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Are you an innovative, high-flying small or medium-sized business with European and global ambitions? Are you looking for substantial funding to develop and scale up your idea? And could you make use of business development resources and coaching to take your company forward? Then the EIC SME Instrument is for you.

Since 7 November 2017, the [EIC SME Instrument](#) ^[2] and [EIC Fast Track to Innovation \(FTI\)](#) ^[3] are a central part of the [European Innovation Council \(EIC\) pilot](#) ^[4], targeting radically new, breakthrough products, services, processes or business models that open up new markets.

This transition will bring the EIC SME Instrument to the next level and expand the reach of its benefits to the European innovation ecosystem. There is roughly €1.6 billion available to fund around 4000 small innovative companies.

New features under the EIC SME Instrument

The EIC SME Instrument's redesign will improve both its accessibility and the excellence of its selection process. Changes include:

- Full bottom-up selection: there are no longer pre-defined topics so entrepreneurs from all sectors of the economy can apply with their market-creating innovations.
- Simpler submission forms – the submission process is now easier with brand new submission forms

that have a simplified structure and content and a business-oriented language that is more adapted to the reality of entrepreneurs.

- More investors as expert-evaluators – the number of expert-evaluators with an investor profile has been significantly increased in the pool of experts in order to better review the market and investment related elements of proposals.

- Face-to-face interviews with selected Phase 2 applicants – this additional step after the remote evaluation will give expert-evaluators a better grasp of the proposals and make sure that only the best and most disruptive innovation ideas pass the cut.

EIC Fast Track to Innovation

Fast Track to Innovation (FTI) also becomes part of the European Innovation Council pilot. EIC FTI is a fully-bottom-up measure in Horizon 2020 promoting close-to-the-market innovation activities that is open to all types of participants. EIC FTI aims to reduce the time from idea to market and to increase the participation in Horizon 2020 of industry, SMEs and first-time industry applicants.

Apply here for [EIC SME Instrument](#) [5] and [EIC Fast Track to Innovation](#) [6]!

Since its launch in 2014 the SME Instrument has carved out a place for itself among the key accelerator programmes in Europe. The programme has demonstrated its ability to identify radically innovative businesses in Europe and invest in their growth. As a result, there are now more than 2800 highly innovative small and medium-sized enterprises all around Europe that benefit from equity-free financial support, individualised business coaching and targeted business acceleration services.

The European Innovation Council pilot supports top-class innovators, 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

For more information read our [Guidelines for Applicants](#) [7].

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[1] <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/news/eic-sme-instrument-calls-open>

[2] <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/horizons-2020-sme-instrument>

[3] <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/fast-track-innovation-fti>

[4] <https://ec.europa.eu/research/eic/index.cfm>

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[6] <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/eic-fti-2018-2020.html>

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