

SME Instrument in Horizon 2020

The SME Instrument is part of the European Innovation Council pilot (EIC pilot), together with the Fast Track to Innovation (FTI), Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) Open and Horizon Prizes. This new funding instrument at the European level is aimed exclusively at small- and medium-sized companies with growth potential, innovative ideas and European or international business activities. There are no predefined topics.

What is funded?

The SME instrument has a three-phase approach, with only the first two phases funded directly by the Commission. The following phases, fundings and criteria are planned:

Phase 1: Feasibility or Implementation Studies ("From Idea to Concept")

Funding: Flat rate of 50,000 Euro

Project duration: Approx. 3 to 6 months

Feasibility study: Feasibility /market implementation of the proposed concept for innovative products, processes or services.

Possibility to support coaching and mentoring for up to three days.

Result: Concrete business plan, foundation for an application for phase 2

Phase 2: Innovation Measures ("From Concept to Maturity")

Funding: Approx. 0.5 - 2.5 million Euro, funding quota generally 70%

Project duration: Approx. 1 to 2 years

Innovation measures: Activities such as demonstration, testing, prototype production, pilot measures, scale-up, miniaturization and design to market implementation. Possibility to support coaching and mentoring for up to 12 days.

Result: Commercialization of product/process/service and a business plan as the basis for an application for phase 3.

Phase 3: Competitive Commercialization

Funding: No direct funding, but indirect support

Actions: Access to financial instruments and support measures to facilitate market entry, e.g. access to risk financing

(<http://www.nks-kmu.de/foerderung-risikofinanzierung.php>)

How are projects selected?

The evaluation process is guided by the following criteria:

- "Excellence"
- "Impact"
- "Implementation"

Particularly relevant aspects are:

- Market potential
- European added value - why EU funding instead of national funding?
- Unique selling point (USP)
- Implementation capacities, development potential and international strategy of the applicants

The decision on which projects to be funded is based on the scores obtained during the assessment. The applications with the highest scores will be promoted as long as the budget lasts.

Who can apply?

Only for-profit SMEs can apply.

The prerequisite is the fulfillment of the SME criteria of the European Union and location in an EU member state or a Horizon 20 Associated country.

Research service providers can only be subcontracted if this is a necessity that can be well explained.

When?

Applications for the SME Instrument for Phase 1 and 2 may be submitted on an ongoing basis at any time.

The evaluation of the project application will take place following pre-determined deadlines ("cut-off dates"). There are usually four cut-off dates per year. Applications must be submitted online and can then be revised at any time up to the cut-off date.

Cut-off dates 2018/2019:

Phase 1: 7 November 2018; 13 February 2019; 7 May 2019; 5 September 2019; 6 November 2019

Phase 2: 10 October 2018; 09 January 2019; 3 April 2019; 5 June 2019; 9 October 2019

The first subsidies (advance payments) are to be paid in phase 1 about three months and in phase 2 about six months after the cut-off date.

SME in Research

What qualifies as SME:

- > Legal definition of European Commission
- > National Contact Point for SMEs in Research

Transfer-oriented Network of Universities in Saxony-Anhalt

Transfer-oriented network of the universities in Saxony-Anhalt as partner of Saxony-Anhalt's businesses:

- > www.kat-kompetenznetzwerk.de