

Distinctly Birmingham

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION STEERING GROUP MEETING

Agenda item 6: Plans for Horizon 2020 workshops aimed at SMEs

INTRODUCTION

The 2014-2020 Research and Innovation programme is called Horizon 2020. One of the key, integral differences between Horizon 2020 and the previous Framework programmes is a much stronger commitment to ensuring the projects have a real impact outside academia and that there are opportunities for organisations outside of the 'traditional' University applicants for this type of project.

Horizon 2020 and SMEs

Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are encouraged to participate across the whole Horizon 2020 programme. They can engage in collaborative projects as part of a consortium and they are supported through a new dedicated SME instrument designed specifically for highly innovative smaller companies. The integrated approach and simplification efforts should lead to a minimum of 20%, or about € 8.65 billion¹, of the total combined budgets of the specific objective 'Leadership in enabling and industrial technologies' (LEITs) and the 'Societal Challenges' going to SMEs. The SME instrument will be crucial in achieving this target. Over the course of Horizon 2020, at least € 3 billion will be allocated to the SME instrument. SMEs are eligible for support across the entire H2020 programme.

Horizon 2020 seminars aimed at SMEs

The European Team at Birmingham City Council proposes to hold two seminars (one in April, one in May) in conjunction with the Europe Association stakeholders and particularly the Universities. The seminars will explain the Horizon 2020 opportunities that are out there for SMEs and to encourage partnerships between these SMEs and Europe Association stakeholders to help shape future H2020 projects.

The April seminar will focus on general SME opportunities in the Horizon 2020 programme, namely the Horizon 2020 SME Instrument, EUREKA Eurostars and Fast Track to Innovation Pilot

The SME Instrument is targeted at all types of innovative SMEs showing strong ambition to grow. Only 'for profit' SMEs can apply.

Eureka Eurostars is specifically dedicated to R&D performing SMEs

FTI promotes close-to-the-market innovation activities.

Although there are 'deadline' dates throughout the year these are rolling programmes. Evaluation begins at submission, not closing date.

The April seminar would include:

- An overview of Horizon2020 (including case studies of previous SME related, EU funded Research and Development projects)
- Presentation from Innovate UK and/or EEN describing the programme, offering guidance on applications, and signposting to further sources of support and advice
- Presentation on EUREKA Eurostars and FTI initiatives
- Discussion

The May seminar will be focussed on particular Horizon 2020 calls that are not SME-specific, where universities or other organisations are developing project ideas and are seeking a SME partner. This would be a much tighter format than the proposed April seminar and would be more of a partnership brokerage workshop. This could include:

- An overview of Horizon2020
- Presentations from BCC, GB&WM Universities and other stakeholders on their Horizon 2020 project ideas where they are seeking a SME partner
- One or more case study examples of local SMEs that have been involved in EU R&D projects
- Discussion

Collaboration with EEN (Enterprise Europe Network) on the event would ensure that we get the information to the right people. This is also a good opportunity to introduce the mentoring offer discussed at previous association meetings.

Questions for the Association:

- What are views of the Association on holding a seminar for SMEs focussed on the H2020 SME Instrument/Eurostars/FTI in April?
- What are the views of the Association on holding a brokerage workshop for SMEs in May on other Horizon 2020 opportunities? This seminar would require more involvement from Universities on potential linkages between them and SMEs on H2020 bids. Should this be about the general WM universities offer to SMEs in H2020, or should we focus on one or more specific H2020 calls?
- Should we set up a steering group (this could be virtual) of the Association's business intermediary and university partners to help plan these workshops?

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