

TOP TECHNOLOGY TWENTE

THE UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE INNOVATION VOUCHER PROGRAM

1. OBJECTIVE

The UT is committed to expanding and enhancing its partnership with the business community in the coming years. To that end, the UT is investing in centers of expertise (COEs) that maintain ties with the business community in their disciplines and provide third parties with access to their facilities. Through the knowledge and expertise they offer, these centers of expertise play an important role in making the UT an accessible partner for knowledge-intensive SMEs.

The UT is offering 50 innovation vouchers valued at €10K¹ each to a pool of eligible centers of expertise for attracting new users. The targeted investment for “Top Technology Twente: The UT Innovation Voucher Program” is €500K: €400K from central university funds and €100K from COE funds. The funds will be invested in phases. In addition, a private cash contribution of at least €125K will be solicited from external partners.

This document describes the criteria and selection process for phase I, which comprises 20 vouchers. For this first phase, the university’s strategic business development (SBD) program will invest €160,000² (€8,000 per voucher) in central funds.

The eligible COEs are the European Membrane Institute (EMI), the Thermoplastic Composites Research Center (TPRC), the MESA+ NanoLab, the Experimental Center for Technical Medicine (ECTM), the Center for Service Robotics (LEO), the Virtual Reality Laboratory (VR-lab/T-Xchange) and the DesignLab. The UT accords these centers of expertise an important role in its strategic business development plan.

Objectives

- Acquaint knowledge-intensive SMEs³ with the UT’s centers of expertise.
- Enhance the centers’ accessibility.
- Attract new companies.⁴

2. SELECTION AND AWARD

The SBD program will select, review and award the innovation vouchers using the following process:

Step 1: Submit proposals (deadline 1 November 2015)

The SBD program invites the heads of the COEs to submit proposals (2 A4 sheets maximum). Each COE manager ranks his or her facility’s proposals as he or she sees fit.

Step 2: Select proposals

The SBD program will select those proposals that are eligible for an innovation voucher. During the selection process, SBD will determine whether the proposals meet the objectives and criteria of the voucher program. The baseline intent is to distribute the vouchers equally over the centers of expertise. Step two involves allocating the vouchers based on the actual proposals received, until the maximum number for this phase has been reached.

¹ The voucher’s value may not be paid to companies in cash.

² This is the investment from central university funds and not the investment by the center of expertise. Calculation: €400,000 / 50 vouchers * 20 vouchers = €160,000 invested by the SBD program (phase I).

³ A public or private legal entity that meets the definition of an SME as recorded by the European Commission on 1 January 2005.

⁴ Both domestic and foreign companies.

Step 3: Award vouchers (deadline 15 November 2015)

The SBD program will award the innovation vouchers to the winning proposals. The funds will be made available once a contract has been signed with external partners, at the latest in the summer of 2016.

The vouchers must be redeemed before the end of 2016.

3. CRITERIA

Proposals will be eligible for an innovation voucher if they meet all the following criteria:

- Novel: the proposal involves a company that has not used the facility before.
- Strategic: the proposal is aligned with the strategies of the university and the center of expertise.
- Private contribution: The company will contribute at least 25 percent of the total project cost in cash, with a minimum of €2.5K per voucher.

4. COORDINATORS AND SUPPORT

The heads⁵ of the centers of expertise will play a central role in both acquiring and ranking their facility's proposals.

The UT's strategic business development program will provide guidance to the COEs during negotiations with external partners, aided by the Kennispark Twente Foundation and the UT Innovation Lab. This guidance is designed to guarantee a consistent approach to IP and other terms and conditions.

The SBD program will also coordinate communications on behalf of the UT, Kennispark, Twente.com and Twenteboard.

5. PROJECT COST

The voucher value of €10K including VAT may be used for any necessary training, guidance, facility use or contract research at one of the COEs. Vouchers may not be combined, even to cover project costs from other centers; only one voucher is permitted per proposal.

6. REPORTING

After the voucher has been redeemed, the external partner will submit a brief report—which will also be used for PR purposes—to the strategic business development program that describes how the funds were used. This report should be no longer than one A4 sheet and should provide insight into the project's results and costs and any follow-up agreements with the company in question.

7. INFORMATION

For more information on "Top Technology Twente: The UT Innovation Voucher Program," please contact Marieke Hofste-Kuipers (m.kuipers@utwente.nl or 053-489-2042) in the strategic business development program.

⁵ Z. Borneman (EMI), H. Heerink (TPRC), A. Geldrop (LEO), G. Roelofs (MESA+ NanoLab), R. Burie (ECTM), M. Iliohan (DesignLab), R. Damgrave (Virtual Reality Lab).