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**COUNCIL DECISION ESTABLISHING THE SPECIFIC PROGRAMME  
IMPLEMENTING HORIZON 2020 - THE FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME  
FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION (2014-2020)**

**WORK PROGRAMME 2014–2015**

*6. Access to Risk Finance*

**INFORMAL DRAFT DISCUSSION DOCUMENT**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

This document is meant to facilitate discussions during the preparation of the work programme 2014–2015. It does not, at this point, cover all relevant aspects, and does not prejudge the outcome of ongoing interinstitutional negotiations on Horizon 2020 or internal work on cross-cutting aspects. Hence it remains subject to change. Information such as indicative budgets will be provided at a later stage.

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### ***Introduction to Access to Risk Finance***

Under 'Access to Risk Finance', Horizon 2020 will help companies and other types of organisation engaged in research and innovation (R&I) to gain easier access, via financial instruments, to loans, guarantees, counter-guarantees and hybrid, mezzanine and equity finance.

The priority for 2014-2015 is, above all, to continue and build on activities that have proved their worth in supporting R&I in 2007-2013: the Risk-Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF) and the Risk-Sharing Instrument for SMEs (RSI) in the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), together with GIF-1, the early-stage part of the High-Growth & Innovative SMEs Facility in the Competitiveness & Innovation Framework Programme (CIP). Horizon 2020's financial instrument facilities will operate in conjunction with those of COSME<sup>1</sup>, the successor to CIP.

The coming two years will also see a significant participation by Horizon 2020 in the proposed SME Finance Initiative<sup>2</sup>; the launch of a pilot facility supporting the technology transfer process; and a new focus on improving access to risk finance by larger midcap firms<sup>3</sup>. In addition, firms of all sizes, together with other types of organisation, will be able to get advice on how to make themselves more attractive to banks and potential investors. And to help prepare for new developments, studies will look into how best to encourage more business angel and crowd-funding investments in R&I; into the potential for pan-European venture capital (VC) funds-of-funds; and at the possibilities for an EU prizes scheme.

As in the previous programmes, debt and equity facilities will be run in a demand-driven manner, though the priorities of particular sectors or of other EU programmes will be targeted if top-up funding is made available. The focus remains on attracting private investments into R&I. As before, firms and other entities located in the EU or in non-EU countries associated with Horizon 2020<sup>4</sup> are eligible as beneficiaries unless otherwise specified<sup>5</sup>.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Investment Fund (EIF) will play an important role, as entrusted entities, in implementing each financial instrument facility on behalf of and in partnership with the European Commission<sup>6</sup>. For EIF, this role includes (as under FP7 and CIP) conducting calls for expressions of interest for selecting the financial intermediaries, such as banks and risk-capital funds, that will make the actual loans to or investments in SMEs and small midcaps. While EIB will make large loans directly, it will

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<sup>1</sup> COSME provides a) succeeding SMEG under CIP, a Loan Guarantee Facility (LGF) providing counter-guarantees and other risk-sharing arrangements for guarantee schemes (including co-guarantees where appropriate), plus direct guarantees and other risk-sharing arrangements for other financial intermediaries; b) succeeding GIF-2 under CIP, an Equity Facility for Growth (EGF) to enhance the supply of risk capital.

<sup>2</sup> The European Council of October 2013 is likely to consider a proposal for the SME Finance Initiative.

<sup>3</sup> There is no official or widely accepted definition of 'midcaps' at present. In implementing the Horizon 2020 financial instrument facilities and until an official definition is agreed, 'midcaps' are deemed to be enterprises comprising 250 to 3000 employees (or full-time equivalents). They are divided into 'small midcaps' of between 250 and 499 employees, and 'medium and large midcaps' of from 500 to 3000 employees. In line with the definition used in the 'SMEs' context, 'enterprises' are defined as in Article 1 of Title 1 of the Annex of Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC (OJ L124, 20.05.2003, p. 36), and headcount is calculated in accordance with Articles 3, 4, 5 and 6 of Title 1 of the same Annex.

<sup>4</sup> Please see annex X for a list of Member States and Associated Countries.

<sup>5</sup> For research infrastructures, support can be given, under certain conditions, to projects or organisations in which non-EU or non-Associated Country entities participate. For more details, please see annex X.

<sup>6</sup> Subject to the successful conclusion of negotiations, EU and EIB will sign a framework agreement defining how they will cooperate in preparing, implementing and managing financial instruments administered by EIB with a financial contribution from the EU budget. With the same proviso, the EU and EIF will sign an analogous framework agreement. A specific agreement between DG Research & Innovation and EIB/EIF will then lay down detailed provisions for the financial instrument facilities of Horizon 2020.

also be able to use financial intermediaries as well, particularly when supporting medium and large midcaps<sup>7</sup>. Exploratory talks with other financial institutions of comparable stature are underway, and in future one or more may join EIB and EIF in running facilities for the European Commission.

To locate banks or funds that provide risk finance supported by the EU, please go to <http://access2eufinance.ec.europa.eu>

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<sup>7</sup> See footnote 3 for definition.

## **Actions supporting Access to Risk Finance (not subject to calls for proposals)**

### *Financial instruments*

#### **1. Loans Service for R&I<sup>8</sup>**

This financial instrument continues and refines the Risk-Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF) under FP7<sup>9</sup>, and offers loans and hybrid or mezzanine finance.

It aims to improve access to risk finance for R&I projects emanating from large firms and medium and large midcaps<sup>10</sup>; universities and research institutes; R&I infrastructures<sup>11</sup> (including innovation-enabling infrastructures); public-private partnerships; and special-purpose vehicles or projects (including those promoting first-of-a-kind, commercial-scale industrial demonstration projects).

For medium and large midcaps, this facility will offer loans and hybrid or mezzanine finance of between EUR 7.5 million and EUR 25 million. A loan to a medium or large midcap of more than EUR 25 million will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For large firms and the other entities mentioned above, loans of between EUR 25 million and EUR 300 million will be available. A loan to a large firm or other entity of less than EUR 25 million will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Investment Fund (EIF) will implement this instrument<sup>12</sup>, which will be delivered both directly by EIB and also by financial intermediaries (such as banks). Financial intermediaries will be guaranteed against a proportion of their potential losses by EIB and/or EIF, which will also offer counter-guarantees to guarantee institutions. This is a demand-driven instrument, with no prior allocations between sectors, countries or regions, or types or sizes of firm or other entities.

Expected impact: This instrument will help address sub-optimal investment situations stemming from poor prospects within firms or other entities for the creation or commercialisation of products or services of societal importance (in the sense of Horizon 2020's Societal Challenges) or that constitute a public good. Overall, it will improve access to risk finance. For direct loans or hybrid/mezzanine investments, the indicators are the number and volume of loans or investments made. For intermediated loans, the indicators are the number of agreements signed with financial intermediaries and the number and volume of loans made. Targets will be set in negotiations with EIB and EIF.

Indicative timetable: This instrument is likely to be available from the first quarter of 2014. To stay informed, please see [\[entrusted entity's or entities' web page once agreement - europa.eu holding-page before\]](#)

Selection procedure: For financial intermediaries: EIF will issue one or more calls for expression of interest, with eligibility and selection criteria defined as part of each call after consultation with DG Research & Innovation.

<sup>8</sup> This name for the successor to the RSFF is a placeholder. A brand-name will be proposed soon.

<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.eib.org/products/rsff/>

<sup>10</sup> See footnote 3 for definition.

<sup>11</sup> For research infrastructures, support can be given, under certain conditions, to projects or organisations in which non-EU or non-Associated Country entities participate, including cases where the location of the infrastructure and the investment is outside the EU or an Associated Country. For more details, please see annex X.

<sup>12</sup> Subject to the successful conclusion of negotiations.

For intermediated loans: according to the internal processes of the intermediary bank or other financial institution concerned, using normal commercial criteria.

For direct financing operations: EIB will check the financial viability of a potential financing operation, while DG Research & Innovation, assisted by other Commission DGs, will check the alignment of the financing operation with the goals of Horizon 2020 (particularly the Societal Challenges).

## **2. SMEs & Small Midcaps R&I Loans Service<sup>13</sup>**

This facility succeeds and refines the RSI pilot under the RSFF in FP7<sup>14</sup>, and is part of a single debt financial instrument supporting the growth of enterprises and their R&I activities. It targets R&I-driven SMEs and small midcaps<sup>15</sup> requiring loans of between EUR 25 000 and EUR 7.5 million. A loan of more than EUR 7.5 million will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The 'R&I Loans Service' (see action 1 above) will serve larger midcaps.

The European Investment Fund (EIF) will implement this instrument<sup>16</sup>, which will be delivered by financial intermediaries (such as banks), who will extend the actual loans to final beneficiaries. Financial intermediaries will be guaranteed against a proportion of their potential losses by EIF, which will also offer counter-guarantees to guarantee institutions.

R&I-driven SMEs or small midcaps wishing to apply for a loan should contact one of the financial intermediaries signing an agreement (see Selection procedure) with EIF. This is a demand-driven facility, with no prior allocations between sectors, countries or regions.

Expected impact: R&I-driven SMEs and small midcaps able to carry out a greater amount of R&I. The indicators are the number of agreements signed with financial intermediaries and the number and volume of loans made. Targets will be set during negotiations with EIF.

Indicative timetable: This facility is likely to be available from the first quarter of 2014. To stay informed, please see [\[entrusted entity's web page once agreement - europa.eu holding-page before\]](#)

Selection procedure: For financial intermediaries: EIF will issue one or more calls for expression of interest, with eligibility and selection criteria defined as part of each call after consultation with DG Research & Innovation.

For loans: according to the internal processes of the intermediary bank or other financial institution that the SME or small midcap applies to, using normal commercial criteria.

### ***Additional participation mechanism***

#### **Joint Guarantee Instruments for R&I-intensive SMEs and Small Midcaps**

These instruments are part of a proposed EU SME Finance Initiative<sup>17</sup>. They aim to enable Member States and regions to channel significant amounts of European Structural & Investment Funds (ESIF) through the 'SMEs & Small Midcaps R&I Loan Service'. Member States and regions may choose to deliver part of their operational programmes by allocating national or regional programme contributions in this way, with disbursements geographically linked to contributions. The joint instruments may take the form of joint portfolio guarantees

<sup>13</sup> This name for the successor to the RSI is a placeholder. A brand-name will be proposed soon.

<sup>14</sup> See [http://www.eif.org/what\\_we\\_do/guarantees/RSI/index.htm](http://www.eif.org/what_we_do/guarantees/RSI/index.htm)

<sup>15</sup> See footnote 3 for definition.

<sup>16</sup> Subject to the successful conclusion of negotiations.

<sup>17</sup> The European Council of October 2013 is likely to consider a proposal for the SME Finance Initiative.

or joint securitisation operations using funds from COSME, Horizon 2020 and ESIF combined with resources from EIB and EIF. Overall, the joint instruments will benefit R&I-intensive SMEs and small midcaps<sup>18</sup> together with other types of SME.

Expected impact: R&I-driven SMEs and small midcaps able to carry out a greater amount of R&I. Indicators and targets will be set during the first half of 2014.

Indicative timetable: These instruments are likely to be available from [date tbc after October European Council]. To stay informed, please see [europa.eu holding-page](http://europa.eu/holding-page)

Selection procedure: For Horizon 2020, contractual arrangements will ensure that access to public guarantees for partner banks is conditional on passing on the benefits in the form of new loans to R&I-intensive SMEs and small midcaps.

### **3. Equity Facility for R&I<sup>19</sup>**

This facility succeeds and refines the GIF-1 scheme under CIP<sup>20</sup>, and is part of a single equity financial instrument supporting the growth of enterprises and their R&I activities. It is designed to improve access to risk finance by early-stage R&I-driven SMEs and small midcaps<sup>21</sup> through supporting early-stage risk capital funds that invest, on a predominantly cross-border basis, in individual enterprises. The COSME programme's Equity Facility for Growth (EFG) complements this facility.

The European Investment Fund (EIF)<sup>22</sup> will make and manage equity investments into risk-capital funds. EIF will be able to invest in a wide range of financial intermediaries, including those cooperating with business angels. The funds concerned will make VC and quasi-equity (including mezzanine capital) early-stage investments in enterprises, which are likely to be mainly SMEs. In the case of multistage funds (i.e., covering both early- and growth-stage investments), funding can be provided pro rata from this facility and COSME's growth-stage equity facility, EFG.

This is a demand-driven facility, with no prior allocations between sectors, countries or regions. R&I-driven SMEs or small midcaps wishing to apply for an investment should contact one or more of the funds signing an agreement with EIF.

Expected impact: An increase in the risk capital available to invest in R&I-driven SMEs and small midcaps, with R&I-driven SMEs and small midcaps consequently able to develop and carry out a greater amount of R&I. The indicators are the number of agreements signed with financial intermediaries (i.e., risk capital funds), the volume of investments made in SMEs and small midcaps, and the number of SMEs and small midcaps invested in. Targets will be set during negotiations with EIF.

Indicative timetable: This facility is likely to be available from the first quarter of 2014. To stay informed, please see [entrusted entity's web page once agreement - europa.eu holding-page before](http://entrusted-entity's-web-page-once-agreement-europa.eu/holding-page-before)

Selection procedure: For risk-capital funds acting as financial intermediaries: EIF will issue one or more calls for expression of interest, with eligibility and selection criteria defined as part of each call after consultation with DG Research & Innovation.

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<sup>18</sup> See footnote 3 for definition.

<sup>19</sup> This name for the successor to GIF-1 is a placeholder. A brand-name will be proposed soon.

<sup>20</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/cip/eip/access-finance/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/cip/eip/access-finance/index_en.htm)

<sup>21</sup> See footnote 3 for definition.

<sup>22</sup> Subject to the successful conclusion of negotiations.



For investments by a selected fund in an enterprise: according to the investment strategy and procedures of the fund concerned.

### ***Equity Facility window***

#### **Piloting Co-Investments by Business Angels in Innovative ICT Firms**

This pilot scheme will co-finance investments by business angels in innovative SMEs and small midcaps<sup>23</sup> that are aiming to commercialise new ICT-related products and services. Potential co-investors with business angels include family offices and equity crowd-funders. The technological domains of photonics, microelectronics, microsystems and robotics, and also the ICT-related creative industries, will receive particular attention. The scheme may operate through a fund set up as a dedicated investment vehicle. Co-financed investments, made as a rule on the basis of an equal sharing of risks and rewards, will take the form of equity and, potentially, other forms of risk capital. ICT-related investments should represent at least x% of the total investments made.

Expected impact: Development of co-investments and cross-border investments by business angels, and improved access to risk finance by innovative ICT firms. Indicators and targets will be set during negotiations with the entity or entities who may potentially implement the pilot scheme.

Indicative timetable: This instrument is likely to be available in 2015. To stay informed, please see [\[entrusted entity's web page once agreement - europa.eu holding-page before\]](#)

Selection procedure: Under discussion with the entity or entities who may be entrusted with implementing the pilot scheme.

#### **4. Technology Transfer Financing Facility Pilot**

This pilot facility will co-finance investments made by existing technology transfer (TT) funds and vehicles. It will focus on TT undertaken via the creation of new companies and the licensing of intellectual property (IP), and concentrates on the proof-of-concept, development and early commercialisation stages of the TT process. It builds on the experience gained from the Technology Transfer Pilot (TTP) implemented in 2007-2013 by the European Investment Fund (EIF) and from the investments in TT funds made by EIF under GIF-1 in CIP. It is complemented by a capacity-building and networking measure, Call CBTT 1.

Co-financed investments will take the form of equity and other forms of risk capital, particularly convertible loans or mezzanine finance. Where possible, these investments will themselves be made alongside matching funds from the European Investment Bank (EIB)<sup>24</sup> and/or EIF<sup>25</sup> as risk-sharing partners on, as a rule, an equal-risk, equal rewards basis.

Expected impact: A higher number and higher volume of TT investment deals in the EU should ensue, with a higher proportion of scientific knowledge produced in the EU commercialised. The indicators are the number of agreements signed with TT funds or vehicles and the number and volume of deals done. Targets will be set during negotiations with EIB and EIF.

Indicative timetable: This facility is likely to be available from 2015. To stay informed, please see [\[entrusted entity's web page once agreement - europa.eu holding-page before\]](#)

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<sup>23</sup> See footnote 3 for definition.

<sup>24</sup> Subject to the successful conclusion of negotiations.

<sup>25</sup> Subject to the successful conclusion of negotiations.

Selection procedure: For TT funds and vehicles acting as financial intermediaries: one or more calls for expression of interest conducted by the entity entrusted by the Commission with implementing the facility, with eligibility and selection criteria defined as part of each call after consultation with DG Research & Innovation.

Investments carried out by a TT fund or vehicle: according to the investment strategy of the fund or vehicle concerned.

### ***External expertise***

#### **5. Assessing the Investment Potential of SMEs Emerging from Phase I of the SME Instrument**

This action will establish a group of investment specialists, operating in a personal capacity, to assess the investment potential of SMEs emerging from Phase I of the SME Instrument.

The group will include (but is not limited to) bankers, venture capital (VC) and other risk-capital fund managers, business angels, and individuals working in corporate VC, family offices, accelerators and incubators. The first beneficiaries of Phase I of the SME Instrument are expected by the end of 2014.

This action is linked to an investment readiness measure (Call BIR 1), and should help ensure greater access to risk finance by SMEs.

Type of action: expert contracts.

#### **6. Technical and Financial Advisory Service for Risk Finance in R&I**

This service aims to improve the 'bankability' and investment-readiness of large, complex projects suffering from sub-optimal investment conditions and needing substantial, long-term investments in order to come to fruition. It will also provide assistance in improving framework conditions that facilitate access to risk finance for R&I. It succeeds and builds on a pilot operated under the Risk-Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF) in FP7<sup>26</sup>. The main clients foreseen are R&I-driven larger midcaps, large companies, and large or complex operations producing products or services of societal importance (in the sense of Horizon 2020's Societal Challenges) or that constitute a public good.

Legal entity: European Investment Bank, established at 98-100, boulevard K. Adenauer, L-2950 Luxembourg, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Evaluation criteria: This action will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria set out in Article XX of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation. [*Link to the annex*]

Rate of co-financing: The maximum possible rate of co-financing is set out in Article XX of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation. [*Link to the annex*]

Type of action: grant to named beneficiary.

### ***Studies***

#### **7. Understanding the Intellectual Property Aggregation Marketplace**

This study aims to improve our understanding of what is happening in the EU in this area and to make recommendations for helping build an EU patents and licensing market. It should

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<sup>26</sup> See <http://www.eib.org/products/rsff/>

survey and analyse intellectual property (IP) aggregation initiatives (such as funds, brokerages and patent pools) in the EU and other regions, and describe the extent of any market deficiencies and recommend possible interventions at EU level to encourage more IPR transactions for the benefit of European players.

The precise scope of the study will depend on the findings of an ongoing expert group which is looking, amongst other things, at the conditions that could justify the creation of an EU patent fund.

If duly justified, the study should make recommendations for EU-level intervention to remedy market deficiencies in the IP aggregation marketplace.

Type of action: public procurement.

Timeframe: first quarter of 2015.

## **8. Understanding the Nature and Impact of Angel and Crowd-Funding in R&I**

This study should produce a comprehensive picture of what is happening in these rapidly developing areas and pave the way for possible EU-level action in 2015/2016.

It will require the design of a data-capture methodology, surveys, desk-research, and workshops, and should cover all EU Member States and countries associated with Horizon 2020. Close liaison will be necessary with the European Business Angels Network (EBAN) and Business Angels Europe (BAE), and with the operators of crowd-funding platforms and the emerging pan-European crowd-funding representative bodies. As regulatory constraints on crowd-funding may be significant, the study should also investigate existing and likely forthcoming national regulatory frameworks and the views of national regulators. Relationships and potential relationships between venture capitalists, business angels and crowd-funding investors should be a particular focus, and the study must build on earlier studies undertaken by the Commission in the same domains. It should also take account of the findings of the Commission's public consultation on crowd-funding launched in autumn 2013.

Building on the evidence-base produced by previous studies, this study should deliver a more comprehensive picture of the potential for angel and crowd-funding investors to improve access to risk finance in the EU for, in particular, SMEs and small midcaps, together with recommendations for action at EU, national and regional levels.

Type of action: public procurement.

Timeframe: third quarter of 2014.

## **9. Assessing the Potential for EU Investment in Venture Capital Funds-of-Funds**

The European Commission aims to make the European venture capital (VC) industry more self-sustainable and globally competitive by reducing its dependence on the public sector and encouraging more investments from institutional and private sources, especially into early and growth-stage funds. Funds-of-funds (FoFs) have the potential to act as intermediaries between such investors and VC and other risk-capital funds investing in SMEs and small midcaps.

In this light, this study should assess the potential for the EU to invest in and/or play a role in setting up one or more public-private, pan-European FoFs.

The range of possible structures and of risk-sharing and other mechanisms for such FoFs is wide: the study should research and evaluate the options and assess the technical, budgetary and other trade-offs between them, with particular reference to the risks of crowding-out private investors. The study must also compare the pros and cons of appointing professional

FoF managers versus managers from the public sector. The options analysed should include the possibility of the EU investing in existing regional, national or transnational FoFs. The study should make use of both case-studies analysis and simulation models, amongst other methods, and draw on evaluations of and academic research into public-private VC fund structures in Europe and elsewhere. Possible schemes must be attractive for private and institutional investors, help meet the policy objective, and be capable of operation under the rules governing the execution of the annual budget of the EU (i.e., the Financial Regulation).

The study should deliver recommendations for potential EU-level action, if any, starting in 2016 following preparations in 2015.

Type of action: public procurement.

Timeframe: third quarter of 2014.

### **10. Feasibility Study for Prizes Scheme in the R&I 'Access to Risk Finance' Domain**

The aim of this study is to help inform a decision on whether, and if so on what basis, to set up and launch a prizes scheme to encourage good practices, innovations and professionalism in the 'Access to Risk Finance' domain.

The study should survey and analyse existing and prominent former prizes schemes in this domain, covering schemes managed or sponsored by European Commission departments and by trade or industry federations or other bodies, and including those operating at pan-European, transnational, and national levels in the EU Member States and in the countries associated with Horizon 2020. The survey should form the basis for a gap and market analysis, including a description of best practices and lessons learnt. From this, the study should identify the potential for establishing one or more new prizes; develop and assess implementation, management and financial options (including an analysis of the risks of crowding-out existing schemes); and make recommendations. Close contact with trade and industry federations operating in the R&I domain will be required.

This study will form a key part of the evidence-base for deciding whether, and if so how, to set up a prizes scheme in 2015/2016 in the 'Access to Risk Finance' domain.

Type of action: public procurement.

Timeframe: third quarter of 2014.

### **11. Interim Evaluations of Horizon 2020 Financial Instruments and Facilities**

These evaluations will give feedback on the implementation of the financial instrument facilities (including accompanying measures and external expertise services) implemented in 2014-2015, and provide recommendations for their improvement. The evaluations will assess the relevance and effectiveness of each facility, measure or service with respect to helping achieve EU R&I-related policy objectives; their efficiency; their utility in addressing market deficiencies and sub-optimal investment situations; and the overall coherence of the facilities themselves. Coherence with respect to other financial instruments and facilities in the 2014-2020 MFF, particularly those implemented under COSME, will also be examined.

The evaluators will be required, in each case, to make a series of recommendations on how the design and functioning of each facility, and their coherence under Horizon 2020 and with the COSME facilities, can be improved. Particular attention must be paid to lessons learnt with respect to the viability, potential scaling-up (or otherwise) and evolution of the two pilot facilities (i.e., the Technology Transfer Financing Facility and the Business Angels Co-Investment scheme).

These evaluations will provide a basis for reporting on the roll-out and initial achievements of the financial instrument facilities and for improving their design, potential scaling-up (in the case of the pilots), and future functioning.

Type of action: public procurement.

Timeframe: fourth quarter of 2015.

## Calls for proposals

### Call: Capacity-Building in Technology Transfer

*H2020-CBTT-2014*

#### CBTT 1 - 2014: Capacity-Building in Technology Transfer

Specific challenge: Many technology transfer (TT) offices in universities, research institutes and other public research organisations, as well as a significant number of newly established TT funds and institutions and regions aspiring to set up such funds, lack staff with enough professional experience to make a success of the TT process. Encouraging and where appropriate incentivising the more established and experienced funds and TT offices (TTOs) to share their expertise and best practices with their less experienced counterparts will help boost Europe's ability to turn scientific knowledge into new, commercialised products and services. In addition, bringing the more established TT funds into contact with each other will help foster more cross-border investments.

Scope: Proposals should at minimum address the delivery of one, several or all of the following:

- 1) A survey of the TT landscape, players and dynamics in the EU Member States and the countries associated with Horizon 2020, building on recent research where possible.
- 2) An overview of the supply of and demand for TT expertise.
- 3) Developing a capacity-building strategy and consequent implementation plan that makes use of techniques such as (but not necessarily limited to) secondments, coaching, mentoring, workshops and other forms of exchanging and transferring best practices (social media can be part of the mix, but proposers are encouraged to focus on face-to-face encounters).
- 4) The execution of (but not necessarily limited to) secondments, coaching, mentoring, workshops and other forms of exchanging and transferring best practices, including running events focused on sharing best (and worst) practices between TT players and undertaking awareness-raising about the importance and role of TT.

Proposals must include a draft plan for the exploitation and dissemination of the results of the activities undertaken.

The approach should complement any existing capacity-building schemes at regional and national levels, working with them where possible. How to best monitor and possibly adapt the scheme in the light of experience are aspects that also need to be considered. Proposers must have and must demonstrate deep knowledge of the TT domain with proven experience in the field. This action will accompany the implementation of the TT Funding Facility pilot (see action 4 above).

Expected impact:

- Better overview of the TT landscape and the state of TT expertise in Europe.
- Sustainable, comprehensive strategy for building capacity in TT across Europe.
- Greater awareness by key stakeholders in Europe about the importance and role of TT.
- Higher levels of TT expertise in Europe.
- Greater commercialisation of scientific knowledge in Europe.
- Increase in cross-border TT-related investments in Europe.

Type of action: Coordination & Support Action (CSA) (100% funding).

## **Call: Boosting the Investment-Readiness of SMEs and Small Midcaps**

***H2020-BIR-2014***

### **BIR 1 - 2014: Boosting the Investment-Readiness of SMEs and Small Midcaps**

Specific challenge: Europe lags behind other regions in technology transfer and the commercialisation of R&I. Lack of early-stage investment is a major factor contributing to this situation. Facilitating the interaction of potential investors with innovative SMEs and small midcaps<sup>27</sup>, together with preparing firms and entrepreneurs to negotiate more effectively with such investors, can help address this problem. In a complementary manner, investors can be trained to better understand the technologies and applications developed through Horizon 2020 projects and thus make sounder decisions about their commercialisation potential.

Scope: Proposals should at minimum address:

- 1) A survey of the major investment-readiness (training and pitching events) schemes in Europe, including those launched under FP7, such as the 'ICT Finance Marketplace' and 'European Investor Gate' initiatives.
- 2) An analysis of lessons to be learnt from the above (proposals are expected to build on and reinforce the outcome of these schemes).
- 3) The training of entrepreneurs (as the key focus of this action).
- 4) The planning and execution of pitching events.
- 5) Strategies for involving a wide range of early-stage investors, including, at minimum, business angels, family offices and venture capitalists.

The main domains attracting equity investments for R&I — such as cleantech, ICT and medtech — should be targeted, along with a generic approach to other domains.

Proposers must have a track-record in the investment-readiness field and in-depth knowledge of early-stage investment. Proposals must include a draft plan for the exploitation and dissemination of the results of the activities undertaken.

Companies taking part in Horizon 2020's SME Instrument will have fast-track access to this scheme (see also action 5 above).

Expected impact:

- Better overview of the investment-readiness landscape in Europe.
- More entrepreneurs better prepared to negotiate effectively with potential investors.
- More investors with a better understanding of the commercialisation potential of technologies and applications developed through Horizon 2020 projects.
- More investments made into early-stage firms.
- Greater commercialisation of scientific knowledge in Europe.

Type of action: Coordination & Support Action (CSA) (100% funding).

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<sup>27</sup> See footnote 3 for definition.