

ANNEX 6

TOWARDS A BETTER EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS:

THE NEW EUROPE INNOVA PROMOTION PILLAR

1. INTRODUCTION

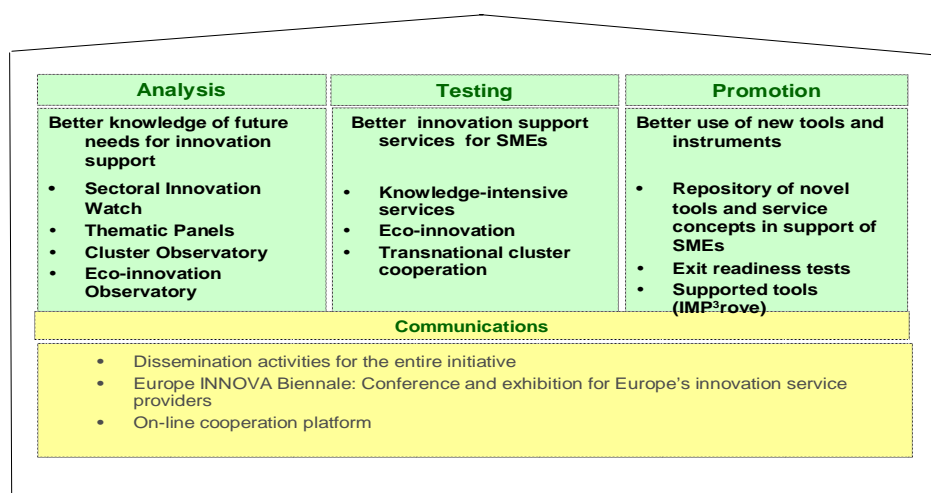
Europe INNOVA is a European innovation policy initiative initially established under FP6¹ to foster networking and mutual learning among innovation practitioners and to contribute to a better understanding of innovation patterns in different industrial sectors. Entering into the second phase as an initiative supported under CIP-EIP², Europe INNOVA reorients its efforts towards delivering effective business support packages to European SMEs. With the new generation of Europe INNOVA under CIP-EIP, the emphasis shifts from support to the identification and dissemination of good practice to the testing and practical implementation of new or better tools through public-private partnerships.

The CIP-EIP, established in support of enterprises and particularly SMEs, sets out new objectives for actions supported under Europe INNOVA. The mission of the new Europe INNOVA is to develop and leverage novel or better tools and business support packages in support of innovative SMEs thereby helping them to innovate better and/or faster. This commitment will be reflected in the performance indicators against which the success or failure of this initiative will be measured in the future. It is expected that Europe INNOVA will act as a test laboratory for new or better innovation support mechanisms that will be widely used by other actors.

Europe INNOVA aims at having a real and measureable impact on the innovation performance of innovative SMEs. To fulfil this objective, more attention needs to be paid to the promotion of projects' results and their wider exploitation in the long perspective. The new tools and instruments developed and tested under Europe INNOVA will have to demonstrate that they meet real needs and can be practically deployed and sustained after the termination of the project. This requires additional and dedicated efforts to promote their further use and to assess their practical impact. Therefore, a new promotion pillar "Sustainability of novel European innovation support tools" is foreseen as an integral part of the new "Europe INNOVA house".

The new architecture of the Europe INNOVA can be summarised as follows:

Europe INNOVA II: The new architecture



¹ 6th Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities, Specific Programme 2 "Structuring the European Research Area".

² Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (2007-2013), Specific Programme "The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme".

The new Europe INNOVA promotion pillar will contribute to a better exploitation of the results achieved by the pilot actions launched under Europe INNOVA, thus further raising the impact of EU-funded innovation projects. The main indicators set out by the EIP Work Programme 2009 measuring the success or failure of Europe INNOVA actions are:

- Number, type and impact of new concepts, methods and approaches developed, tested and promoted;
- Number of SMEs having benefited through active involvement in the testing of the new concepts and the impact on their innovation performance;
- Number of innovation professionals across Europe, who shared directly or indirectly the knowledge gained from developing, testing and promoting the new concepts;
- Number, type and impact of new methods and tools proposed to the European Enterprise Network;
- Level and impact of liaising with related initiatives across Europe, demonstrating the openness of the Europe INNOVA initiative.

The rationale and concept of the new pillar are based on the experience gathered during the first phase of Europe INNOVA. Although the active promotion of the results had not been originally envisaged this new orientation was discussed and further developed with the Europe INNOVA partners on a voluntary basis. The idea evoked a positive response from the Europe INNOVA partners and was assessed further during thematic workshops organised by some projects. Different options of how to promote the projects' main deliverables were examined as part of the "exit strategy" for the projects, resulting in the proposals of different strategies to be implemented. Altogether, this contributed to a better exploitation of the results of Europe INNOVA projects.

A number of lessons were learned from this process of defining tailored "exit strategies" for the different Europe INNOVA projects. First of all, it had to be accepted that not all projects would result in effective solutions that could be easily implemented. Evidently, not all challenges and market failures can be met successfully, which should not always be perceived as a failure. Secondly, different options may exist to follow-up a project, ranging from self-sustainability to the commercial or free of charge exploitation of the results by others. Therefore, it appeared, thirdly, to be very important to clear IPR issues well in advance. Fourthly, specialised expertise from outside the projects often helped to provide a neutral assessment of the viable options and to involve external stakeholders actively into the assessment process.

The new promotion pillar will build-upon this experience and follow in the future a more consistent and systematic approach with a view to maximising the practical impact of Europe INNOVA initiatives, as defined by the above-mentioned performance indicators. The further exploitation of the results by integrating them into sustainable solutions is now recognised as a key objective and requires therefore full attention. Taking this into account, the promotion pillar will undertake the following main activities:

- Establishment of a "Repository of novel tools and service concepts" in order to maintain and promote best results developed by the first and the second generation of Europe INNOVA projects;

- Establishment and facilitation of a Group to liaise with the partners in the Enterprise Europe Network and associated members to the Enterprise Europe Network (like EBN) to enhance the uptake of novel tools and service concepts by the potential implementing partners and to involve them in the process of formulation of exit strategies;
- Assistance to the new generation of Europe INNOVA projects in formulating and validating suitable exit strategies to sustain the provision of services after the termination of projects.

In addition, specific exploitation actions may be proposed under the promotion pillar depending on a project's exit strategy. If the exit strategy proposes as a 1st step to undertake specific tasks aiming to further promote outputs that are sufficiently mature for deployment into wide use, these tasks would be included in a specific separate promotion project, taking into account the specific characteristics of the exit strategy. To begin with, the projects IMP³rove and ip4inno are proposed as first candidates to be further promoted by specific actions.

2. THE NEW EUROPE INNOVA PILLAR: SPECIFIC ACTIONS

The new promotion pillar of Europe INNOVA is expected to further promote the use of the developed and tested novel tools and services. Experience shows that making this a reality requires efforts beyond the dissemination of the results of pilot schemes. At present, the risk of deliverables of pilot projects being outdated or even forgotten before they are ready for further implementation is high. The main reasons for this are twofold: with the end of a project, the project teams which developed and tested the new approaches are usually abandoned so that no continuous support for the further promotion exists; secondly, and in addition to the first point, spreading new ideas around and finding institutional support for them is usually a lengthy process. The new promotion pillar of Europe INNOVA aims at improving this situation by bridging between the pilot projects and the further implementation of their results by institutional players.

In order to further promote the results of Europe INNOVA projects and to ensure a high impact, the following tasks shall be undertaken:

2.1. Promotion of project results: the repository of novel tools and service concepts

The first generation of Europe INNOVA projects developed and tested a large number of novel tools and service concepts, many of which proved to be of high potential in support of innovative SMEs at European level. These novel tools and service concepts are now available and ready for deployment. It is the goal of the new Europe INNOVA to maintain the best of them and to leverage them, as widely as possible, into new or better innovation support services provided by established innovation agencies. This would allow maximising their impact and valorising the investments already made in them.

The "Repository of novel tools and service concepts" aims to maintain the most promising results of the first and the second generation of Europe INNOVA projects, with the objective to encourage and facilitate their uptake by potential implementing partners and to deliver complete and practical information about their utility and implementation methods. Under this action, the following specific activities are envisaged:

2.1.1. Design and technical architecture of the repository

The Repository is envisaged as an on-line database in the form of a digital library containing selected tools and service concepts developed under Europe INNOVA and, possibly, other European innovation policy initiatives. The following functionalities could be assured:

- User friendly interface including all kind of support services (print, mail, help etc.);
- Clear, simple and intuitive navigation system;
- Precise search engine to index and provide access to resources (allowing searching the repository for key words, phrases, etc.);
- Interactive rating system allowing users to evaluate the tools on-line;

- Clear sorting system arranging the content in function of categories, names, dates, ratings, platforms and other predefined criteria;
- A feedback function for users allowing them to comment on tools and features of the repository.

2.1.2. Selection, extraction and validation of novel tools and service concepts

It is proposed to select the most promising tools and service concepts from among the available deliverables of the first generation of Europe INNOVA projects and present them in the repository. The selection process will be based on the following validation criteria:

- Expected or detected impact of the project and expected benefits from its results;
- Relevance of the final deliverable i.e. whether it responds to a real demand (sector, branch, etc.);
- State of development and implementation readiness of a tool or service concept;
- The quality and novelty of the proposed solution;
- The potential of the deliverable to become a benchmark and to serve as a model for other initiatives;
- The potential of the deliverable to have a spin-off effect, to inspire concrete actions like exchange of experience, methodologies, tools, know-how, information, etc.;
- Levels of resources required for implementation, critical success factors, the potential of the deliverable to be adapted for different environments and sectors.

At a later stage, the same methodology of selection, evaluation and insertion could be applied to the new generation of projects (when the deliverables are available). In addition, it is proposed to group the deliverables in function of sector, target audience, type of tool or service and needs they respond to. This would allow users to browse the repository by the above mentioned criteria and their combinations by marking their preferences.

2.1.3. Description and presentation of selected novel tools and service concepts

The Repository will provide detailed information on the selected tools and service concepts and present them in the best possible manner. For this purpose, a standard template will be developed, including a description of the relevant tool or service concept, the delivery mechanisms, the expected and detected impact, main challenges, success factors, levels of resource required, possible synergies and complementarities with other tools and services. Additionally, aspects related to transnational transfer and implementation modalities such as legal framework and funding conditions, assessment and recommendations on ideal implementation environment, required documentation and procedures, target audience, etc. could be treated. Where applicable, case studies could be included.

2.1.4. Intellectual Property issues

Europe INNOVA is in the process of being registered. Similarly, it will have to be ensured that the tools and instruments developed under Europe INNOVA can be widely used on a non-discriminatory basis. More attention will therefore have to be paid to IP related issues which requires specific attention and expertise. Under the new promotion pillar, such advice will be provided, in close cooperation with the Joint Research Centre, in order to timely clarify open issues related to Intellectual Property rights, especially as concerns the ownership of the tools and services and the conditions for their further use by others.

2.2. Sustained service provision: exit strategies for Europe INNOVA projects

Experience from the first Europe INNOVA phase shows that discontinuation of projects' activities after their termination can jeopardise achieved results as they quickly cease to be available and of value to the beneficiaries. This might hinder the general impact of projects. To remedy this, the new generation of Europe INNOVA platforms, such as the European Innovation Platform for Knowledge Intensive Services (KIS-IP) and the European Innovation Platform for Eco-innovation (Eco-innovation-IP), will have the obligation to formulate timely exit strategies as a part of their project activities. Such exit strategies are plans of actions to be developed and implemented by the project partners aiming to transfer the knowledge into intermediary environments best placed to offer it as business support packages after the project's end.

Several Europe INNOVA sectoral partnerships have already kicked-off the discussion on the potential future of their projects beyond Europe INNOVA. These consultations proved the worth of the exit strategy concept and revealed the need for providing external support and expertise to consortia, especially when it comes to the identification of potential partners to take over the activities of projects. Taking into account these experiences, specific assistance to the new generation of Europe INNOVA platforms is envisaged under the new pillar seeking to complement the efforts of the project partners where it has been proven necessary or advantageous.

The concept of “exit strategies” goes far beyond the idea of “dissemination of results”, as applied by most funded actions. An "exit strategy" refers to a consistent plan of actions to be developed and implemented by the project partners aiming at leveraging projects into sustainable operational models. Exit strategies therefore identify and analyse concrete options and modalities for transferring knowledge into intermediary environments that would make the developed services available on the market after the termination of the projects, taking into account well identified needs and best available options to ensure effectiveness.

2.2.1. Defining an exit strategy – assistance services

The new generation of Europe INNOVA will have the obligation of formulating an exit strategy as a part of the project proposal. It is proposed to contribute to this process and provide the project partners with assistance and practical guidance on how to address this issue more concretely and effectively throughout the project cycle. The main assistance tasks that could be envisaged within the framework of this action are:

- Identifying and implementing cooperation methods with the KIS-IP and Eco-innovation-IP projects, establishing and maintain close linkages with them throughout the whole projects' lifespan;
- Establishing contacts with targeted innovation service providers from the Enterprise Europe Network with a view to involve them in the development and validation process of exit strategies;
- Focusing projects' exit strategies on well identified needs of innovative SMEs;
- Arranging broader exposure of projects' activities and results, raising awareness and stimulating the uptake of service packages and tools by innovation service providers

from the Enterprise Europe Network and associated European networks (channelling services);

- Actively supporting dissemination of project deliverables and results;
- Defining specific guidelines for each project containing concrete recommendations on the formulation of exit strategies and their further implementation.

2.2.2. A customized approach to projects – towards more accurate exit strategies

In order to promote the developed tools in the most accurate way there is a need to deepen the analysis of the specific market failures that they aim to address. Exit strategies can prove useful in this regard and help to assess the needs, problems, future trends and market failures to be tackled with the innovation support action. In this context, the subsidiarity and effectiveness test should be included in exit strategies. Such a test would allow determining what should best be done at EU level as well as assessing ex-ante the expected results and impact so as to define the most effective way to address the market failure in practice.

It seems that the following options for a further promotion of tools are possible: First, a free of charge uptake and maintenance of a tool by the potential implementing partners; second, an uptake and maturing of a tool encouraged by financial incentives in the form of a top-up grant; and, thirdly, a full reimbursement of the implementing costs. The result of the subsidiarity and efficiency test would clarify which option is most appropriate and help to develop the proper actions to be taken in order to promote the tool, i.e., an accurate exit strategy.

To effectively support the project partners, individually tailored practical guidelines on the formulation of exit strategies and their further implementation need to be prepared. These guidelines should be based on the assessment of the effectiveness and suitability of possible scenarios (exit to different environments). The guidelines will therefore have to address, among others, the following issues:

- What are the possible exit scenarios for a given project? How do they compare, what are the pros and cons?
- What are the criteria for selecting the viable options?
- What best could be done at the EU level to promote a given tool (subsidiarity test)?
- What sequence of steps or functions should an effective exit strategy cover?
- What are the most fitting environments for the transfer of tools and services developed by projects? What measures could be applied to promote and facilitate the take-up?
- What measures could be taken to enhance the involvement of potential implementing partners in the formulation and validation process of exit strategies?

- What measures could be taken to assure a high and sustainable impact of an exit strategy in terms of scope, expertise of implementing partners, quality of the delivered services by implementing partners, their resources and others?
- What measures could be taken to effectively communicate exit strategy?
- How could planning for exit strategies be more effectively integrated into projects?
- What actions are needed to protect the IP developed?

Each project should be treated individually and the guidelines should be summarised in a report that could include concrete examples and case studies, where applicable. This would make it easier to decide how to follow-up funded projects in the best possible manner, by either further promoting the tool or taking specific actions for their further implementation.

2.2.3. Assuring a broader exposure of projects' activities and results – encouraging the uptake of tools

The new Europe INNOVA generation aims at the development and further deployment of better innovation support. This is an ambitious task which requires full support. Potential users need to be activated and a continuous dialogue with them established. To this end the following activities are planned to be carried out:

- Establishment of a continuous interface with the Enterprise Europe Network and associated partners;
- Close cooperation with the INNO-Partnering Forum that will bring together European innovation agencies and cluster organisations to facilitate mutual learning and trans-national cooperation;
- Organisation of specific workshops to present the novel tools and service concepts developed by the KIS-IP and Eco-IP projects could be organised.

What is needed is a closer cooperation between regional, national and European innovation support mechanisms. If Europe INNOVA shall successfully act as a laboratory for the development and testing of new tools and instruments in support of innovation, a more integrative and open approach must be followed in order to identify needs and scope for European action in this field. This will also help to leverage the benefits of pilot actions beyond the initial consortium.

2.3. Adaptation: liaising with Enterprise Europe Network innovation experts ³

The challenge of the new Europe INNOVA is to leverage the results of projects, as widely as possible into services provided by established innovation support providers. Partners in the Enterprise Europe Network have a particularly high potential to take up the developed novel tools and service concepts and to refine them into real business support packages. By establishing and facilitating a Group to liaise with partners in the Enterprise Europe Network and associated members to the Enterprise Europe Network (like EBN), the new pillar is expected to lay foundations for a mutual operational awareness and for the permanent flow of inputs between Europe INNOVA projects and potential implementing partners. This will help to involve them in the process of formulating and validating suitable exit strategies for the new generation of Europe INNOVA.

The Group would allow the Europe INNOVA community and the Enterprise Europe Network partners to jointly work out measures for a better exploitation of project results. The added value of such a direct link would lie in the possibility of elaborating practical solutions in a flexible and adaptive framework. This would also contribute to a continuous update and improvement of the services provided by the Enterprise Europe Network partners, by implementing mature solutions and adapting services to “better practice” as developed and tested under Europe INNOVA.

2.3.1. Composition of the Group

The Group would consist of representatives from the Enterprise Europe Network and associated European networks and from the Europe INNOVA community. The members will be selected by the external contractor facilitating the new Europe INNOVA promotion pillar, taking into account different relevant areas to be covered.

The Enterprise Europe Network and associated European networks and the Europe INNOVA community could be appropriately represented in the Group. One additional member could represent the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI) as a person responsible for the animation of the network. The Group will be chaired by a representative from a regional or national innovation agency, thus ensuring the full involvement of stakeholders in Europe INNOVA activities.

2.3.2. Working methods, organisation, special meetings

The Group will meet up to three times per year for special meetings. Each meeting could be devoted to an in-depth treatment of identified key problems notably the analysis of novel tools and service concepts developed by Europe INNOVA and their adaptability to the Enterprise Europe Network and, optionally, other networks. Members of the Group could be invited to organise the meetings locally in order to further learn about the different environments of service provision.

The Group will prepare Annual Reports and a final report to be delivered by the end of the project that will summarise the main work results and provide concrete policy

³ All references in the present information note to the Enterprise Europe Network are without prejudice to the work programme of the EACI, that takes into account the Commission's annual guidance note and the absorption capacity of the EACI.

recommendations. The policy recommendations could be, where applicable, supported by concrete examples and case studies.

3. Specific initiatives in support of “better innovation support” and future perspectives

The requirements for effective innovation support are constantly changing. Europe INNOVA is perceived as a laboratory for developing and testing new tools and instruments to help innovative SMEs to innovate faster and/or better. However, the most decisive test for the success or failure of this initiative is to what extent such new support mechanisms will be ultimately used by regional and national innovation agencies, the Enterprise Europe Network or other innovation professionals. This requires additional and dedicated efforts that go beyond the objectives and lifetime of a pilot project.

In the future, all deliverables resulting from Europe INNOVA will receive specific attention with a view to promoting their further use and uptake. Europe INNOVA is not a research programme, but a policy initiative that aims at “better innovation support”. This approach will be vigorously applied in the future. It is evident that the new promotion pillar is yet another step in this direction. To have a real impact, efforts must go beyond that.

Under the first Europe INNOVA, a number of promising new tools and instruments in support of innovation have been developed and successfully tested. It would be the wrong signal not to fully exploit them. However, this requires additional efforts in order to secure the results and to put them into practice. Therefore, and in addition to the key actions of the new promotion pillar as described above, two more actions are proposed under this new activity, aiming at promoting the results of former projects funded under Europe INNOVA and PRO INNO Europe.

3.1.1. IMP³rove Innovation Management Performance with Sustainable IMPact II (IMP³rove II)

In order to enhance the performance and growth of SMEs by improving their capacity to manage innovation, the online IMP³rove platform was developed and tested following a previous call for tender under Europe INNOVA. This action was prepared in close cooperation with Member States and aimed to address a specific market failure in this area. As a result, the European Commission has become the owner of the output of the project and is now interested to make it available for further use as widely as possible.

The IMP³rove approach is based on an online self assessment tool on innovation management combined with an integrated personal consulting process and a systematic quality assurance process for the services rendered. It has been extensively tested with more than 2000 enterprises across Europe. The results have shown that the approach meets the needs of SMEs while helping innovation management consultants to provide services to SMEs in a more efficient manner. However, in many Member States there is a lack of qualified innovation management consultants offering affordable services to innovative SMEs. IMP³rove aims at addressing this market failure, by providing a framework for “training the trainers” and new certified innovation support services.

In order to promote the wider use of the IMP³rove services by public and private innovation support providers, the IMP³rove II will support the roll out of these services on a broad scale across Europe. To this end, the IMP³rove platform is intended to be maintained and further promoted as a common standard for measuring innovation management performance at the European level. In addition, certified benchmarking reports will enable SMEs to demonstrate their excellence in innovation management and consequently facilitate their access to venture

capital and public funding. The project will also ensure the maintenance and further development of the software, data gathering and validation as well as the establishment of train-the-trainer courses. These courses will cover innovation management in general as well as the IMP³rove tools.

The IMP³rove services shall be provided on a non-discriminatory and a non-profit basis predominantly to intermediaries such as the Enterprise Europe Network. As the need to use IMP³rove tools may differ across Member States and their regions, depending on the existence of the market and/or the availability of the tools that are perceived as equivalent, the adoption of the IMP³rove tools will be optional for the Network members. Consequently, their adoption will not imply any additional funding for the network besides the training budget that has already been made available.

The project shall also develop and implement a strategy to ensure the further maintenance of the platform on a self-sustainable basis. The existing intellectual property rights generated by the IMP³rove project will be transferred to the future partners also involving a neutral certifying body under the condition that they will be maintained and continually adapted to SMEs needs.

3.1.2. Intellectual Property for Innovation II (ip4inno II)

The current ip4inno project aims to raise the awareness and usage of intellectual property by SMEs. National Patent Offices developed and tested under the leadership of the European Patent Office (EPO) and other partners under the PRO INNO Europe initiative a set of train-the-trainers modules, based on the best available training material found in this area. These modules serve to enhance the competence of IP trainers in Europe, who work directly with SMEs. The unique position of the project participants resulted in a high added value for SMEs which took part in the field tests in a large number of European countries. To fully capitalise on the investment and to promote their wider use by public and private innovation support providers, the modules need to be maintained and further promoted to attain self-sustainability in an open, equitable way.

Given the unique position of the project participants and their ownership of the intellectual property rights, the maintenance of this business support service shall be carried forward by the current partnership. The key activities to be supported include the maintenance and further development of the teaching modules and information material developed by ip4inno. In addition, through the cooperation with the Enterprise Europe Network and interested national patent offices, the project will extend the geographical coverage and will for this purpose adapt and localise the learning material.

3.1.3. Future exploitation initiatives – roll out of best available solutions at a large scale

As said before, Europe INNOVA enters into a new and more ambitious stage. The challenge is to practically deploy the most promising new tools developed with European support as widely as possible. This requires concentrating on a limited number of challenges to be addressed, as well as involving regional and national funding agencies pro-actively into this process. The objective is to encourage Member States and their regions to integrate “better innovation support” practices as widely as possible into their own regional and national programmes and measures in order to roll them out at a large scale. At the same time, the

services provided by the Enterprise Europe Network in support of innovation need to be updated and improved on a continuous basis.

In this respect, the new promotion pillar under Europe INNOVA should be considered only as a first step to better leverage the results from European pilot actions. More ambitious tracks, such as the Art. 13b of the CIP, will have to be explored and followed in the future in order to maximise their impact. In the coming years, many new tools and instruments will be developed and tested at European level that could be considered for further regional and national implementation. The EIPC should be closely associated to the timely identification of the most promising tools and instruments that offer potential for further use. In the next round of Europe INNOVA even more emphasis should be given to provide more incentives to further implement better innovation support practices at large scale.