

[Horizon 2020 dedicated SME Instrument Phase 1 and 2, 2014-2015](#)

H2020-SMEINST-1-2015

Opening Date	18-12-2014	Deadline Date	25-11-2015 17:00:00 (Brussels local time)
Publication date	11-12-2013	Total Call Budget	€26,557,000
		Cut-off date(s)	18-03-2015 17:00:00 (Brussels local time) 17-06-2015 17:00:00 (Brussels local time) 17-09-2015 17:00:00 (Brussels local time) 25-11-2015 17:00:00 (Brussels local time)

Programme Horizon 2020

Status

Open

Main Pillar Societal Challenges

OJ reference [OJ C361/9 of 11 December 2013](#)

Topic: Small business innovation research for Transport IT-1-2015-1

- [Topic Description](#)
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Scope:

Specific challenge: The European transport sector must have the capacity to deliver the best products and services, in a time and cost efficient manner, in order to preserve its leadership and create new jobs, as well as to tackle the environmental and mobility defies. The role of SMEs to meet these challenges is critical as they are key players in the supply chains. Enhancing the involvement of weaker players in innovation activities as well as facilitating the start-up and emergence of new high-tech SMEs is of paramount importance.

Scope:The SME instrument consists of three separate phases and a coaching and mentoring service for beneficiaries. Participants can apply to phase 1 with a view to applying to phase 2 at a later date, or directly to phase 2.

In phase 1, a feasibility study shall be developed verifying the technological/practical as well as economic viability of an innovation idea/concept with considerable novelty to the industry sector in

which it is presented (new products, processes, design, services and technologies or new market applications of existing technologies). The activities could, for example, comprise risk assessment, market study, user involvement, Intellectual Property (IP) management, innovation strategy development, partner search, feasibility of concept and the like to establish a solid high-potential innovation project aligned to the enterprise strategy and with a European dimension. Bottlenecks in the ability to increase profitability of the enterprise through innovation shall be detected and analysed during phase 1 and addressed during phase 2 to increase the return in investment in innovation activities. The proposal should contain an initial business plan based on the proposed idea/concept. The proposal should give the specifications of the elaborated business plan, which is to be the outcome of the project and the criteria for success.

Funding will be provided in the form of a lump sum of EUR 50.000. Projects should last around 6 months.

In phase 2, innovation projects will be supported that address any area of the Transport Specific Programme (H2020 Specific Programme: Part III – 4. Smart, green and integrated transport), and that demonstrate high potential in terms of company competitiveness and growth underpinned by a strategic business plan. Activities should focus on innovation activities such as demonstration, testing, prototyping, piloting, scaling-up, miniaturisation, design, market replication and the like aiming to bring an innovation idea (product, process, service etc.) to industrial readiness and maturity for market introduction, but may also include some research. For technological innovation a Technology Readiness Levels of 6 or above (or similar for non-technological innovations) are envisaged; please see part G of the General Annexes.

Proposals shall be based on an elaborated business plan either developed through phase 1 or another means. Particular attention must be paid to IP protection and ownership; applicants will have to present convincing measures to ensure the possibility of commercial exploitation ('freedom to operate').

Proposals shall contain a specification for the outcome of the project, including a first commercialisation plan, and criteria for success.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of between EUR 0.5 and 2.5 million would allow phase 2 to be addressed appropriately. Projects should last between 12 and 24 months.

In addition, in phase 3, SMEs can benefit from indirect support measures and services as well as access to the financial facilities supported under Access to Risk Finance of this work programme.

Successful beneficiaries will be offered coaching and mentoring support during phase 1 and phase 2. This service will be accessible via the Enterprise Europe Network and delivered by a dedicated coach through consultation and signposting to the beneficiaries. The coaches will be recruited from a central database managed by the Commission and have all fulfilled stringent criteria with regards to business experience and competencies. Throughout the three phases of the instrument, the Network will complement the coaching support by providing access to its innovation and internationalisation service offering. This could include, for example, depending on the need of the SME, support in identifying growth potential, developing a growth plan and maximising it through internationalisation; strengthening the leadership and management skills of individuals in the senior management team and developing in-house coaching capacity; developing a marketing strategy or raising external finance.

Expected impact:

Enhancing profitability and growth performance of SMEs by combining and transferring new and existing knowledge into innovative, disruptive and competitive solutions seizing European and global business opportunities.

Market uptake and distribution of innovations tackling the specific challenges of the Transport Specific Programme in a sustainable way.

Increase of private investment in innovation, notably leverage of private co-investor and/or follow-up investments.

The expected impact should be clearly described in qualitative and quantitative terms (e.g. on turnover, employment, market seize, IP management, sales, return on investment and profit).

Type of action: SME Instrument (70%)