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Opportunities for innovation agencies

Introduction

Esteban PELAYO, Director of EURADA

Speakers

Janos SCHMIED DG GROW – European Commission
Gergely TARDOS EIC Taskforce II

Main messages

Janos Schmied - DG Grow

Janos Schmied, from DG GROW, started his speech talking about concrete issues. He gave to the participants a general overview on calls for proposal. The first topic discussed was INNOSUP (innovation support). It is part of the Horizon 2020 Work Programme ‘Innovation in SMEs’ and basically deal with two main actions:

1. Providing opportunities to Member States and regions to enhance their services through collaboration and peer learning;
2. Testing new approaches for better innovation support such as experimentation in innovation agencies with RCTs, workplace innovation, blockchain technology.

Mr Schmied also talked about the recurrent calls: INNOSUP 05 (peer learning of Innovation Agencies). The objective of this call is to encourage peer learning of innovation agencies on all topics relevant for the design and delivery of innovation support programmes for SMEs. The current definition of the European Commission for Innovation agency is: any entity designing/delivering SME innovation support programmes on behalf of a national/regional public entity (e.g. Innovation agencies, Incubators, Technology parks, Knowledge transfer offices).

The INNOSUP 05 normally has 2 cut-offs per year (17/3/20 and 14/10/20) and a yearly budget of 0.5 million euro. Usually 10 project per year are approved with a lump sums action. Since 2014, 57 projects have been supported. The majority of them are based in Southern
Europe (13 in Italy, 12 in Spain and 8 in Greece). The key word shared by all the 57 financed projects is sustainability.

Therefore, Mr Schmied mentioned the clusters projects for new value chains. The objective of this tool is to develop new industrial value chains and foster emerging industries across the EU by supporting cross-sectoral and cross-regional innovation in groups of SMEs through cluster. It’s important to underline that 75% of total budget goes directly to SMEs through cascade funding. The budget foreseen for 2020 is 25.15 Million euro. There will be 2 deadlines in 2020: 2nd April (first stage) and 8th September (second stage).

Finally, M Schmied illustrated INNOSUP 8 – Pan European advanced manufacturing assistance and training for SMEs. The objective of this call is to reinforce the competitiveness of manufacturing SMEs; roll-out an assistance programme helping SMEs to turn into a “factory of the future”; and providing training services and developing frameworks for training programmes. The budget for 2020 is 5.7 Million euro and the deadline is set for the 1st of December 2020.

**Gergely Tardos - European Innovation Council**

The second speaker of the introduction part of the EURADA Brokerage Event 2020 was Mr Gergely Tardos from the European Innovation Council (EIC). EIC support top-class innovator, entrepreneurs, small companies and scientists with bright ideas and the ambition to scale up internationally. It brings together the parts of Horizon 2020 that provide funding, advice and networking opportunities for those at cutting edge of innovation. Mr Tardos showed to the participants some relevant data in terms of venture capital. The financial gap between US and Europe is getting bigger every year so there is no chance to be able to create a kind of Silicon Valley in Europe, but one of the goal of EIC is to create some links among all the technological centers of Europe.

The project Horizon Europe 2020-2027 will be composed by three pillars: Open science (budget: 25 Billion euro); Global challenges and industrial competitiveness (budget: 50 billion euro) and Innovative Europe (budget 13.5 Billion euro). The Horizon Europe Innovative pillar
is as well composed by the EIC, with a budget of 10 billion euro), the European Innovative Ecosystems (budget 0.5 Million euro) and European Institute of Innovation and Technology (budget 3 billion euro).

The EIC aims to support innovation all across Europe, and in all dimension and forms, including through complementary EU and national and regional policies (via effective synergies with ERDF and smart specialisation strategies) and resources, whenever possible.

The EIC is working as one stop shop for breakthrough & disruptive innovators. In fact, it is open to all innovators, in any field, at any time. It is also an agile funding from idea to investment. There is in fact the possibility to access to pathfinder grants for advanced research on emerging technologies. Finally, it’s Building ecosystems and communities providing access to mentoring and advisory services and to knowledge partners. Moreover, EIC is collecting feedback from partner to how better prepare Horizon Europe project. They are focusing on a few relevant topic: enhanced collaboration with foundation; joint initiative from DG GROW and R&I on a common strategy for innovative procurements; and finally to design, scale up and areas for startups and prizes. They would like to restart the programme Eurostars 3. This programme is fully new with a new approach realized by the expert of EIC. Matchmaking platform to be realized in the future.
Presentation of successful projects

Moderator

Jarmo KAUPPINEN Business Joensuu.

Speakers

Jaime DEL CASTILLO INFYDE S.L.;
Cristina MOLINA AITEX;
Luca PIRA Zabala;
Nicola DOPPIO HIT;
Saverio d’EREDITÀ Friuli Innovazione;
Markéta FILIPENSKÁ JIC;
Caroline POLLET Vlaio;

Jarmo Kauppinen – Business Joensuu

Joensuu is located to the north-east of Helsinki. Good communication. Internationalised companies. The two previous regional agencies of Joensuu merged and created Business Joensuu. Targets and purposes are listed in the slides. Involved in 20-30 projects that made up one quarter of their revenue. 25 different contact experts that SMEs can approach for consulting. Service Portfolio: invest in and relocation services, new business and internationalisation services, growth and development services, science park’s and facility and event services (more in the presentation slides). Last year they elaborated a new strategy that support 4 spearhead industries : forest, bio and circular economy, metal and plastic, photonics, and ICT and digital economy. At the moment 6 projects financed by Brussels.

Jaime del Castillo – Infyde S.L.

Difficult to arrive to SMEs especially in agri-food sector (some very innovative, some very conservative). In Chile they export commodities. What type of European RDAs could be good partners (not many specialised in agri-food, but some that have it on their regions). To
understand how you could support enterprises without financial aid, could allow to save money and be more efficient. Go out of Europe in next innosup tenders to know different worldviews.

**Cristina Molina - AITEX**

This project will launch 2 calls for proposals to select 25 partnerships. The impact expected are to increase competitiveness of SMEs, technology transfer, accelerate and improve the uptake of technologies. 70,000€ per project. Coaching programmes. Participation in 1 workshop and conference were partners will be able to showcase their results.

**Luca PIRA - Zabala**

Not a finished project, at the beginning. Focus on digital innovation of SMEs of non-digital products (enhancing its digital capacity). Zabala is a leader on the consulting sector. 300 people in the company. Zabala is involved in some Cascade Funding projects (Big Data, agnostic technology, FIWARE and open data...). 3 open calls of DIGIFED: march 2020, September 2020, march 2021.

**Nicola DOPPIO – Hub Innovazione Trentino**

Open Innovation Contests for SMEs. Help their shareholders writing proposals and bringing their products to the market. Start designing open innovation to tackle existing problems and find solutions related to their strengths. Started from the needs of one cluster of health digital technologies. Their user experience wasn’t good, but they have a very good ICT university department, started a programme called UX Challenge to select some SMEs (5 or 6) and put them together with researchers in joint projects. This is why they decided to enter the INNOSUP project. Their project is called INNOSUP-05 INNochallenge: one year long project, 3 peer learning workshops, during them they exchanged good practices they collected before. They exchanged not only partners, but other innovation agencies. They designed a tool (canvas) to help design new open innovation contests. INNOSUP-06 200SMEChallenge help international partners replicate the same format to improve knowledge on how to help SMEs design innovative products. They want to conduct Randomised Control Trials with a lot of sound data
to make them understand what’s the difference between the control and the experimental group. The first workshop will be in May in Trento.

**Saverio d’EREDITÀ – Friuli Innovazione**

DepoSIt will last 2 years, and have a budget of 500.000€, with 6 project partners. Objective: support their clients (companies) but also supporting social innovation. Social innovation needs everything that may have an impact on society. Selected 3 sectors: smart living and mobility among them. They are concerned with climate change and ageing population. The project aims to give another perspectives to companies. 2 groups: companies exposed to their treatment with support and try to know if social innovation can change their business model, other group, control group, without support. They will test IA for social innovation. See last slide.

**Markéta FILIPENSKÁ - JIC**

FABLAB: Digital fabrication laboratory. 800 around Europe. Exchanging their experience with partners in Luxembourg, Germany... They offer for involvement of Fablab in innovation support programmes, new service based on cooperation of Fablab, survey among SMEs on Fablab, sustainable operation of Fablab. Operating Fablab is helping them get closer to schools and universities, become an attractive place for stakeholders, corporate and visitors to talk them about innovativeness, and promotes the acquisition of new clients and potential entrepreneurs.

**Caroline POLLET - Vlaio**

Everybody is touched by digitalisation. What could they do for those not digitalised? They went to different places and investigated different measures to help SMEs out of Industry 4.0. How same phenomena had different effects on SMEs. Continuity is vital for SMEs. SMEs need to have instruments with a long life. The companies are the ones who look for help, not force them.