Action will be a piloting scheme for the uptake of workplace innovation by SMEs. It will aim at creating interregional networks gathering national or regional innovation support agencies<sup>14</sup>, which will work together to create pilot schemes supporting the uptake of workplace innovation in SMEs. The composition of the networks should reflect similar needs of SMEs and a comparable entrepreneurship culture in the area covered by the network. This approach will enable the creation of new, context-based workplace innovation support schemes.

Those new pilot schemes will be tested in companies selected by the interregional networks, by using financial support to third parties (at least 75% of the grant will be used for this purpose). The total number of supported companies will be taken into account in the evaluation of the proposals (please refer to the grant conditions for this topic).

The Action, by looking at existing tools, exchange of best practice and creation of new pilot schemes will help to create new, context based, long term mechanisms supporting the uptake of workplace innovation by SMEs across Europe. It will also give concrete support to SMEs interested in looking for new sources of growth through the competitive edge provided by workplace innovation related opportunities. Thereby it will stimulate: (i) new forms of work organisation and working (including the gender dimension); (ii) stronger employee participation in innovation processes (creation of new products, services and their production); (iii) improvement of the managerial techniques; (iv) it will help draw lessons for innovation support agencies.

A budget of EUR 1,5 million should allow to address this challenge (budget for a single network not exceeding EUR 300,000).

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 0,3 million would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected Impact:

- New, context based mechanisms supporting uptake of workplace innovation by SMEs.

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<sup>14</sup> i.e. the regional and national agencies that design and/or implement innovation support programmes for SMEs are important intermediaries for SME innovation

- More SMEs take advantage of the opportunities offered by workplace innovation.
- New, context-based forms of workplace innovation are created.
- Improved framework conditions for the uptake of new technologies.
- Better skilled workforce and more resilient companies.

Type of Action: Coordination and support action

***The conditions related to this topic are provided at the end of this call and in the General Annexes.***

### **INNOSUP-05-2018-2020: Peer learning of innovation agencies**

Specific Challenge: Innovation support agencies, i.e. the regional and national agencies that design and/or implement innovation support programmes for SMEs are important intermediaries for SME innovation. Focus, design and delivery mechanism of innovation support programmes determine to a large extent the economic impact from the supported actions and the satisfaction of the beneficiaries with the support provided. The European Union has supported mutual policy learning and exchange of ‘good practices’ in different programmes, including for example the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), the Competiveness and Innovation Framework Programme and INTERREG. However, the transfer of good practices in SME innovation support, the enhancement of existing and the establishment of new innovation support programmes for SME remains slow; and SMEs benefitting from support programmes still often remain dissatisfied with the services received<sup>15</sup>.

The PRO-INNO Europe 'INNO-Partnering Forum' (IPF, 2009-2012) has made some significant contributions to formulating the requirements for a permanent learning mechanism for SME innovation support agencies<sup>16</sup>: learning activities have to be based on clear methodologies and they have to be demand driven, launched at the moment agencies themselves recognise the need to revise programme formats. Furthermore peer learning activities need to benefit from a secretariat or an animation structure that assures horizontal flow of information among interested agencies. In a collaborative exercise the IPF has developed two methodologies in this respect: a quality management system implemented through a peer review system based on the EFQM methodology and a 'twinning+' methodology that combines elements of traditional peer reviews and twinning in small learning groups of interested agencies.

It is the objective of this action to make available to national and regional innovation agencies these two methodologies as elements of a permanent peer learning environment and to give incentives to the agencies to engage more frequently in peer learning activities.

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<sup>15</sup> See for example “Making public support for innovation in the EU more effective”, Commission staff working document SEC(2009)1197.

<sup>16</sup> See <http://www2.vinnova.se/PageFiles/604825187/IPF%20Synthesis%20report%20including%20appendices.pdf>

Scope: The proposed activities will provide incentives in the form of small lump sum grants to national and regional innovation agencies for engaging in peer learning on all topics relevant for design and delivery of innovation support programmes for SMEs. This should be challenge-driven, based on an agency's intention to revise its programme formats or introduce a new scheme, and lead to the development of common understanding of a given support service. The support to joint learning activities shall be available at any time when need and opportunity for policy learning in agencies arises. Peer learning is open for all topics for a better innovation support to SMEs. In the context of this action however, only the 'Twinning+' methodology as well as the quality management scheme for innovation agencies based on EFQM are recognised as learning methods. Funding for grants awarded under this topic will take the form of a fixed lump sum of EUR 15.000 / 50.000<sup>17</sup>.

Applicants should be aware that this is not purely an action to promote the exchange of good practices. The aim is to investigate and develop by means of peer learning new topics and approaches in innovation support to SMEs with an intention to put newly developed skills into practice.

Expected Impact:

- The number of innovation agencies engaged in peer learning activities significantly increases.
- The results of the peer learning are taken up by national and regional innovation support programmes, including those co-financed by European Structural and Investment Funds.
- A broad range of new topics and approaches in innovation support to SMEs is investigated and developed by peer learning activities of national and regional innovation agencies. Pilot agencies design and implement programmes based on these new approaches
- The wider use of quality management in innovation agencies enhances efficiency of service delivery and customer satisfaction and accelerates the learning process.

Type of Action: CSA Lump sum

***The conditions related to this topic are provided at the end of this call and in the General Annexes.***

**INNOSUP-06-2018: Supporting experimentation in innovation agencies**

Specific Challenge: Innovation support agencies, i.e. the regional and national agencies that design and/or implement innovation support programmes for SMEs are important intermediaries for SME innovation. Focus, design and delivery mechanism of innovation

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<sup>17</sup> Decision authorising the reimbursement on the basis of lump sums for the Action INNOSUP-5 'Peer learning for innovation agencies' under the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme

support programmes determine to a large extent the economic impact from the supported actions and the satisfaction of the beneficiaries with the support provided.

With new business models and technologies emerging, it is more important than ever that innovation support agencies constantly adapt and innovate in the way that they provide support. Yet, innovation support agencies rarely engage in policy experimentation - for lack of funds, time pressure to deliver new support, and the fear of a backlash against 'money wasting'.

At the same time, there is a linked problem that evidence on the effectiveness of both existing and proposed new support mechanisms is limited and inconclusive<sup>18</sup>. Schemes are continued or introduced with no adequate way of testing their effectiveness. However, there is evidence that SMEs benefitting from support programmes are often dissatisfied with the services received<sup>19</sup>.

These two linked issues need to be addressed: growing pressure on public budgets demands that the support schemes become more innovative, effective, efficient, and evidence-based and that scarce resources are allocated to schemes with the greatest impact.

These two issues can be addressed jointly by combining policy experimentation and innovation with the introduction of a more evidence-based approach to the support schemes provided by innovation support agencies, i.e. rigorously measuring the impact of interventions using randomised control trials (RCTs) - a method successfully used in other fields most notably medicine. This would encourage them to experiment more, reconcile 'trial and error' attitude with existing expertise, to design and pilot innovative support schemes for new challenges, and scale-up the most successful ones.

Scope: To incentivise innovation agencies to engage more in policy experimentation and to use RCTs to evaluate the impact of their schemes, and to encourage "innovating the innovation support system" through brand new schemes or significantly improved ones<sup>20</sup>, the European Commission proposes two types of grants to innovation agencies which wish to innovate their innovation support schemes addressed at SMEs and start-ups. Both types of grants should include testing using RCTs. Financial support to third parties as a direct support to SMEs is possible if required for RCTs (please refer to the grant conditions for this topic).

1. Strand 1: Grants for small-scale experimental pilot projects which aim to investigate, including small-scale RCTs, either a feasibility of a promising idea for a brand new SME

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<sup>18</sup> For example, 2013 "Compendium of Evidence on the Effectiveness of Innovation Policy Intervention Project" by Manchester University; or What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth's analysis of around 1700 innovation support evaluations from the UK and OECD countries discovered that only 3% credibly investigated what would have happened to the beneficiaries without the intervention, for example by using the control group. And only a miniscule number of 0.3% found that the impact of an intervention under evaluation had been positive.

<sup>19</sup> See for example "Making public support for innovation in the EU more effective", Commission staff working document SEC(2009)1197

<sup>20</sup> A "new scheme" means "new to the world", not just new to the applicant agency; "significantly improved" refers to adapting an existing scheme – either making more effective a scheme already in place in the agency, or adapting to local specificities a scheme successfully used in another country.

innovation support scheme ('proof of concept'), or test different options of significantly revising an existing support scheme. Funding for grants awarded under this topic will take the form of a fixed lump sum of EUR 60.000<sup>21</sup>.

2. Strand 2: Grants for large-scale experimental pilot projects which aim to test on a larger scale, with RCTs, new SME innovation support schemes. The Commission is looking for proposals to test promising scalable innovative new schemes in support of innovation in SMEs to provide clear evidence of their impact. Proposals requesting a grant of around €300.000 - €500.000 should allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts. Given the budget involved, a pre-condition to get funding under this strand (unlike under strand 1) would be that the schemes to be tested had either been piloted at a small-scale first or a feasibility study had been done (or both).

Since 2014, the action "Peer learning of innovation agencies" ("INNOSUP-5") has supported national and regional innovation agencies to engage in peer learning on all topics relevant for improving design and delivery of innovation support programmes for SMEs using 'Twinning+' methodology. A deliverable is a Design Option Paper (DOP) on the challenge investigated. Beneficiaries of INNOSUP-5 may apply to this call to test the ideas described in DOP.

Only innovation agencies may apply (including applications from single innovation agencies). For the purpose of this call an 'innovation agency' is defined as an entity entrusted by national or regional government to develop/or implement innovation support programmes for SMEs.

For the first stage of the call applicants should provide a concept note (of max. 5 pages), which should include: a clear description of the idea, including a rationale and expected impact of a new/improved SME innovation support scheme, what makes it innovative compared to existing schemes, and information about the applicant(s). In addition, proposals for Strand 2 should include preliminary budget and evidence that the scheme in question had either been piloted at a small-scale or undergone a feasibility study. This may be evidenced by supporting documents for example on the pilot outcomes or feasibility study results.

Only proposals which pass the evaluation threshold for the first stage will be invited to a second stage to submit a full proposal including timeline, CVs of the project and research teams, and full budget. Moreover, all the applicants should include a letter of intent signed by the president of the applicant innovation agency or its governing authority indicating intent to scaling up the scheme to be tested, if proven successful.

Considering that the use of RCTs in innovation support is not a common practice, a background note with information on RCTs will be made available on the call page at the Participant Portal under "Topic conditions & documents". Moreover, an event or webinar will

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<sup>21</sup> Use of Lump Sum authorized by the responsible authorizing officer as the amount does not exceed the amount of a low value grant

be organised for the applicants invited to submit stage 2 proposals to explain how RTCs could be organised.

The beneficiaries of the action will be assisted from the onset of their projects by a contractor in design and running of RCTs (see Other action 7 'Support to design and running of randomized controlled trials under INNOSUP-06-2018').

Given that one of the objectives of the action is to make new or improved support schemes available to the innovation support, beneficiaries are requested to make the results of the pilot projects publically available.

Expected Impact:

- The number of innovation agencies engaged in policy experimentation significantly increases.
- Use of RCTs in design and testing of innovation support schemes significantly increases.
- A broad range of new or significantly improved SME innovation support schemes are investigated and developed and their impact rigorously tested. Pilot agencies scale up these new schemes.

Type of Action: CSA Lump sum, Coordination and support action

***The conditions related to this topic are provided at the end of this call and in the General Annexes.***

**INNOSUP-07-2019: European Open Innovation network in advanced technologies**

Specific Challenge: Open innovation is a paradigm that assumes that companies can benefit from external ideas/technologies (Outside-In) and valorise internal ideas/technologies with external partners (Inside-Out) to reduce the financial risks associated to innovation, and quickly get a competitive advantage. Open Innovation implies accelerating internal R&D and innovation along value chains through collaboration between the technological supply - and demand - side<sup>22</sup> within networked, multi-collaborative ecosystems.

Open innovation today is a well-known concept in large companies. However, SMEs are less aware of the opportunities offered by open innovation. Innovation intermediaries such as technology centres can help SME solution providers get closer to large industrial users to co-create<sup>23</sup> new products/services through a better anticipation of their needs.

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<sup>22</sup> Open innovation, open science, open to the world - a vision for Europe, DG RTD, 2016 (<http://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/open-innovation-open-science-open-world-vision-europe>)

<sup>23</sup> Co-creation refers to the joint development of knowledge through relationships with specific partners. Relationships can be consortia of competitors, suppliers, customers as well as universities and Public Research Organisations (such as RTOs).

One major role of technology centres is "to bridge the gap between internal and external know-how".<sup>24</sup> They are thus well-positioned as innovation intermediaries in an open innovation context. Technology centres help companies move technologies (such as digital and other key enabling technologies) from lab to market. They often achieve innovation by adapting existing ideas and concepts to other industrial ambits and usually collaborate with both large companies and SMEs.

Scope: The action will consist of:

- The setting-up of a European Open Innovation Network in advanced technologies with a central brokerage service point, aimed at matching innovation needs/requests from large industries with innovative solutions from SME technology providers.
- The central brokerage service point will use the network of innovation intermediaries (e.g. technology centres) to help matching innovation needs/requests and solution offers. The consortium will define the capacity and quality criteria applicable to innovation intermediaries for joining the network. The network should span across the EU.
- The brokerage services aim to liaise SME providers of solutions based on advanced technologies with potential industry users such as large (multinational) companies having specific technological challenges. The services are expected to include support and advice to companies to define their innovation requests/offers and identify possible solutions/usages (technology scouting). The services could include for example translating innovation requests into technical descriptions, technology scouting, disseminating requests through the network, proactively identifying existing solutions and providers, actively promoting solutions from SME providers towards potential users etc. The services should also include the identification of any technology services required to make the collaboration between the SME provider and the industry user successful (e.g. engineering to customise the technology solution to the customer's needs), including the identification of the technology centre(s) and expert(s) for providing these.
- The services should be flexible, quick and efficient to match business needs and ensure effective matchmaking between SME solution providers and large industrial users. The brokerage services should be free of charge for SMEs.

The brokerage services should lead to a critical mass of collaboration projects between SME solution providers and (large, multinational) industry users. The network is expected to work towards financial sustainability and remain active after the end of the project.

Proposals should outline a strategic vision for building a European Open Innovation Network in advanced technologies with a central brokerage service point. The network should be open

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<sup>24</sup> Boosting open innovation and knowledge transfer in the European Union, Independent expert group report on open innovation and knowledge transfer ; Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, 2014 (<http://bookshop.europa.eu/fr/boosting-open-innovation-and-knowledge-transfer-in-the-european-union-pbKI0214284/>)

to all innovation intermediaries complying with set capacity/quality criteria. The platform should improve SME access to large industrial users and address challenges associated to Open Innovation, such as confidentiality and IPR, entry costs and proactive search for innovation partners. The impact of the brokerage services should be monitored (e.g. contracts signed by companies as a result of the brokerage services). Synergies will be sought with relevant EU and other initiatives supporting innovation in SMEs, such as the INSPIRE initiative<sup>25</sup> as well as the Enterprise Europe Network, in particular for making best use of existing tools for matchmaking (such as the Enterprise Europe Network database<sup>26</sup>) and outreach to SMEs. Synergies with the European IPR Helpdesk are also encouraged.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 1.5 million would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected Impact:

- Critical mass of collaboration projects between SME solution providers and (large, multinational) industry users.
- Sustainable network ensuring effective matchmaking, at pan-European level, between innovative solutions from SME providers and needs/usages of (large, multinational) industries.
- Positive business impacts (e.g. increased sales) for SME providers having benefited from the brokerage services.
- Increased provision by SMEs of innovative solutions based on advanced technologies matching the needs of industrial users.

Type of Action: Coordination and support action

*The conditions related to this topic are provided at the end of this call and in the General Annexes.*

**INNOSUP-09-2018: Design and development of a tool to support and improve the decision making process of investors for financing high-growth potential innovative SMES<sup>27</sup>**

Specific Challenge: The Long Term Investment Working Group set up by DG Research and Innovation of the European Commission during the Greek Presidency of the Council Conference that took place in Athens on 12 and 13 June 2014 has shown that the lack or

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<sup>25</sup> [http://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/200839\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/200839_en.html)

<sup>26</sup> <http://een.ec.europa.eu/tools/services/SearchCenter/Search/ProfileSimpleSearch>

<sup>27</sup> This activity directly aimed at supporting the development and implementation of evidence base for R&I policies and supporting various groups of stakeholders is excluded from the delegation to EASME and will be implemented by the Commission services.

dispersion of available data on innovation, of existing analysis of their market potential, as well as the expensive costs to access to both of them, are strong obstacles to assess the technological and financial viability of innovative projects and enterprises for investors.

The Horizon 2020 InnovFin Advisory report on "Access-to-finance conditions for KETs companies"<sup>28</sup> published and discussed on 31 March 2016 in Den Haag during the "Innovative Enterprise – Financing Ideas from Europe" conference of the Dutch Presidency of the Council, confirmed this outcome and allowed to understand more in depth the difficulties faced by innovative SME while attempting to access finance. The report shows the difficulty of the decision making for investors when confronted to high growth potential innovative companies, especially those led by disruptive market-creating innovation. Indeed, enhanced technology and market expertise is needed but not always available to assess the technological viability of projects. Complex technology and "asymmetric knowledge" between the companies and lenders/investors worsen the general risk aversion of the latter. Indeed as shown by Nobel Price Akerloff, asymmetries leading to a single price equilibrium mixing different qualities dynamically converge to a market collapse. The transaction cost related to the technological assessment is relatively higher for smaller funding needs. As a consequence Innovative SMEs, and in particular those providing/driving breakthrough/disruptive market-creating innovation, struggle to access to finance.

Scope: A core solution to improve access to risk finance for innovative enterprises should target these informational asymmetries at their source to help investors decision making by signalling positively technologically rigorous and promising projects, and avoiding a mixed equilibrium between non-viable and viable projects leading to higher interest rate and to the migration of very promising projects outside the EU. Hence, such a solution would lower the risk premium as well as the administrative cost for technological assessment that are ultimately paid by innovative project managers, and therefore should reduce the cost of financing for innovative project managers. Such tool could help improving EU Access to Finance conditions for innovators by better selecting projects, making a better allocation of resources, and a better use of EU private existing fundings by channelling them to companies in position to succeed in their projects, therefore participating to the creation of growth and jobs. Such tool could also help improving the reputation of investing in EU and AC innovative companies by increasing the success probability of such investments which could ultimately lead to attract new investors in the field.

The action will therefore consist of:

- The design and development of (a) methodolog(y)(ies) and relating tool(s) providing (a) technological assessment(s) / rating(s) of technologies (being) developed / carried out by EU and AC <sup>29</sup> innovative SMEs seeking for investments for their growth, the methodology should account of the diversity of the strengthes and weaknesses of EU and AC SMEs (supply chain, collaterals, IP, sectorial positioning...);

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.eib.org/infocentre/publications/all/access-to-finance-conditions-for-kets-companies.htm>

<sup>29</sup> EU Member States and Horizon 2020 Associated Countries.

- The testing of the above-mentioned technological assessment / rating methodolog(y)(ies) and relating tools with different group of investors (e.g. business angels, VC, banks (including promotional banks); ...). The testing must also target different type of EU and AC innovative SMEs;
- The development of a deployment plan of the above-mentioned methodolog(y)(ies) / tool(s).

The action, of an expected length of 3 years, could involve, if relevant, participants from third countries.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 3 million would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected Impact:

- Reduction of the financial risks perception and higher confidence/trust for investors supporting EU and AC innovative SMEs, ;
- Easier access to finance for EU and AC innovative SMEs, in particular those providing / driving breakthrough/disruptive market-creating innovation;
- Increased investments in EU and AC innovative SMEs, in particular those providing / driving breakthrough/disruptive market-creating innovation;
- Increased uptake of innovative solutions, including breakthrough/disruptive market-creating innovation, by EU and AC SMEs;
- Development of a recognised EU technological assessment / rating tool(s) for the benefit of EU and AC innovative SMEs.

Type of Action: Coordination and support action

***The conditions related to this topic are provided at the end of this call and in the General Annexes.***

## Conditions for the Call - For a better innovation support to SMEs

Opening date(s), deadline(s), indicative budget(s):<sup>30</sup>

Topics (Type of Action)	Budgets (EUR million)		Deadlines
	2018	2019	
Opening: 07 Nov 2017			
INNOSUP-01-2018-2020 (IA)	19.97		12 Apr 2018 (First Stage) 13 Sep 2018 (Second Stage)
INNOSUP-06-2018 (CSA-LS) INNOSUP-06-2018 (CSA)	4.00		27 Mar 2018 (First Stage) 13 Sep 2018 (Second Stage)
INNOSUP-05-2018-2020 (CSA-LS)	0.50	0.50	15 Mar 2018 18 Oct 2018 13 Mar 2019 16 Oct 2019
INNOSUP-09-2018 (CSA)	3.00		28 Feb 2018
Opening: 01 Feb 2018			
INNOSUP-03-2018 (CSA)	1.50		15 May 2018
Opening: 16 Oct 2018			
INNOSUP-02-2019-2020 (CSA)		4.00	17 Jan 2019
INNOSUP-04-2019 (CSA)		1.50	17 Jan 2019
Opening: 06 Nov 2018			
INNOSUP-01-2018-2020 (IA)		22.85	03 Apr 2019 (First Stage) 12 Sep 2019 (Second Stage)

<sup>30</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The deadline(s) in 2019 are indicative and subject to a separate financing decision for 2019.

The budget amounts for the 2018 budget are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the draft budget for 2018 after the adoption of the budget 2018 by the budgetary authority or, if the budget is not adopted, as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

The budget amounts for the 2019 budget are indicative and will be subject to a separate financing decision to cover the amounts to be allocated for 2019.

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Opening: 05 Feb 2019			
INNOSUP-07-2019 (CSA)		1.50	01 Aug 2019
Overall indicative budget	28.97	30.35	

Indicative timetable for evaluation and grant agreement signature:

For single stage procedure:

- Information on the outcome of the evaluation: Maximum 5 months from the final date for submission; and
- Indicative date for the signing of grant agreements: Maximum 8 months from the final date for submission.

For two stage procedure:

- Information on the outcome of the evaluation: Maximum 3 months from the final date for submission for the first stage and maximum 5 months from the final date for submission for the second stage; and
- Indicative date for the signing of grant agreements: Maximum 8 months from the final date for submission of the second stage.

Eligibility and admissibility conditions: The conditions are described in General Annexes B and C of the work programme. The following exceptions apply:

INNOSUP-01-2018-2020	Under this call topic, the innovation actions to be funded may give rise to the award of only one grant from the European Union budget to where a beneficiary undertakes the role of the coordinator. This means that any beneficiary may not get more than one grant within this call topic when being indicated as coordinator of the proposal. In case an applicant organisation appears as coordinator in more than one proposal, only the last submitted proposal will be considered for evaluation. An organisation may also not act as coordinator in two or more concurrent INNOSUP-01 projects, including projects awarded under previous INNOSUP-01 calls. It can however still participate as a partner in a proposal.
INNOSUP-02-2019-2020	Applicants must be single SMEs <sup>31</sup> . Any beneficiary may not get more than one grant within this call

<sup>31</sup> By the nature of the action itself, this action is limited to individual SMEs as it aims to enhance the innovation capacity of individual SMEs lacking skills to turn an innovative idea into an innovation project. For the EU definition, please see: <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition>

	<p>topic. In case an applicant submits more than one proposal, only the last submitted proposal will be considered for evaluation.</p> <p>SMEs which have received a grant under the previous pilot action carried out in 2017/2018 (work programme 2016/2017) are not eligible under this call.</p> <p>Only applications from SMEs established in the EU Member States or countries associated to Horizon 2020 are eligible<sup>32</sup>.</p> <p>The applications must include a recruitment plan, the draft job description, the vacancy notice text for the associate as well as an advertisement plan (Euraxess, other media). The vacancy notice must also give a clear indication of the type of contract and of the remuneration package. The application must contain a declaration of honour that the vacancy has not been filled upon submission of the application.</p> <p>The application should include a clear description of the associate's position in the organisation of the company.</p> <p>Proposals are not required to provide a draft plan for exploitation and dissemination.</p>
<p>INNOSUP-03-2018</p>	<p>At least 50% of the total proposed budget shall be allocated to financial support to third parties.</p>
<p>INNOSUP-05-2018-2020</p>	<p>Only entities entrusted by national or regional governments to develop or implement innovation support programmes for SMEs are eligible to apply. The minimum number of partners per project is three.</p>
<p>INNOSUP-06-2018</p>	<p>Only entities entrusted by national or regional governments to develop/or implement innovation support programmes for SMEs are eligible to apply. Single or multiple partner projects are allowed.</p>
<p>INNOSUP-07-2019</p>	<p>Over a period of maximum 3 years, the brokerage services should lead to a critical mass of collaboration projects.</p>
<p>INNOSUP-09-2018</p>	<p>Eligible proposals can take one of the following forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Either a single legal entity established in a Member state or a</li> </ul>

<sup>32</sup> This action's objective is to enhance the innovation capacity of SMEs within the European Union and associated countries by giving them access to the right skills through a transnational mobility mechanism.

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	<p>Horizon 2020 Associated Country;</p> <p>- Or a consortium composed of at least 2 independent legal entities established in 2 different Member States or Horizon 2020 Associated Countries. Legal entities from Third Countries can participate in addition to the minimum composition.</p>
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Evaluation criteria, scoring and threshold: The criteria, scoring and threshold are described in General Annex H of the work programme. The following exceptions apply:

<p>INNOSUP-02-2019-2020</p>	<p>The following additional aspects will be taken into account:</p> <p>Excellence: Ambition and innovation potential for the SME from the filled vacancy, eventually leading to radical innovations in the SME</p> <p>Impact: Demonstrated inability to recruit the required skills on the national labour market.</p> <p>Quality and efficiency of implementation: Coherence and effectiveness of the recruitment and personal development plan.</p> <p>The following aspects will not be considered:</p> <p>Excellence: "Soundness of the concept, and credibility of the proposed methodology".</p> <p>Impact: "Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of IPR), and to manage research data where relevant".</p> <p>Quality and efficiency of implementation: "Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures" and "Complementarity of the participants and extent to which the consortium as whole brings together the necessary expertise".</p>
<p>INNOSUP-05-2018-2020</p>	<p>The following additional aspects will be taken into account:</p> <p>Excellence: in how far applicants demonstrate concrete opportunities to transmit the results of the projects into the adaptation of existing and/or design of new support programmes. Any supporting documents (such as a letter of intent by the president of the region or the agency or a relevant mention in an innovation strategy endorsed by the government) will be an advantage.</p>

INNOSUP-06-2018	<p>The following additional aspects will be taken into account:</p> <p>Excellence: in how far applicants demonstrate concrete opportunities to transmit the results of the projects into the adaptation of existing and/or design of new support programmes.</p>
INNOSUP-09-2018	<p>The following aspects will be taken into account additionally and in particular:</p> <p>Excellence: Ambition and innovation potential of the proposed methodology(y)/(ies), eventually leading to radical innovations in the sector</p> <p>Impact: Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the methodology(y)(ies) and related expected improvement for the decision making process of investors</p> <p>Quality and efficiency of implementation: Coherence and effectiveness of the proposed deployment plan.</p>

Evaluation Procedure: The procedure for setting a priority order for proposals with the same score is given in General Annex H of the work programme. The following exceptions apply:

INNOSUP-01-2018-2020	<p>Under this call topic the following more specified text replaces point a) for the considerations to establish the priority order for proposals with the same score listed in <a href="#">General Annex H of the work programme</a>:</p> <p>a) Proposals that address industrial value chains or sectors, not otherwise covered by more highly-ranked proposals, will be considered to have the highest priority.</p>
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The full evaluation procedure is described in the relevant [guide](#) published on the Participant Portal.

Grant Conditions:

INNOSUP-01-2018-2020	<p>For grants awarded under this topic beneficiaries may provide support to third parties as described in <a href="#">General Annex K of the work programme</a> either in form of grants or prizes. The respective options of Article 15 of the <a href="#">Model Grant Agreement</a> will be applied.</p>
INNOSUP-03-2018	<p>For grants awarded under this topic beneficiaries may provide support to third parties as described in <a href="#">General Annex K of the work programme</a>. The support to third parties can only be</p>

	provided in the form of grants. The respective options of Article 15.1 and Article 15.3 of the <a href="#">Model Grant Agreement</a> will be applied. This financial support to third parties will allow for 20-30 SMEs to test concrete applications of DLTs in their respective field with technology suppliers (budget for each third party not exceeding €50,000).
INNOSUP-06-2018	For grants awarded under this topic beneficiaries may provide support to third parties (i.e. SMEs taking part in RCT) as described in <a href="#">General Annex K of the work programme</a> . The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The respective options of Article 15.1 and Article 15.3 of the <a href="#">Model Grant Agreement</a> will be applied.
INNOSUP-04-2019	For grants awarded under this topic beneficiaries may provide support to third parties as described in <a href="#">General Annex K of the work programme</a> . The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The respective options of Article 15.1 and Article 15.3 of the <a href="#">Model Grant Agreement</a> will be applied. At least 75% of the grant will be used for testing new pilot schemes in companies by using financial support to third parties.

Consortium agreement:

INNOSUP-02-2019-2020, INNOSUP-05-2018-2020	Members of the consortium are required to conclude a consortium agreement in principle prior to the signature of the grant agreement, except for actions under the following topics: INNOSUP-02-2019-2020 European SME innovation Associate - pilot (as the action supports single beneficiaries) and INNOSUP-05-2018-2017-2020: Peer learning of innovation agencies (as the actions provides very small grants for activities implemented in a given format, with a result in the public domain).
INNOSUP-09-2018	Members of consortium are required to conclude a consortium agreement, in principle prior to the signature of the grant agreement.

## **Other Actions<sup>33</sup>**

### **1. Enterprise Europe Network's services provision in 2019-2021**

Services in 2019/20/21 of the Enterprise Europe Network “Enhancing the innovation management capacity of SMEs” and providing ‘key account management’ for the beneficiaries of the SME instrument.<sup>34</sup>

Lack of innovation management capacity is recognised as an important barrier to creating economic impact (competitiveness, growth and jobs) from innovation activities in SMEs. Consulting services enhancing the innovation management capacity are not available to SMEs in many European regions as a result of a lack of offers, unaffordable market prices or poor quality. Horizon 2020’s SME-instrument foresees offering mentoring and coaching services to beneficiaries to address this need.

The Enterprise Europe Network is a European-wide network of public, public-private and private providers of support services to SMEs established for the period 2015-21 under the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Programme (COSME). The COSME programme provides that other EU programmes can make use of and contribute to the Network’s structures and activities. The Enterprise Europe Network organisations are encouraged to cooperate with initiatives from the European Structural and Investment Funds' support for SME competitiveness and innovation.<sup>35</sup>

Since 2014 the Enterprise Europe Network has introduced services “Enhancing the innovation management capacity of SMEs” and makes available to SMEs higher quality innovation support services where these are absent or unaffordable on local markets.

In 2019-21, under the Enterprise Europe Network established for the period 2015-21, an indicative number of 13.700 ‘service package assignments’ (over 3 years) across Europe and associated countries shall be allocated to deliver:

- a. A 7 to 10-day service package that includes an innovation management capacity assessment, a gap analysis and the provision of at least 5 days of targeted services to address recognised gaps. The assessment could be based on the IMP<sup>3</sup>rove methodology or methodologies already introduced in the regions that comply with the definition of innovation management and the elements of an innovation management system as in CEN technical specification CEN/TS 16555-1.

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<sup>33</sup> The budget amounts for the 2018 budget are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the draft budget for 2018 after the adoption of the budget 2018 by the budgetary authority or, if the budget is not adopted, as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

The budget amounts for the 2019 and 2020 budget are indicative and will be subject to separate financing decisions to cover the amounts to be allocated for 2019 and for 2020.

<sup>34</sup> Grants to identified beneficiaries - Financial Regulation Rules of Application Art. 190(1),e

<sup>35</sup> See: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/themes/sme-competitiveness/](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/themes/sme-competitiveness/)

- b. For beneficiaries of the Horizon 2020 SME instrument a - on average - 7-day assignment covering phase 1 and phase 2 of the SME instrument shall be used to identify gaps, suitable coaches and support their work that would address the recognised barriers to growth on the basis of a jointly agreed ‘coaching plan’. Beneficiaries that have completed phase 1 of the SME instrument but unsuccessfully applied for phase 2 and received the 'Seal of excellence' shall be able to receive advice in realising the proposed project and in further developing their innovation strategy and innovation management. These services shall be provided realising synergies with the network's existing services under COSME, including advice on funding opportunities under the ESI Funds. Furthermore, within the 7-day service package assignments SMEs benefitting from Horizon 2020 project support should, where appropriate, be assisted in managing their project with the EU.

For the years 2019-21, an indicative number of 13.700 ‘service package assignments’ shall be allotted to the coordinators of the Enterprise Europe Network consortia. In each consortium, Network partners willing to participate in this action have to demonstrate that relevant staff members have the necessary skills to undertake assessments of innovation management capacity. The costs incurred for the duration of the assignments will be covered by the grant.

The maximum grant amount proposed to a consortium covering a region will be calculated by a combination of (i) a projection of expected cases for "key account management" based on past success of the region in the SME instrument, (ii) the number of inhabitants in the geographic area covered by the Enterprise Europe Network consortium, and (iii) known daily rates of senior staff in the network projects in the country and a contribution to travel and subsistence costs related to specific training. To ensure critical mass of resources and return in investment in new skills the minimum grant amount proposed to any region will correspond to at least 25% of the cost of a full-time senior consultant in the project.

The eligible costs of the action are restricted to the personnel costs of the qualified staff members and the travel costs to specific training and community building events organised by EASME<sup>36</sup> and indirect cost at the standard rate for coordination and support actions. They shall be reimbursed according to the same system of annual productive hours used in the framework partnership agreement of the Enterprise Europe Network consortium.

Countries not participating in the COSME programme have been invited to propose the establishment of “Enterprise Europe Network - Business Collaboration Centres” on a self-financing basis. In case the countries are associated to Horizon 2020 the Business Collaboration Centres would be eligible for support for the action described above.

Expected impact:

Direct impact from the action will be a significantly enhanced growth and profitability of SMEs receiving the services as compared to a control group. Innovation processes will be conducted more efficient and more effectively.

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<sup>36</sup> Travel costs to the SME shall only be eligible in exceptional and duly justified cases

Indirect impact is expected from the introduction of high quality innovation management capacity assessment and support services in all regions across Europe. In an increasing number of regions the initial introduction in the context of the described action may enable the integration of the IMP<sup>3</sup>rove toolbox or other appropriate tools in national and regional innovation support. The specific impact criteria for coordination and support actions related to "dissemination of results" shall not be applied.

The standard evaluation criteria, thresholds, weighting for award criteria and the maximum rate of co-financing for this type of action are provided in General Annexes D and H of the work programme.

Legal entities:

The coordinators of the 2015-21 Enterprise Europe network projects on behalf of the regional and national consortia. The detailed list of coordinators and maximum grant amounts is provided on the Enterprise Europe Network website (<https://ec.europa.eu/easme/sites/easme-site/files/documents/EENcoordinators.pdf>).

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary - Coordination and support actions

Indicative timetable: 4th quarter of 2018

Indicative budget: EUR 5.12 million from the 2018 budget and EUR 13.58 million from the 2019 budget

## **2. Supporting assessments of 'innovation management capacity' by the Enterprise Europe Network**

The services of the Enterprise Europe Network 'Enhancing innovation management capacity of SMEs' have to be aligned to CEN/TS 16555-1. This requires the availability of a high quality assessment tool and a variety of tools to address in client enterprises the weaknesses identified. Markets for specialised innovation management consultancy remain weakly developed in most regions. Only in a small number of regions staff already qualified in innovation management consulting and assessment tools aligned to CEN/TS 16555 were available. Consequently the large majority of regional consortia in the Enterprise Europe Network proposed to rely on the 'IMP<sup>3</sup>rove tool' and the training services of the 'IMP<sup>3</sup>rove Academy' to support their service delivery. Several Member States have integrated services provided by the IMP<sup>3</sup>rove Academy in their national/regional SME support system or expressed their interest to do so in the future.

The IMP<sup>3</sup>rove platform had initially been developed for the European Union since 2007. The core of the IMP<sup>3</sup>rove platform is a benchmarking database for 'innovation management performance' with more than 6000 quality checked datasets (as of October 2016). The EU and others owners of IP have supported the establishment of the not-for-profit IMP<sup>3</sup>rove-Academy and have exclusively licensed to the Academy the IMP<sup>3</sup>rove related Intellectual Property Rights.

To deliver the services 'enhancing the innovation management capacity of SMEs' the partners in the Enterprise Europe Network require:

1. An assessment tool fully compliant with CEN/TS 16555 including a quality management benchmarking database with an assured availability,
2. Training in innovation management (especially for new staff in relation to the consulting tasks) and the use and operation of the assessment tool,
3. Specialised training / capacity building in the different parts and process of enterprise's innovation management system; support in the interpretation of assessment reports

The EU has committed itself to making tools and training available free of charge to Network Partners which contribute to maintaining and further developing the benchmarking database and getting better insight in SMEs innovation management, via a grant to the identified beneficiary.<sup>37</sup>

Expected impact:

Direct impact is expected from the contribution to the coaching and mentoring service to the beneficiaries of the SME instrument and the services 'enhancing the innovation management capacity of SMEs'. Furthermore the support provided would secure the quality of the benchmarking by accelerating the inflow of new data sets allowing to replace the oldest data collected in the first years.

Indirect impact is expected from the introduction of high quality innovation management capacity assessment and consulting services in all regions across Europe. In an increasing number of regions the initial introduction in the context of the Enterprise Europe Network of the described action may enable the integration of the IMP<sup>3</sup>rove toolbox or other appropriate tools in national and regional innovation support.

Legal entities:

IMP3rove - European Innovation Management Academy, Dreischeibenhaus 1, 40211 Düsseldorf, Germany

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary - Coordination and support actions

Indicative timetable: 3rd quarter of 2018

Indicative budget: EUR 2.20 million from the 2018 budget

### **3. Core training to the European SME Innovation Associate - pilot (INNOSUP-02)**

The action 'European SME Innovation Associate will provide grants to an indicative number of 115 visionary SMEs which have experienced difficulty in recruiting nationally scarce skills for the development of ambitious innovation strategies. SMEs will be supported to employ for

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<sup>37</sup> Grant to identified beneficiary - Financial Regulation Rules of Application Art. 190(1),e

one year a highly-skilled experienced researcher to develop an innovative idea into an innovation project. For details on the action see INNOSUP-2-2019-2020.

As experienced researchers may not have had industrial innovation or business management training, and may not have had prior experience working for companies, especially SMEs, a training programme on industrial innovation and business management will be provided to all the associates of the pilot. The required courses attendance will total around 12 working days, in addition to some compulsory on-line training. The provision of this core training is expected to take place after recruitment of the innovation associates. The industrial innovation management training will be so designed as to involve supervisors in a limited number of courses.

The objective of the action is to support experienced researchers to acquire/develop skills in innovation management and business management, which they will apply directly during their assignment as associate.

Type of Action: Public Procurement - one new direct contract

Indicative timetable: Third quarter of 2018

Indicative budget: EUR 0.50 million from the 2019 budget

#### **4. Study on the effectiveness of public innovation support for SMEs in Europe**

The competitiveness of the European economy strongly depends on small innovative companies which create the majority of new jobs. To help SMEs fully realise their potential and overcome market failures specific to them, public support to innovation in SMEs at European, national and regional level is available with a wide range of instruments, including grants, subsidised loans and support services. Yet, the increased pressure on public budgets requires that the public innovation support is effective and efficient, and that there are no overlaps between different levels of governance. At the same time the nature of innovation is changing: open data, open software, open hardware design and crowd-funding make it easier and cheaper to start enterprises with limited own resources - however the challenge arises from scaling these initial offerings to create growth and jobs. The public innovation support has not only to follow those developments but also become proactive in shaping them.

In 2009 the European Commission conducted a public consultation on the effectiveness of innovation support in Europe.<sup>38</sup> It showed that while the vast majority of enterprises and intermediary organisations believed that direct innovation support can help overcome barriers to innovation, many SMEs were dissatisfied with the public support they had received.

These findings inspired the current INNOSUP call - "For a better innovation support to SMEs". However, the mid-term evaluation suggested that the situation could have improved since 2009 and therefore should be reinvestigated.

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<sup>38</sup> <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/making-public-support-for-innovation-in-the-eu-more-effective-pbNBNA23902/>

To that end a comprehensive study shall investigate inter alia the following aspects:

- main factors hampering innovation in SMEs;
- forms of innovation support received by SMEs;
- SMEs' level of satisfaction with the support received;
- gaps in existing SME innovation support;

The study shall issue recommendations on more effective and efficient ways of public innovation support provision. It shall include a survey of a statistically significant number of SMEs with innovation activities from the EU and Horizon2020 associated countries, as well as innovation support intermediaries.

Expected impact:

- insights into barriers to SMEs' innovation and SMEs' expectations as regards public innovation support to contribute to evidence-based policy making;
- recommendations on how to make public innovation support more efficient and effective.

Type of Action: Public Procurement - one new direct contract

Indicative timetable: 2nd quarter of 2019

Indicative budget: EUR 0.40 million from the 2019 budget

## **5. SMEs for Social Innovation - European Social Innovation Competition**

The European Social Innovation Competition is a unique space offered to social innovators, whether they are young or experienced entrepreneurs. It has met a real demand with nearly 1,000 applications per edition from entrepreneurs and SMEs. The Competition is a 'challenge race' for the best ideas, but building teams' capacities and encouraging them to cooperate are key objectives equally.

This work programme provides for the continuation of the service contract<sup>39</sup> to assist the Commission in organising the 2019-2020 editions of the European Social Innovation Competition.

The Competitions are based on a 2-step process. First the most promising solutions are selected amongst all entries, which are received over the open call for ideas. Those solutions qualify as 'semi-finalists' and their development is supported with mentoring and coaching. In a second phase, the 'challenge prizes' are awarded to the solutions which best meet the award criteria.

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<sup>39</sup> Initial contract is expected to be signed in October 2017, for a period not exceeding 12 months. The contract could be renewed automatically twice for 12 months each.

Moreover, in order to accelerate the implementation of the ideas and maximize their impact, a follow-up one 'impact prize' (selected among the semi-finalists from previous year) is also part of the Competition scheme. The Competition supports many more innovators than the sole prize winners with mentoring and has a strong incubation dimension so that ultimately more ideas turn into marketed solutions and sustainable enterprises.

Type of Action: Public Procurement - renewal of an existing contract

Indicative timetable: 3rd quarter of 2018

Indicative budget: EUR 0.70 million from the 2018 budget(EUR 0.7 million service contract ) and EUR 0.70 million from the 2019 budget(EUR 0.7 million service contract )

## **6. Hosting, maintaining, and developing the learning environment for intercultural business communication - continuation**

The learning environment for intercultural business communication is meant to increase SMEs' awareness of intercultural business communication and the cultural dimension of markets in emerging economies in order to increase their chances of doing business with those countries and even to innovate for them. It is the main deliverable of the service contract awarded to implement Lot 1 of the call for tenders "Capturing innovation impulses from emerging economies" from the 2014/ 2015 work programme (reference of the call: EASME/H2020/2015/022). This service contract entered into force on 13 July 2016.

The objective of the current action is to prolong the hosting, maintenance and development of the learning platform by the same contractor beyond the 30 months originally foreseen, in line with the provisions of the Terms of Reference EASME/H2020/2015/022: " EASME might rely on contractors to further operate the tools after the end of the contract" and "EASME reserves the right to make use of a negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice for additional contracts involving services similar to those assigned to the party awarded the initial contract by the same contracting authority. That procedure may be used only during the 24 months following conclusion of the original contract for services to be delivered until 31/12/2021".

Expected impact:

- continued hosting, maintenance and development of the learning platform for a duration of 18 months
- Handover and transfer to EASME after this date

Type of Action: Public Procurement - one direct contract

Indicative timetable: 2nd quarter of 2018

Indicative budget: EUR 0.20 million from the 2018 budget

## **7. Support to design and running of randomized control trials under INNOSUP-06-2018**

The action Innosup-06-2018 Supporting experimentation in innovation agencies will provide grants to national and regional innovation agencies which wish to engage in policy experimentation to design and test, using randomised control trials (RCTs), new or significantly improved schemes in support of innovation in SMEs.

RCTs are still not widely used in the field of innovation and business support, so the best practice is scarce and few innovation agencies or researchers in the field of innovation and business support have expertise and experience in using the RCTs in design and evaluation of the impact of their support programmes. Therefore the beneficiaries of INNOSUP-06-2018 grants may lack capacities and expertise to successfully deliver their projects. To mitigate this risk the projects will receive expert advice on the design, selection methods, and analysis of the results of the RCTs funded by INNOSUP-06-2018.

The objective of the action is to:

- Assess proposed trial approach of selected projects and advise how to make them more robust;
- Provide on-going support to the projects to help them address any problems which may arise during the implementation;
- Ensure that findings are publicly available and disseminated to policy makers and innovation agencies in Europe;
- Assist the European Commission in organising an event/webinar to the applicants invited to submit the full Stage 2 proposal to familiarise the applicants with the use of RCTs in the context of innovation support;

Type of Action: Public Procurement - one new direct contract

Indicative timetable: 4th quarter of 2017

Indicative budget: EUR 0.40 million from the 2018 budget

## **8. IP Helpdesk**

EU SMEs do not use enough intellectual property (IP)<sup>40</sup> and are not sufficiently aware of the possibility. SMEs mostly explain it by three factors: 1. lack of knowledge/information; 2. complex and costly registration procedures, and; 3. complex and costly court procedures in IPR infringement cases. The Helpdesk is asked to address the first reason and also the complexity aspect of the second.

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<sup>40</sup> For more information on the use of intellectual property by SMEs see the recent survey report by the Observatory of IPR infringements: Intellectual Property SME Scoreboard 2016 (EUIPO) <https://euipo.europa.eu/ohimportal/en/web/observatory/sme-scoreboard-2016>

These challenges affect SMEs that participate to any research and innovation project, but its negative effects become more acute the closer the project is to commercialisation of its' results. At the same time, intellectual property needs to be managed from the beginning of any research and innovation project to ensure that the lack of conscious decision in this area undermine the ability of researchers and innovators to seize benefits from the results of their projects. Thus the Helpdesk in improving SME knowledge about IP should specifically show how to use IP as a commercial tool. In a similar way the Helpdesk can provide its services to universities and public research organisations in view of their cooperation with SMEs and especially start-ups.

At Member State level there is no support mechanism for IP issues that are relevant in cross-border research and commercial relationships supported by EU funds, especially in H2020 projects. It is also more justified to provide such a support mechanism at EU level as it is easier to achieve economies of scale and to pool the expertise necessary for this project.

The action consists of Intellectual property support for SMEs participating in EU funded research, especially H2020, and for SMEs engaged in cross-border business activities as well as universities and public research organisations cooperating with such businesses. The Helpdesk should support the management, diffusion and/or valorisation of technologies and other intellectual assets.

The support can take the form of training (on-site and e-learning), self-help materials and individual initial legal advice (more advanced, e.g. drafting of contractual clauses for individual firms, or complementary services, e.g. patent searches, should be provided by private practitioners or by other public services depending on national arrangements). The action should build on the experience of previous initiatives. The improvements should consist of better targeting SMEs that need such services and better adjustment of services to the demand of identified users. In preparation of the proposal applicants should follow the recommendations of the evaluation of the Helpdesk<sup>41</sup> as well as be inspired by the activities of the current helpdesk ([www.iprhelphelpdesk.eu](http://www.iprhelphelpdesk.eu)). This should also lead to the achievement of similar service quantitative and qualitative performance levels compared to its past performance (approx. website visitors 220000; persons trained 3600 and queries answered 950) in the first year of operations and ensure a 10-20% growth p.a. The Helpdesk will need to closely link with all relevant stakeholders to ensure it is known to a vast potential group of users (H2020 NCPs, EEN, Chambers of commerce, trade associations, etc.). It should also work in synergy to the IP support developed on the basis of the recent Communication on Start-ups and its accompanying staff working document on IP support for SMEs<sup>42</sup>.

**Expected Impact:** The helpdesk should improve the management of IP assets by the target group. This, in turn, should lead to better commercialisation of results of EU funded research and innovation

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<sup>41</sup> <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/evaluation-of-the-european-ipr-helpdesk-pbNB0413176/>

<sup>42</sup> Commission Communication "Europe's next leaders: the Start-up and Scale-up Initiative" COM(2016) 733 and Commission Staff Working Document "Putting intellectual property at the service of SMEs to foster innovation and growth" SWD(2016) 373

Type of Action: Public Procurement - one new direct contract

Indicative timetable: 2nd quarter of 2018

Indicative budget: EUR 3.00 million from the 2018 budget

## **9. IP pre-diagnosis action for Horizon 2020 participants**

EU SMEs use not enough intellectual property (IP)<sup>43</sup> and do not know how to use it to the benefit of their business. The most convincing help consists of individual advice that takes the SME situation into account. Such tailored advice is not available for all Horizon 2020 projects in all EU Member States. This action should provide funding for at least 750 individual advice services to EU SMEs taking part in Horizon 2020 or ones that terminated their EU funded research and innovation project, but still need to consider the use of IP.

Although the service of IP pre-diagnostic has been assessed as a best practice it has not been thoroughly tested in which conditions it provides the best results for supported SMEs.

This IP pre-diagnosis action for Horizon 2020 participants should develop and test this tool further possibly using randomised controlled trials. In particular the selected contractor should:

- propose a methodology of testing and assessment of the usefulness and impact of the IP pre-diagnostic in various aspects (e.g. different levels of technological development of R&I project, different research areas/industry sectors, different methods of providing the service);
- based on the proposed methodology, provide SMEs with funding to perform the IP pre-diagnostic services (e.g. 1500 Euro per SME in France, the Commission will provide an estimate of costs per country) by available IP pre-diagnostic experts trained according to a common methodology<sup>44</sup> (the Commission will provide a list of experts per Member State);
- collect the evidence of the impact of the services on SMEs and based on it propose recommendations to improve the service.

Expected Impact: This service should help identify the most suitable IP protection methods and improve the management of IP assets by the target group. This should help better commercialisation of results of EU funded research and innovation

Type of Action: Public Procurement - one new direct contract

Indicative timetable: 1st quarter of 2019

Indicative budget: EUR 1.50 million from the 2019 budget

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<sup>43</sup> Intellectual Property SME Scoreboard 2016 (EUIPO) (see footnote 37)

<sup>44</sup> The Commission will provide results of the feasibility study on IP pre-diagnostic services

## **10. Assessment of SME Participation to Horizon 2020 (2014-2017)**

Small and medium-sized enterprises are drivers of innovation and play a central role in achieving economic growth. As a consequence, supporting SMEs innovation and competitiveness is at the heart of horizon 2020; at least 20% of the total combined budget for [Societal Challenges](#) and [Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies](#) (LEITs) should be invested in SMEs.

The overall objective of this action is to assess the economic and organizational impact of Horizon 2020 investment in the participating SMEs over the period 2014-2017. Various analyses will be conducted to profile participating SMEs and define and measure relevant key performance indicators.

Type of Action: Public Procurement - One direct service contract

Indicative timetable: First quarter of 2018

Indicative budget: EUR 0.12 million from the 2018 budget

## **11. In-depth evaluation of the (EIC) SME instrument**

Throughout Horizon 2020, dedicated SME support is channelled through the SME instrument. This instrument provides support to a wide range of innovation activities, while helping to increase the economic impact of project results by its company-focused and market-driven approach, feeding into the development of more market-creating innovation and fast-growing businesses. The SME instrument addresses all types of innovative SMEs so as to be able to promote growth champions in all sectors, and supported under all 'Societal Challenges' and the specific objective 'Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies' under Horizon 2020. By addressing the financing and other support needs of internationally oriented SMEs, and helping to implement high-risk and high-potential innovation ideas, the instrument assists innovative SMEs in shaping new markets, and achieving high return on investment and profits for the European economy and society, including in terms of industrial leadership.

Given the SME instrument's pivotal role in supporting innovation in SMEs throughout Horizon 2020, and the important investments that have gone along with it, the European Commission will organise a second interim evaluation of the SME instrument. Emphasis will be put on the economic impact of the programme so far, but also the extent to which the SME instrument has contributed to meeting the specific policy objectives under 'Societal Challenges' and 'LEITs' will be assessed. The evaluation shall also review the management and governance of the scheme, which is to evolve from a broad topic-driven scheme over the years 2014-2017 to a fully bottom-up scheme during the final three years of implementation of Horizon 2020. Final recommendations will include a SWOT-analysis of the scheme, and will also include recommendations on how to mitigate possible weaknesses and address possible risks, including in the context of the creation of a possible European Innovation Council for the next 7-year programming period.

Type of Action: Public Procurement - One direct service contract

Indicative timetable: Second quarter of 2019

Indicative budget: EUR 0.50 million from the 2019 budget

## **12. In-depth assessment of the (EIC) Fast Track to Innovation (FTI)**

Building on the 'Assessment of 2015 response to the FTI Pilot call'<sup>45</sup> and the 'Fast Track to Innovation Pilot: Final Evaluation'<sup>46</sup>, this assessment will examine the extent to which FTI actions have delivered on their goal of accelerating the commercial exploitation of the innovations they proposed and developed.

The assessment will also look into how other objectives of the Fast Track to Innovation (cf. EU Regulations [1290/2013](#) and [1291/2013](#)) have been met, notably in terms of increased participating and 'newcomers' to Horizon 2020, economic impact and private sector investment in research and innovation. In addition, the assessment will look at the contributions of the Fast Track to Innovation pilot to policy objectives set under the different 'Societal Challenges' and the specific objective 'Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies', which contribute to the budget of this fully bottom-up call for industry-driven consortia.

Based on the conclusions from the assessment on the economic and policy impacts of the Fast Track to Innovation, the contractor will review the implementation framework of the Fast Track to Innovation, including the legal framework conditions, under Horizon 2020 and propose a vision on a future of the Fast Track to Innovation, if desirable, be it or not within the context of a possible future European Innovation Council. This vision will include, apart from considerations on the particular challenge, the scope and the impact that the FTI should address, a concrete set of recommendations on how an FTI successor scheme can be implemented.

Type of Action: Public Procurement - One direct service contract

Indicative timetable: Second quarter of 2019

Indicative budget: EUR 0.25 million from the 2019 budget

## **13. Assessment of the Impact of Completed Eurostars-1 and 2 Projects**

Since 2007, the EUREKA/Eurostars Joint Programming Initiative (TFEU Article 185) has supported R&D performing SMEs from Eurostars participating countries to develop – together with at least one partner from (a) fellow Eurostars participating country/countries – innovative products, processes, services or other outputs destined to be launched on the market within two years of Eurostars project completion.

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<sup>45</sup> See [Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2014-2015 on 'Innovation in SMEs'](#), page 35.

<sup>46</sup> See [Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2016-2017 on 'Innovation in SMEs'](#), page 59.

Building on the results of the 'Analysis of the impact of completed Eurostars-1 projects'<sup>47</sup>, this action will assess to what extent the social and economic expected impacts of the Eurostars-1 and Eurostars-2 Joint Programme have been reached so far by analysing the results of the completed projects as well as their use notably in terms of market introduction.

The contractor will deliver a study evaluating the impact of the programme, mainly in terms of exploitation on the market of project results. Particular attention will be paid to the analysis of the main characteristics of the Eurostars-1 and 2 projects in terms of geographical coverage, size and type of partnerships, markets concerned by the new products/processes/services, difficulties faced to go to the market. Moreover, the study will analyse the complementarities in terms of impacts for the participants in Eurostars-1 projects with other Horizon 2020 initiatives in particular SME Instrument Phase 2 projects and collaborative projects under the Societal Challenges and Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies.

Type of Action: Public Procurement - One direct service contract

Indicative timetable: Third quarter of 2019

Indicative budget: EUR 0.20 million from the 2019 budget

#### **14. Final evaluation of Eurostars 2 Joint Programme**

A final evaluation shall be carried out by the Commission in accordance with article 15 of the Decision n°553/2014/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of 15 May 2014. The final evaluation will examine the Eurostars-2 Joint Programme at programme and project level. Special emphasis will be put on the implementation and the economic impact of the programme. The evaluation shall also audit the governance of the programme and access its evolution in particular as far as its impact in the market is concerned, ahead of the EU's next seven-year programming period. The action will take into account the results of the 'Eurostars Joint Programming Initiative: Interim Evaluation'<sup>48</sup> and the 'Analyses of the impact of completed Eurostars-1 and Eurostars-2 projects'.<sup>49</sup>

An expert group shall be set up to carry out the evaluation of the market-oriented collaborative R&D programme supported by the EUREKA network.

The experts will be highly qualified and specialised, competent in the field of evaluating collaborative science and innovation support programs, and support to market-oriented innovation in SMEs.

A special allowance of EUR 450/day will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest in terms of Article 21 of Decision C(2016)3301. This amount is considered to be proportionate to the specific tasks to be

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<sup>47</sup> See [Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2014-2015 on 'Innovation in SMEs'](#), page 35.

<sup>48</sup> See [Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2016-2017 on 'Innovation in SMEs'](#), pages 58-59.

<sup>49</sup> See [Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2014-2015 on 'Innovation in SMEs'](#), page 35, and other action # 11 in this document.

assigned to the experts, including the number of meetings to be attended and possible preparatory work.

Type of Action: Expert Contracts

Indicative timetable: Second quarter of 2019

Indicative budget: EUR 0.20 million from the 2019 budget

### **15. External expertise**

Use of individual experts on the monitoring of running actions (grant agreement, grant decision, procurements, financial instruments) and, where appropriate, ethics checks.

Type of Action: Expert Contracts

Indicative timetable: 2018

Indicative budget: EUR 0.15 million from the 2018 budget

### **16. Eureka Annual Membership Fee**

This action will support coordination activities aimed at increasing complementarities and synergy between EUREKA and the Horizon 2020 Programme in areas of common interest. The EU is a member of EUREKA and, as such, contributes to the budget of the EUREKA Secretariat. Membership fees are expected to total about EUR 2 million for the whole duration of the Horizon 2020 Programme.

Legal entity: EUREKA Secretariat is an "Association Internationale sans but lucratif"(AISBL) under Belgian Law located in Brussels, Rue Neerveld, 107 B-1200.

Type of Action: Subscription

Indicative timetable: 2018-2019

Indicative budget: EUR 0.27 million from the 2018 budget and EUR 0.27 million from the 2019 budget

### **17. SMEs for Social Innovation - European Social Innovation Competition - Prizes**

The Competition aims at stimulating social innovation's potential to provide solutions to societal challenges and foster sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe. It will directly support ideas best illustrating this potential. It will engage citizens, businesses (including start-ups) in a large range of sectors, as well as universities, business and engineering schools, thereby creating new connections, sources of growth and job opportunities.

The Competition has a yearly thematic focus, related to different social challenges. All ideas are welcome, even if they are not mature yet. The Competition aims to induce new solutions and help them reach the stage of prototyping and implementation. The Competition is based

on the following process. First, the most promising solutions are selected amongst all entries, which are received over the open call for ideas. Those solutions qualify as 'semi-finalists' and their development is supported with mentoring and coaching. In a following phase, a group of finalists is selected. Finally, the Competition awards **3 challenge prizes of 50,000 euros** each to the best 3 ideas, amongst those selected as finalists. Moreover, **1 impact prize of 50,000 euros** is given to the project which has achieved most results amongst the semi-finalists from the previous year.

The Competition provides other benefits such as visibility for the ideas and networking opportunities. It will allow semi-finalists to connect to a wide range of social innovation experts, organisations, investors and networks from Europe and beyond.

Essential award criteria: The prize will be awarded, after closure of the contest, to the contestants who in the opinion of the jury best addresses the following cumulative criteria:

1. For challenge prizes:

- degree of innovation
- impact
- sustainability
- scale

2. For the impact prize:

- the project that has achieved most results amongst the semi-finalists from the previous year.

Further details on the conditions for participation and award criteria will be described in the Rules of contest, published for each year's edition.

Eligibility criteria: The Competition is open to legal entities (including single persons or group of legal entities except public administrations) resident in EU Member States and Horizon 2020 Associated Countries<sup>50</sup>. Ideas and proposals from all sources, sectors and all types of organisations including for-profit, non-for-profit, or private companies are welcome. Applications involving several organisations and/or from various countries are possible.

For the common Rules of Contest for Prizes please see General Annex F of the work programme.

Expected results: Entries must be original ideas from contestants. They may propose new or improved ways to implement existing solutions, combine them, or adapt them to a different context or target group, but they cannot be exact copies of those. The contestants must

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<sup>50</sup> This action's objective is to stimulate social innovation's potential to provide solutions to societal challenges and foster sustainable and inclusive growth within the EU and Horizon 2020 Associated Countries by supporting best ideas illustrating this potential.

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demonstrate the novelty of their solution, in comparison with those already developed/implemented by themselves or by others in their context. The contestants are also expected to indicate how the participation in the Competition may benefit their idea (e.g. prize, mentoring, networking, visibility or other related benefit).

Indicative timetable of contest(s):

Stages	Date and time or indicative period
Opening of the contest	1st quarter 2018 and 1st quarter 2019
Deadline for submission of application	2nd quarter 2018 and 2nd quarter 2019
Award of the prize	4th quarter 2018 and 4th quarter 2019

Type of Action: Prize

Indicative budget: EUR 0.20 million from the 2018 budget and EUR 0.20 million from the 2019 budget

## **CALLS and OTHER ACTIONS for 2020<sup>51</sup>**

**Call - For a better innovation support to SMEs (call continued in 2020)<sup>52</sup>**

*H2020-INNOSUP-2018-2020-continued*

**INNOSUP-01-2018-2020-continued: Cluster facilitated projects for new industrial value chains**

(topic continued in 2020)

Type of Action: Innovation action

**INNOSUP-02-2019-2020-continued: European SME innovation Associate - pilot**

(topic continued in 2020)

Type of Action: Coordination and support action

**INNOSUP-05-2018-2020-continued: Peer learning of innovation agencies**

(topic continued in 2020)

Type of Action: CSA Lump sum

**INNOSUP-08-2020: Pan-European advanced manufacturing assistance and training for SMEs**

Type of Action: Coordination and support action

### **1. Enterprise Europe Network's services provision in 2019-2021 (continued)**

This is the continuation of an action for which information is provided in the first sections of this work programme.

Legal entities:

The coordinators of the 2015-21 Enterprise Europe network projects on behalf of the regional and national consortia. The detailed list of coordinators and maximum grant amounts is provided on the Enterprise Europe Network website (<https://ec.europa.eu/easme/sites/easme-site/files/documents/EENcoordinators.pdf>).

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary - Coordination and support actions

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<sup>51</sup> The budget amounts for the 2020 budget are indicative and will be subject to a separate financing decision to cover the amounts to be allocated for 2020.

<sup>52</sup> This is the continuation of a call for which information is provided in the first sections of this work programme. The specific conditions for individual topics that are continued may be similar to those outlined for 2018 and 2019.

Indicative timetable: 2020

Indicative budget: EUR 15.30 million from the 2020 budget

## **2. Eureka Annual Membership Fee**

This action will support coordination activities aimed at increasing complementarities and synergy between EUREKA and the Horizon 2020 Programme in areas of common interest. The EU is a member of EUREKA and, as such, contributes to the budget of the EUREKA Secretariat. Membership fees are expected to total about EUR 2 million for the whole duration of the Horizon 2020 Programme.

Legal entity: EUREKA Secretariat is an "Association Internationale sans but lucratif"(AISBL) under Belgian Law located in Brussels, Rue Neerveld, 107 B-1200.

Type of Action: Subscription

Indicative timetable: 2020

Indicative budget: EUR 0.27 million from the 2020 budget

## **3. SMEs for Social Innovation - European Social Innovation Competition -Prizes**

This is the continuation of an action for which information is provided in the first sections of this work programme.

The indicative budget for the prize is EUR 0.2 million from the 2020 budget. The specific rules of the contest will be published in 2020 by the European Commission, which will directly launch and manage the contest and award the prize.

Indicative timetable of contest(s):

Stages	Date and time or indicative period
Opening of the contest	1st quarter 2020
Deadline for submission of application	2nd quarter 2020
Award of the prize	4th quarter 2020

Type of Action: Prize

Indicative budget: EUR 0.20 million from the 2020 budget(prizes)

## Budget<sup>53</sup>

	Budget line(s)	2018 Budget (EUR million)	2019 Budget (EUR million)	2020 Budget (EUR million)
<b>Calls</b>				
H2020-INNOSUP-2018-2020		28.97	30.35	
	<i>from 02.040203</i>	25.97	30.35	
	<i>from 08.020203</i>	3.00		
H2020-INNOSUP-2018-2020-continued				35.85
	<i>from 02.040203</i>			35.85
<b>Other actions</b>				
Grant to Identified beneficiary		7.32	13.58	15.30
	<i>from 02.040203</i>	7.32	13.58	15.30
Public Procurement		4.42	4.05	
	<i>from 02.040203</i>	4.30	3.10	
	<i>from 08.020203</i>	0.12	0.95	
Expert Contracts		0.15	0.20	
	<i>from 08.020203</i>	0.15	0.20	
Subscription		0.27	0.27	0.27

<sup>53</sup> The budget figures given in this table are rounded to two decimal places.

The budget amounts for the 2018 budget are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the draft budget for 2018 after the adoption of the budget 2018 by the budgetary authority or, if the budget is not adopted, as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

The budget amounts for the 2019 and 2020 budget are indicative and will be subject to separate financing decisions to cover the amounts to be allocated for 2019 and for 2020.

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	<i>from</i> <i>08.020203</i>	0.27	0.27	0.27
Prize		0.20	0.20	0.20
	<i>from</i> <i>02.040203</i>	0.20	0.20	0.20
<b>Estimated total budget</b>		41.33	48.65	51.62