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Frequently Asked Questions



COS-Art-7-001

Call for Expressions of Interest - 'Business Cooperation Centres' in third countries for the Enterprise Europe Network

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Budget availability and use of resources

1. Question: Could you let us know the membership fee for participation in EEN located in a country, which is neither a member state of EU nor a COSME-participating country?

Answer: There is no membership fee for the participation in EEN as a Business Cooperation Centre. However, as indicated in section 12 of the Call for Expressions of Interest, entities in third countries not participating in the COSME Programme are not entitled to receive financial contributions from its budget. The partners themselves must secure the required financial resources to implement the activities of 'Business Cooperation Centres' for the Enterprise Europe Network and shall demonstrate to EASME that they are able to secure sufficient financial resources.

2. Question: What would be the total amount required to establish a “Business Cooperation Centre” in Jordan?

Answer: There is no minimum budget required to take part in this call as the costs of providing the EEN services will vary between countries. As stipulated in section 12 of the call, “the partners themselves must secure the required financial resources to implement the activities of 'Business Cooperation Centres'” and they shall “demonstrate to EASME that they are able to secure sufficient financial resources”.

3. Question: What is maximum financing portion from the subsidy? What is minimum requirement for organization's contribution in budget? For how many years will financing be secured? Is there any financial conditions guide available?

Answer: Under this call for expressions of interest, applicants are not eligible for co-financing from the COSME Programme. It is not possible to establish a minimum budget requirement for contributing to the EEN activities since this will vary from country to country. All organisations submitting an application must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activities throughout the contractual period, and will need to demonstrate credibly that they have the necessary financial resources. Applicants will need to prove that they will receive co-financing for their EEN activities from national ministries (or other regional institutions) responsible for SME internationalisation and/or research & innovation policies.

Applicants should present a realistic planning for activities, outputs, outcomes and the needed financial and human resources, i.e.:

- Total annual financial resources committed for activities in euros ();
- Total number of staff assigned for activities (part-time and full-time);
- Total number of man-hours foreseen for activities.

See also Answer to Budget availability and use of resources question 2.

4. Question: is there any objection to cost recovery fees for services being charged by the Business Cooperation Centre for the provision of services or registration fees for major activities?

Answer: The general rule is that fees may not be charged to EU companies or EEN partner organisations for the common set of services and activities of the Network (see chapter 11 of the call text). However, SMEs could be asked to pay fees for event registration (for example); although EU companies should not be charged more than the standard fee applicable to any participant.

5. Question: If an event is organised by the Business Cooperation Centre to take place in its own market, is there available any support to SMEs travelling from the EU to participate in such events taking place in the third market?

Answer: No, the European SMEs travelling abroad for participating in BCC's events will not receive any EU funding.

6. Question: Financial capacity (page 22) "applicants are able to prove that they will receive co-financing for Enterprise Europe Network activities from national ministries (or regional institutions)". Is it possible to co-finance consortium activity from the organizations' fees which have agreements with applicant?

Answer: The partners themselves must secure the required financial resources to implement the activities of 'Business Cooperation Centres' for the Enterprise Europe Network and need to demonstrate that they are able to secure the necessary financial resources. All applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to ensure their activities throughout the contractual period, and will need to demonstrate credibly that they have the necessary financial resources. It will be considered an advantage if applicants can prove that they will receive co-financing for Enterprise Europe Network activities from national ministries (or regional institutions) responsible for SME internationalisation and/or research & innovation policies (see also Answer 4. of this section).

INFO DAY 7. Question: In the work programme part of the implementation strategy, do the "Financial resources committed (in EURO) need to include staff costs?

Answer: Yes, costs for human resources should be part of the financial resources committed in the annual work programme.

INFO DAY 8. Question: How can a consortium come up with a planning for the commitment of financial and human resources in the annual work programme if most events for the coming year are not yet encoded in the event calendar?

Answer: Applicants are asked to come up with an indicative planning for the year ahead. Business Cooperation Centres should have a general idea in how many company missions or brokerage events (or Network trainings or conference) they are willing to participate in the year ahead. In addition to co-organising an event encoded by an EU EEN partner, Business Cooperation Centres may also propose own brokerage events on the occasion of major fairs in the country.

NEW 9. Question: In the appendix part, within the table of expected results the last box "number of man-hours". Is this: the total number of expected worked hours by all the people involved in EEN during all 2015? For example: 38 worked hours/week x 52 x 1 full time staff. Should it includes/excludes the legal holiday periods? Or is it something else?

Answer: Applicants should indicate the total number of man-hours for all staff members foreseen for the Enterprise Europe Network project, i.e. the hours effectively spent on EEN activities from 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2015. This constitutes an indicative planning but should be consistent with your targets for EEN activities in 2015. In the majority of the cases most staff members of an organisation are unlikely to work full time on EEN. The number of staff and the number of planned man-hours allows calculating the effective full time equivalent for staff working on EEN.

Eligibility Criteria

1. Question: Is it possible for applicants established in the EU or COSME participating country to take part in a possible consortium with third-country organisations willing to apply for the abovementioned call for expressions of interest?

Answer: The participation of EU organisations in a consortium together with Third Country organisations is possible as long as they have a clear enduring presence in the third country in question and as long as they are well embedded in the national/regional business support environment (see page 8 of the call).

2. Question: Could you please advise whether a private consultancy in a third country (Russian Federation) is eligible to apply for the Enterprise Europe Network (2015 - 2020).

Answer: Yes, as stated in page 21 of the call, private bodies may participate if they properly constituted, present and operational in the country or region covered (in this case Russia).

3. Question: We would like to know if Hong Kong and Macao are eligible for this Call for Expressions of Interests – ‘Business Cooperation Centres’ in third countries for the Enterprise Network (2015-2020)

Answer: Yes, organisations based in both, Hong Kong and Macao are eligible to participate in this call. Please, note that it is in the interest of the Network’s efficiency that consortia are designed to reach the broadest possible geographical area.

4. Question: Would it be possible for a consortium based in a country whose participation in the COSME programme is not yet decided (e.g. Norway) to submit an application to this Call for Expressions of Interest?

Answer: Yes, a consortium which has already submitted a proposal in response to the EEN call (COS-EEN-2014-2-01), may as well participate in this Call for Expressions of Interest if the status of its country with regards to the COSME programme is not yet clear.

5. Question: Is Jordan considered one of the countries participating in the Programme for Competitiveness of Enterprises and SME’s (COSME) which are not eligible to participate in the call?

Answer: No. As of 7th July 2014 Jordan has not formally expressed any interest to join COSME. http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/initiatives/cosme/index_en.htm Entities from Jordan may therefore participate in the present call.

6. Question: Is an NGO that acts as an umbrella that embodies the three local chambers of industry in Jordan eligible to participate in a consortium to apply for the call?

Answer: Yes, see answer to Eligibility criteria question 2.

7. Question: Given that Argentina is not participating in the EEN, can Argentinian organizations apply for the establishment of a Business Cooperation Centre?

Answer: Yes, see answer to Eligibility criteria question 2.

8. Question: What kind of documentary proof shall be presented to evidence organizations required competence? What are minimal track record and experience criteria for organization to be eligible for participating in a consortium?

Answer: Applicants must have the necessary professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications to implement all proposed activities. This will be proved by the number of years of relevant experience. Applicants must be able to implement the activities described in COSME - Call for Expressions of Interest - the call text and fulfil the requirements for organisations and staff. Formally, there is no requirement of documentary proof.

9. Question: Is Colombia considered one of the countries participating in the Programme for Competitiveness of Enterprises and SME's (COSME) which are not eligible to participate in the call?

Answer: As Colombia is neither an EU Member State nor a participating country of the COSME programme, it is an eligible country for the present call.

10. Question: we would like to know the list of eligible countries for the call "COS-Art-7-001 - Call for Expressions of Interest - 'Business Cooperation Centres' in third countries for the Enterprise Europe Network (2015 - 2020)". CENPROMYPE - the Center for the Promotion of Micro and Small Enterprise in Central America is an entity under the Central American Integration System (SICA). The institution is composed of SICA member states that have signed and ratified the Convention: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Dominican Republic. We are based in El Salvador, San Salvador and already have experience with Business Development Centers. Are we eligible?

Answer: We cannot provide a list of all the eligible countries since it is not yet possible to list all the countries that have requested or intend to participate in the COSME programme and those not participating in COSME. As El Salvador is neither an EU Member State nor a participating country of the COSME programme, it is an eligible country for the present call. As stated on page 8 of the call, an indicative and non-exhaustive list of typical host organisations for 'Business Cooperation Centre' consortia in third countries may include:

- *SME organisations (including also EU-based business organisations or representative organisations of SMEs with a clear presence in the third country);*
- *National development agencies;*
- *Innovation agencies;*
- *Research organisations or foundations;*
- *Business and technology transfer support units of higher education institutions such as universities;*
- *Foreign direct investment and/or export promotion agencies;*
- *Other bodies tasked with improving the access of SMEs to support services for business partnering, internationalisation and innovation projects and other topics relevant to this call for expression of interest.*

11. Question: We started to elaborate the new proposal for EEN-Brazil 2015-2020. The current Brazilian consortium has only 3 official Partners: CNI (operated through the 27 International Business Centres), SENAI and IBICT. All the 3 partners operate throughout the Brazilian territory and all of them have a very good approach and relationship with another industrial institutions and SMEs. After having read the "Call for Expressions of Interest" for third countries, we noticed that consortia from large

countries must comprise 4 or 5 official partners. So, we would like to verify the possibility to keep only the 3 official partners (CNI, Senai and IBICT) at EEN Brazil 2015-2020? We assure that these 3 partners perform at the entire country, providing good quality of services and results.

Answer: In this case you need to justify it fully in your implementation strategy, by providing an exhaustive explanation of the complete geographical coverage of the country by the 3 Partners, by demonstrating the ability to provide the full range of services as described in the call. Applications will be assessed on the basis of their quality and the added value provided for the Network.

12. Question: We would like to know if Malaysia is eligible for this call?

Answer: As Malaysia is neither an EU Member State nor a participating country of the COSME programme, it is an eligible country for the present call.

13. Question: Is it right, that the participation of EU organization in a consortium together with the Third country is possible?

Answer: The participation of EU organisations in a consortium together with Third Country organisations is possible as long as they have a clear enduring presence in the third country in question and as long as they are well embedded in the national/regional business support environment (see page 8 of the call and Question 1 of this section).

INFO DAY 14. Question: in the call text it is recommended that applicants obtain the endorsement and ideally also financial support from government institutions. Are there any examples for this?

Answer: In the current Network, several consortia have successfully sought the support of their national policy makers. These partners receive financial support for EEN activities from their national governmental bodies.

INFO DAY 15. Question: Concerning the equality of conditions, may Business Cooperation Centres charge fees to EU EEN partners or EU SMEs for services delivered in the framework of the Enterprise Europe Network?

Answer: The general rule is that fees may not be charged to EU companies or EEN partner organisations for the common set of services and activities of the Network (see chapter 11 of the call text). For brokerage events organised by BCCs in 3rd countries, EU companies and Network members may be charged the normal registration fees applicable to any participant. BCCs may not charge additional fees for other services related to organisation of brokerage events OR other EEN services that are part of the common set of EEN activities (e.g. no fees for recruiting companies for incoming company missions should be charged by BCCs).

INFO DAY 16. Question: What if one organisation in the applicant consortium cannot credibly demonstrate their financial capacity to implement the project in the country (e.g. it the organisation has only recently been established)?

Answer: All applicants must demonstrate credibly their capacity to finance the activities planned in the annual work programme. However, the assessors will take into account the consortium's overall potential and aptitude to fund the planned activities. The overall application needs to convince assessors and must be in line with the admission criteria.

16. Question: If a country, for whatever reason, eventually does not sign MoU for participation in COSME with the European Commission, is it late for us to join EEN as BCC?

Answer: No. Organisations from such countries may indeed participate in the Network as a BCC if the country fails to sign the COSME International Agreement. Please note that there will be a second cut-off date in March 2015 to submit proposals for BCC membership. Organisations have (had) to consider their participation in the COSME call for proposals, which could lead to the signature of the framework partnership agreement and grant agreements for successful candidates whenever the COSME agreement would be signed. In this case, ongoing BCC memberships for this country will be phased out.

NEW 17. Question: We would like to learn what a EEN BCC is expected to do if it receives Expressions of Interest (EOI) from other BCCs in third countries and looking for cooperation from your country rather than finding EU partners? Shall such services provided be recorded?

Answer: Collaboration between different BCCs in different third countries will not be covered by Cooperation Agreement to be signed with EASME. As a consequence such activities cannot be recorded nor reported to EASME.

NEW 18. Question: Could you please give me more info about the eligibility of Third countries' participation in the COSME programme?

*Answer: Please see on COSME website for more information:
<http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/8441>*

Submission of proposals

1. Question: When we have completed and submitted the online form (EUSURVEY online form), we will get a PDF copy of implementation strategy. Shall we print it, sign it and send the paper copy (of the implementation strategy) to EASME by express post?

Answer: Yes. You should send the signed implementation strategy together with a letter of support from the EU Delegation in your country to the address below

European Commission

Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME)

Mr Jose Puigpelat

Head of Unit

COV2 11/101

B-1049 Brussels

Belgium - European Union

2. Question: This below link is the proposal and it is fill it online not like the last years paper?

Answer: Yes, indeed, the applications must be submitted electronically via the official EUSURVEY online submission form:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/751f0006-400b-c994-eee9-610accf0cc67>

3. Question: We have a question about documents “Description of Work” and “Work programme” Is there any special form for Work Programme? Are these two annexes – different documents and we must prepare two documents? Or should we somehow include work programme for one year in our description of work for 5 years(including PES)?

Answer: the work programme is part of the implementation strategy online submission form that all applicants will have to complete (please see section APPENDIX - Work programme and expected use of resources).

In the annual work programme applicants set their targets for the Enterprise Europe Network's main performance indicators , i.e. number of Partnership Agreements to be achieved, brokerage events and company missions to be organised, etc..

Applicants will also have to indicate the resources foreseen for the implementation of the Enterprise Europe Network project, including:

- *Total financial resources committed for activities (in euro)*
- *Total number of staff assigned for activities (part-time and full-time)*
- *Total number of man-hours foreseen for activities*

The work programme should only be prepared for the period 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015. EASME will then consult admitted partners on annual basis on new work programmes.

4. Question: Filing in the online EUSURVEY submission form, we encountered difficulties concerning subject of the financial resources: As it was mentioned in "5. Funding" all organisations, national budgetary authorities, governmental institutions or other donors supporting the project to be listed (and we suppose, alongside with their approx. financial contribution to the project?). The same time the chart field of the "Work programme and expected use of resources", Financial resources committed (euro) seems to contain the resources allocated to the project only by the Consortium Partners. So the question is: Estimating the annual budget in the chart do we have to divide all the resources obtained from stakeholders and/or national budgetary authorities between consortium partners or not mention any resources but Consortium Partners' own at all?

Answer: In the EUSURVEY online submission form under section 5 “Funding”, applicants should describe or indicate the global financial support provided by national budgetary authorities, governmental institutions or other donors (if applicable). However, in the work programme each Business Cooperation Centre in the consortium should come up with an individual annual planning for targets for performance indicators and the available resources (including financial and human resources). This is necessary in order to draw conclusions on the efficiency and performance of each partner in the consortium.

INFO DAY 5. Question: There are 2 deadlines for the submission of applications. Which deadline should apply?

Answer: Organisations may apply for any deadline, and applications are welcome from all over the world. In practice, we expect organisations from non-EU countries already working with the Network (currently 26), and some that have been preparing for some time, to be ready by 31 October 2014. Organisations from other countries may wish to wait until the 15 March 2015 deadline (or the year after) in order to ensure a high-quality proposal. This is a decision for the applicants.

INFO DAY 6. Question: We are a Mexican organisation with a branch in situated in Europe. Which EU Delegation is in charge of issuing the letter of support?

Answer: The letter of support should be issued by the EU Delegation in the country where the headquarters of the organisation is located, in this particular case the EU Delegation in Mexico.

INFO DAY 7. Question: What happens if there are competing applications from one and the same country?

Answer: In the event of multiple applications covering the same area within a given country, applications will be ranked according to their total score. The application with the highest score will be admitted as 'Business Cooperation Centre' for the Enterprise Europe Network. Depending on the number of qualitative applications received, EASME may recommend applicants to combine their applications in order to even further increase the quality. In particular cases, EASME may also reserve the right to exclude some organisations from a consortium application if deemed in the best interest for the overall performance of the Network. It should be noted by applicants that signature of the Cooperation Agreement with EASME will only follow upon successful completion of a refinement phase.

8. Question: One cut-off is on 31 October 2014, the next one on 15 March 2015. Will there be other cut-offs after these ones? Later in 2015 or in 2016 for instance? Or will the 15 March be the last deadline to apply for BCC countries for the whole 2015-2020 period?

Answer: EASME will evaluate what countries are joining as a results of both current cut-off dates before announcing another date, although it may be likely that another cut-off date will be announced later on for 2016-2017.

NEW 9. Question: 1. If we plan to submit the on-line application 1 month earlier before the deadline , can we just follow up sending the signed paper copy of the implementation strategy to EASME? Will it be too early for EASME to receive the paper applications? Also, should the “ letter of support” be sealed in an envelope?

The system has been set up and is ready for submission of applications. So, there shouldn't be any problem. Please send the signed paper copy of the implementation strategy and the letter support of the EU Delegation to EASME by registered mail (see call text for address).

NEW 10. Question: How will you assess the applications? Will you start assessing while the deadline is due and all applications are received? Or you will assess upon each application's arrival?

We will collect all applications after the deadline and start only assessing by 15 March (don't forget, there might be competing applications!).

NEW 11. Question: How long is the assessment period of this Call due on March 15?

It might take up to 2-3 months before we can inform applicants on the outcome of the assessment. Probably the assessment process will be completed faster though.

Performance indicators / outputs & outcomes

1. Question: One performance indicator is the "SMEs registered in official Enterprise Europe Network client database". Does this mean that all clients must be registered in Merlin in the future? What will be the policy privacy-wise? We are not sure it will be possible for us to use an outside CRM for our old clients.

Answer: This performance indicator refers to companies or other clients from the country or region covered, which have

- *Signed up to email alerts for EEN events and business and/or technology profiles on the public EEN webpage;*
- *Expressed interest in a business and/or technology profile via the public EEN webpage.*
- *OR company data entered by EEN partners (e.g. to send an expression of interest on the client's behalf to another Network partner).*

EASME will NOT require partners to transfer their CRMs to the Network's client database.

INFO DAY 2. Question: What happens if a Business Cooperation Centre receives an expression of interest for a partnership proposal of a local SME client via Email and not via the Network's Partnership Opportunities Database (POD)?

Answer: Business Cooperation Centres must always use the Network databases for dealing with such requests. Only this way will the centres' activities be recorded. BCCs must demonstrate that they contribute to the overall performance of the Network. The Network databases allow the centres to easily keep track and follow up their own activities and services delivered to local SMEs. This holds for all databases of the Network (i.e. events calendar, PAD, etc.). Most of the data for the BCCs' annual report is extracted from the Network's databases.

INFO DAY 3. Question: How will the annual activities reports look like?

Answer: Most of the data on the performance of the Business Cooperation Centres, EASME will extract from its databases, i.e. Partnership Opportunities Database, Partnership Agreements database, events calendar, EEN CRM or client database, etc. However, if an activity of a Business Cooperation Centre is not sufficiently reflected in the Network's databases, it will be possible for BCCs to describe these activities in the narrative part of the annual activity report to be submitted to EASME.

INFO DAY 4. Question: In which cases EASME may terminate the cooperation agreement with a particular Business Cooperation Center?

Answer: In the event of a repeated failure to reach the targets set in the work programme, EASME will consider the termination of the Cooperation Agreement. However, before these measures are taken, EASME shall offer operational support for the centre to meet the targets and to integrate fully into the Enterprise Europe Network. Training and mentoring will also be provided by European Network partners upon request by the BCC. The cooperation agreement also foresees termination for duly justified political reasons.

5. Question: On WP and budget estimation and commitments, is there any general reference figures? Like in average how many b2b activities each BCC organise annually, and how many Partnership Agreements achieved? Another figure would be how many enquiries from EEN members in average?

Answer: 'Partnership Agreements' are the most important deliverables / outcome performance indicators of the Enterprise Europe Network. It is also a performance indicator you may use to convince your national policy makers to fund EEN activities which will result in international business partnerships creating growth and employment in the EU and the third country. Applicants should estimate that the achievement of commercial partnership agreements may take up to 6 months, whereas the achievement of technology partnership agreements may even take longer potentially requiring a lengthy negotiation process. You should set the target for Partnership Agreements based on the number of b2b meetings planned and the number of partnership proposals encoded in the POD. The target should not be too low for the EEN project to create a tangible impact but not too high to appear unrealistic.

NEW 6. Question: Are all the performance indicators for BCCs also shared by EEN members in EU states? Or are they having a different set of indicators? This would help us to assess the level of common interest and possible response level we might get for partnership activities.

Answer: Business Cooperation Centres will focus on the transnational partnering of SMEs. For these activities the performance indicators with EU partners are identical. The achievement of international Partnership Agreements remains one of the main objectives of EU Network partners as well. In addition, EU EEN partners have further indicators related to other activities not part of the call for expressions of interest for BCCs in third countries.

NEW 7. Question: Number of Brokerage events and company missions targeted. Should we include "organised" AND "coorganised" events? Is there a way to distinguish between the two? As regards the Number of contributions

to network activities targeted. What is this? Should we include participation to sector group meetings, to annual conference, SAG meetings, working group meetings, training all together?

Answer: The performance indicator "Number of Brokerage events and company missions" does not distinguish between events "organised" and "coorganised". Thus, applicants should indicate the target for total number of events organised and/or coorganised for the 12 months in 2015.

The definition for the performance indicator "Active contributions to Network activities" is as follows: The number of contributions to Network activities including participations in annual conferences, training sessions, steering & advisory group meetings, sector groups, working groups, exchanges and mentorship scheme or other relevant Network events. Please add the target for all contributions planned in the first year.

NEW 8. Question: Further to a successful application after the submission deadline 15 March 2015, it will probably take another few weeks before the cooperation agreement can be signed by EASME and the applicant. How should we set the annual performance indicator targets in case the agreement with EASME is only signed in mid-2015? Should we set the targets for the entire year?

Answer: Yes! The performance indicator should be set indicatively for the entire year even if the consortium becomes only operational in mid-2015.

NEW 9. Question: While studying the template for "Implementation Strategy" listed in the "Call for Expressions of Interest", we have no idea how to better fill in the "APPENDIX-Work Programme and expected use of resources"(p.47), thus we would like to ask for your precious advice. In the table, it seems we need to put in performance indicators, but is it enough just fill in the indicators, or it is suggested that we elaborate the table by further pages, are there any page limitation on the elaboration?

Answer: Please insert only the targets for the main performance indicators of the Network for 2015 in the table. In the sections above in the implementation strategy you have sufficient space to outline your activities and availability of funding in more detail, i.e. description of work / or section funding. The overall implementation strategy should be drafted for the expected 7 years duration of the Cooperation agreement to be signed. While the WP should cover only the first year in the Network (2015). We will then launch annual work programme consultations from 2015.

Other

1. Question: Is participation in the Information Day which will take place in Brussels on 26th September, 2014 mandatory or optional for interested organization?

Answer: The participation in the Info day is optional. The information from the info day will be made available via the EEN website.

2. Question: Do we have to have ready consortium IT platform and website until 31 of October?

Answer: The consortium's website does not have to be ready by the 31st of October, however selected Business Cooperation Centres are expected to have it ready shortly after the signature of the cooperation agreement.

3. Question: Does the EU currently have priority countries for signing cooperation agreements with Business Cooperation Centres?

Answer: The EU does not have priority countries as such. Applications are welcome from any country. In practice, we expect organisations from non-EU countries already working with the Network (currently 26), and some that have been preparing for some time, to be ready by 31 October 2014. Organisations from other countries may wish to wait until the 15 March 2015 deadline (or the year after) in order to ensure a high-quality proposal. This is a decision for the applicants.

4. Question: Does the EU have a limit to the number of agreements it will sign?

Answer: No. There is no specific limit in the number of agreements to be signed.

5. Question: Providing the country Business Cooperation Centre meets the criteria, will an Agreement be signed regardless of the size or level of trade with the EU?

Answer: Yes

6. Question: SME Definition: Does this 2003 definition still hold?

Answer: Yes. This definition is still valid.

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/facts-figures-analysis/sme-definition/index_en.htm.

7. Question: Where could the applicants describe future plans to change the consortium composition? Is it ok to describe a possible future modification of the consortium (one additional partner, for instance) happening from, let's say, 2016, in the implementation strategy?

Answer: Applicants may use section 9. "Further information or explanations supporting the application" in the EUSUREY online form to explain possible future changes in the consortium. However, it should be noted that applications shall be evaluated on their current merit and NOT their potential future composition.

8. Question: The change of a coordinator in a consortium is a possibility during the 2015-2020 period?

Answer: Any amendment to the agreement must be the subject of a written supplementary agreement. The supplementary agreement may not have the purpose or the effect of making changes to the agreement which might call into question the decision awarding the agreement or result in unequal treatment of applicants for cooperation agreements. If the request for amendment is made by the coordinator, in agreement with the co-partners, it must send it to the Agency in good time before it is due to take effect.

9. Question: What is the difference between local cooperation partners (page 9 of the call, paragraph 6.f) and “other relevant stakeholders”, page 10 paragraph 7?

Answer: Past experience has shown that a number of EEN partners in third countries employed extensive "sub-networks" with organisations actively contributing to the project implementation, while not having signed a Cooperation Agreement with EASME. This approach may be replicated by new applicants and should (if applicable) be described under the section 'Local cooperation partners' in the EUSURVEY form. Business Cooperation Centres are strongly encouraged to sign formal collaboration agreements with their local cooperation partners specifying the exact terms of the cooperation and what contribution these organisation make to the project implementation.

On the other hand, the consortium is strongly encouraged to establish close working relations with all other relevant major service providers in the country or region dealing with both SME and European affairs. This cooperation may however be less formal.

INFO DAY 10. Question: Can services also be delivered to larger companies?

Answer: The main focus of the Enterprise Europe Network remains on small and medium sized enterprise. However, it is not excluded also to offer services to larger companies.

INFO DAY 11. Question: Does EASME offer any online and/or e-learning schemes?

Answer: EASME has already developed some e-learning modules and is currently considering further developments in order to make cost-efficient training opportunities available to the Business Cooperation Centres of the Network.

INFO DAY 12. Question: Does EASME have a template for the consortium agreement to be signed by the consortium partners? Will this consortium agreement be attached to the Cooperation Agreement?

Answer: EASME recommends partners to conclude consortium agreements including the rights and obligations of each partner. However, EASME will not be involved in this process and does not offer any templates. The consortium agreement will not be attached to the Cooperation Agreement to be signed with EASME.

INFO DAY 13. Question: what are the privileges and benefits joining the Enterprise Europe Network?

Answer: The privileges and benefits for organisations willing to join the Enterprise Europe Network are outlined in detail in section "Why doing business in the European Union?" and "Reasons to cooperate with the Enterprise Europe Network" in the call text. Moreover, organisations admitted to the Network shall benefit from

training sessions organised by EASME and mentoring support from EU Network partners.

INFO DAY 14. Question: Is it possible to get access to success stories achieved by the Enterprise Europe Network?

Answer: Success stories of the Network are available on the public webpage: <http://een.ec.europa.eu/success-stories/list>

INFO DAY 15. Question: What if there are is a delay in the assessment of the applications submitted? Will current members be excluded as of 1 January 2015 if the assessment is not yet completed?

Answer: Pragmatic solutions shall be found in order to avoid a contractual gap and to allow current members to continue working on the Enterprise Europe Network.

INFO DAY 16. Question: the call text indicates that there must be a project manager AND at least one back-up assigned to the project. Do you mean on consortium or partner level?

Answer: Each partner in the consortium needs to assign a project manager and at least one back up. This does not mean that these staff members need to be working full time on the project. They simply have to act as contacts for EASME and the EU EEN partners and deal with all daily operational issues.

INFO DAY 17. Question: are there any obligations for SMEs which want to benefit from EEN services?

Answer: There are no particular obligations. However, SMEs should be cooperative and should respond to requests for clarification for the partnership proposals they have published on the Network database. SMEs should also be willing to help EEN Business Cooperation Centres to report their deliverables, i.e. provide basic information on the partnership agreements they have signed with EU SMEs (i.e. in the Network's Partnership Agreement Database).

18. Question: Could you please advise us on the legal status of the Cooperation Agreement for Third Countries, including which legal jurisdiction it would come under as we are not part of the EU?

Answer: The model Cooperation Agreement attached to the terms of reference of the call stipulates: (ARTICLE I.10 - LAW APPLICABLE AND COMPETENT COURT)

The agreement is governed by the European Union law applicable and, on a secondary level, by the law of Belgium. Where the partner is legally established in a country other than a Member State of the European Union (the 'non EU partner'), the Commission and/or the non EU partner may bring before the Belgian Courts any dispute between the Union and the non EU partner concerning the interpretation, application or validity of the Agreement, if such dispute cannot be settled amicably. In such case where one party (i.e. the Commission or the non EU partner) has brought

proceedings before the Belgian Courts concerning the interpretation, application or validity of the Agreement, the other party may not bring a claim arising from the interpretation, application or validity of the Agreement in any other court than the Belgian Courts already seized.

19. Question: On the POD Database, would it be possible for us to have some statistics, like how many proposals are in there, and what is the type split (business vs technology vs research) and geographical split?

Answer: Applicants may use the public POD search engine to get an overview on the number partnership proposal currently available.

<http://een.ec.europa.eu/tools/services/SearchCenter/Search/ProfileSimpleSearch?shid=32db25cb-726f-43b0-8b5f-7742d0935799>

The POD currently includes 16.591 Business, 8099 Technology and 174 Research partnership proposals.

20. Question: How much co-branding are we allowed to do with EEN. I would like to know if there are guidelines for the website, and if it is possible to co-brand the participating consortium members?

Answer: Applicants should set up a separate Enterprise Europe Network website for the country or region to be covered. EASME will provide templates for this national EEN website. Moreover, Business Cooperation Centres may also build on the good practices developed by our current Network members. In addition to the national EEN website, Business Cooperation Centres should also promote EEN via their host structure websites and potentially disseminate EEN POD profiles via these pages. There, co-branding is certainly recommended. EASME may provide suggestions / ideas / concepts for the branding strategy once an application has been accepted.

21. Question: On the strategy and work programme, we might have specific focus-markets, for example, Germany, Netherland, UK, Denmark, and a few more. Could our work programme / activities focus more in these markets? Or it is required to have an equal focus in all EU states?

Answer: Your planned activities should cover the entire European market. However, it is certainly possible for applicants to put a greater focus on selected markets and/or sectors. In the course of your membership in EEN you may discover also further opportunities in markets / countries which were originally not your main focus. Every EU market has particular strengths in a certain sectors which should be discovered by EEN partners in third countries for the benefit of EU companies and SMEs located in your country.

22. Question: Where is it best to put the proposal on how the consortium will work on the 'key account management services', if and when a third country will be associated to H2020? Is it better to put the description for instance in work package 3, or in the "further information supporting the application", or somewhere else?

Answer: As for the KAM, the section "further information supporting the application" would be best suited. However, please mind that at this stage it is not explicitly

requested from applicants to demonstrate their operational capacity to offer KAM services. This shall be done in a separate procedure once a consortium has been admitted to the Network. Nevertheless, you may hint your intention and operational capacity to implement the KAM.

NEW 23. Question:It seems that only the project coordinator of BCC need to sign the implementation strategy. But we are not sure about the Cooperation Agreement. Do all the partners should sign the agreement or it can be also signed by the legal representative of the project coordinator?

Answer: At the time of the submission of the application, only the Project coordinator should sign the implementation strategy. If the application is successful, the cooperation agreement (incl. the impl. strategy as annex) will have to be signed by all applicants.

Contact:

Executive Agency for Small and Medium sized Enterprises (EASME)

Email EASME-COSME-EEN-CALL-ART7@ec.europa.eu

Website: http://ec.europa.eu/easme/index_en.htm