



**EUROPEAN INNOVATION COUNCIL AND SMES  
EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EISMEA)**



## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

**Call for expressions of interest for International Network  
Partners of the Enterprise Europe Network**

**SMP-COSME-2021-EEN-INTERNATIONAL**

**Update: 20 August 2021**

**(Including answers for questions posted during Info Day)**

## CONSORTIUM COMPOSITION

**Question: Will the wider consortium or the local stakeholders (except the main 2 or 3 official partner) have the access to the database on the EEN platform! If not, will their contact details and descriptions be published on the platform?**

Answer: Access to the platform is limited to the contractual partners. The wider consortium, i.e., up to 10 organisations associated to the contractual partners, will have no direct access to the EEN intranet and IT platform. The Project coordinator will have to ensure that the wider consortium is well informed.

**Question: Are Sector Groups open to contractual consortium partners only or can stakeholders also participate in these groups?**

Answer: Only the (up to) 3 contractual partners will be able to join Sector Groups. However, the wider consortium will be able to support sector group activities via the up to 3 contractual partners.

**Question: Could our applicant consortium have 4 main organisations (project coordinator and 3 co-partners)?**

Answer: Please bear in mind that such a potential exception will be only an option for organisations located in European countries with which the EU has historically strong trade ties, and that they would need to be pre-approved before submitting the application.

**Question: Can a China-based SME organisation form a consortium with an EU-based advisory company for the benefit of offering better services to companies?**

Answer: Applicants to this call must not be established in an EU Member State or overseas country or territory linked to it. Hence, EU legal entities are not eligible to apply for this call. However, our International Network Partners may cooperate closely with organisations based in Europe (e.g. as members of the wider consortium).

**Question: In the call paper, it said that 'Organisations which are part of the wider consortium could eventually be invited by the Agency to become official/contractual partners of the Network'. If it happens, can the number of contractual partners be more than 3 organisations?**

Answer: Organisations which are part of the wider consortium could eventually be invited by the Agency to become official / contractual partners of the Network. This will depend on their aspirations and overall performance. However, an application must be submitted with a maximum of 3 contractual partners.

**Question: Can an organisation of a subnational state (like a province) be one of the co-partners?**

Answer: Yes.

## SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

**Question: Are there any changes in the way the activities run due to EEN being funded by the Single Market Programme?**

Answer: EU policy makers have pinpointed the following priorities for EEN under the SMP:

- Support business digitalisation & enable companies to develop new products & services.
- Help companies to adopt sustainable business models.
- Foster resilience & support companies to recover from COVID-19 crisis.

**Question: On page 16 it is indicated that "Applications from a single organisation could only be accepted if they cover full range of services described in the call",**

**Does that mean the "single organisation" must be able to provide the three core services which including "international support and partnering services, innovation support, and research collaboration services"?**

Answer: An application from a single organisation should cover all services and activities described in the call text.

**Question: If European Network Partners ask an International Network Partner to organise a mission to a third country, and in the third country there is a local presence of an EU Trade Promotion Office, or a bi-national chamber of commerce, could the International Network Partner pass the request to the third country Trade Promotion office, or a bi-national chamber of commerce?**

Answer: We would expect that applicants map all other relevant stakeholders in their countries. And this includes also EU support structures such as bilateral chambers or Trade Promotion Offices. We also strongly recommend involving those support structures systematically when organising matchmaking events and trade missions with European Network Partners.

Business clients of International Network Partners may not always be interested in participating in incoming trade missions. In this case, International Network Partners could approach EU support structures in the country to find out if these support organisations would be interested in supporting an incoming company mission from Europe.

**Question: How many missions and market studies would need to be done and how are they scheduled? By demand of EU counterparts? By initiative of the International Network Partner?**

Answer: European and International Network Partners usually engage if both sides have business clients keen on finding business partners in their respective markets. An applicant consortium should have a broad idea how much demand there is among their clients for participation in brokerage events and trade missions in Europe. Naturally applicants should also commit some resources for missions to their countries from Europe.

Network partners also exchange market intelligence (e.g., industrial rules and regulations). There is no requirement to carry out extensive market studies for clients from European Network Partners.

**Question: Can only be SMEs clients of the Enterprise Europe Network? What about research institutes and/or universities?**

Answer: The main target group of the Enterprise Europe Network are small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups. This does not exclude International Network partners to offer services to other client groups such as larger corporations, research institutes/organisations or universities.

For example, a technology-oriented SME or start-up could license a certain technology to the innovation department of a larger corporation. This cooperation could help the SME/start up to scale and grow further. The needs of Network clients should remain the focus of our EEN advisers.

**Question: How does the Enterprise Europe Network ensure capacity building of Network advisers?**

Answer: Each year, Enterprise Europe Network partners offer numerous training sessions to Network advisers (peer-to-peer learning approach). Many trainings are also organised by the European Commission/EISMEA in Brussels or online. Naturally, we invite external experts to the training session if necessary.

**Question: In the call paper, what does 'business peer-to-peer learning' mean and which activities are included?**

Answer: This is a new type of service to be further developed in the upcoming programme. For example, on the occasion of matchmaking events, Network partners may be invited to contribute to peer-to-peer learning activities between businesses. During these peer-to-peer learning sessions, businesses can share experiences and information about the challenges they faced during their innovation/growth phases and how they overcame those major barriers.

**Question: In the call paper, 'Research' is indicated as one of the advisory services. Is this only applicable for the Horizon Europe research programme? What about other programmes such as**

**bilateral R&D programmes supported by EUREKA?**

Answer: This type of advisory service comprises not only Horizon Europe research programmes but also bilateral programmes and EUREKA. In addition, International Network Partners may offer more general advice to their clients on how to engage in international R&D cooperation.

**Question: Is EISMEA willing to provide International Network Partners with trainings on how to deliver Advisory services?**

Answer: Applicants need to have the necessary technical and operational capacity to provide advisory services in the areas outlined in the call description. However, EISMEA and other Network Partners will continuously offer training sessions to further upgrade the quality of EEN services. International Network Partners will be invited to participate in these trainings.

**Question: Do applicants need to commit setting up an EEN website in their country?**

Answer: Applicants need to commit setting up a regularly updated Network website for the entire consortium; in English and in the language of the country where the international consortium is based.

**MEASURING PERFORMANCE**

**Question: We would like to confirm whether each partner (project coordinator + co-partners) should achieve the set target individually? Can it be achieved mainly by project coordinator?**

Answer: If the consortium as a whole reaches the proposed targets, usually there won't be any reason for us to follow up on the overall performance of the consortium. However, we may reach out to the Project coordinator to find out why a particular partner does not meet the agreed targets.

**Question: What are the conditions for setting numeric targets for the project coordinator or the co-partners?**

Answer: Please see info-graphic 'Case study for Network client journey' in section '3. QUALITY OF THE SERVICES' in the call document.

The performance indicators are described in section '5. MEASURING PERFORMANCE AND EFFICIENCY'.

We recommend you also to read through our published success stories:

<https://een.ec.europa.eu/success-stories>

And, to view our Enterprise Europe Network YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/enterpriseurope>

Based on these Information you should be able to make an estimation how long it will take you to generate partnering and advisory achievements and set the targets accordingly. Achievements often take several months to be established and require the support of European Network partners.

**Question: We would like to clarify the definition of "Unique Network Clients in the client journey". How will it be calculated? Is that the figure for companies recruited for EEN services, expressions of interest made, technology profiles created and clients who participate in EEN brokerage events, trade missions and webinars?**

Answer: This performance indicator counts the number of unique Network clients receiving tailor-made services based on needs assessment and drafted action plan. These are customised services to companies that have already started their Network client journey. The indicator measures how many Network clients get continuous support. The support requires close ties and in-depth knowledge of the client's situation and regularly updated needs assessments part of a detailed action plan.

In different words: It is not merely the number of your clients receiving typical EEN services but counts the share of those clients for who you have carried out a needs assessment, agreed upon with them on a concrete action plan and for who you have or will establish Partnering/Advisory Achievements following the provision of an EEN service.

**Question How will the performance of associated consortium partners (wider consortium) be measured?**

Answer: The official/contractual Enterprise Europe Network partners should report the achievements generated by the wider consortium. There will be the possibility for International Network Partners to flag the contribution made by the wider consortium.

**Question: When can advisory services be counted as advisory achievements?**

Answer: Advisory Achievements are results of advisory services that lead to a positive outcome for the Network client. They facilitate and consequently mark the successful entry to a market or international presence of a Network client. The result is associated with considerable, measurable and/or identifiable impact for the client.

**Question: Could you elaborate about the mentoring support programme and how it fits into the description of actions?**

Answer: International Network Partners will be offered to receive support from one or more experienced European Network advisers. This support will be free of charge. European Network advisers

will help International Network Partners to take advantage of their membership in EEN, i.e., introduce them to our IT tools and explain how partnering and advisory services are delivered by EEN partners.

**Question: Does it constitute an achievement if an International Network Partner supports its client to submit a proposal for the EUROSTARS programme? And if yes, is it an advisory or partnering achievement?**

Answer: International Network Partners may report an advisory achievement if their support led to a submission of a successful collaborative proposal receiving EUROSTARS grants involving at least one more (European) company. Please mind that International Network Partners always need to report achievements (partnering & advisory) with a contribution by a European Network Partner.

**Question: What documents or evidence materials do we need for Advisory Achievements? (i.e., for a PA technology do we need at least a LOI or NDA document for registration?)**

Answer: EISMEA may carry out sample checks on achievements reported by International Network Partners. There are only a few pieces of information, which need to be included in the achievement report in our database. If the company wishes to remain anonymous, International Network Partners could use alias names in our databases. However, International Network Partners should retain all information about the reported achievements in case EISMEA has further questions on the reported achievement.

**Question: Could you give us further examples about Advisory achievements? Does responding to European Network Partners' requests on market information can be reported as advisory achievement?**

Answer: The advice provided to clients of European Network Partners on market information can be reported as advisory achievements if it leads to a considerable, measurable and/or identifiable impact for the Network client (e.g., successful entry to a market).

**Question: If I publish a Technology Offer of a University and this will lead to a cooperation with an EU company, does it count as Partnering Achievement?**

Answer: Yes.

**Question: Should Partnering Achievements and Advisory Achievements be generated from 'unique Network Clients in the client journey'? If we find partnering opportunities in certain matchmaking**

**event, can we report as an achievement even that client is not ‘unique network client’ yet?**

Answer: This should be in principle be possible if the client of the European Network partners is already registered as Unique Network Client in the client journey.

## COOPERATION AGREEMENT

**Question: Under which conditions will the “discontinuation of the Cooperation Agreement” happen? Does that mean the cooperation can only be continued when partners achieve the set target every year? (What about the special conditions like the pandemic in recent years?)**

Answer: We will of course consider exceptional circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Normally further mentoring support is offered before the contractual relation with a partner is discontinued.

**Question: Could we add organisations to the wider consortium after submitting the proposal and during the project timeline or it will be obligatory to add them all before the call?**

Answer: There will always be the possibility for amendments during the contract period if both sides agree. However, the maximum consortium size should not be exceeded at any point.

**Question: We would like to know to know whether the Enterprise Europe Network under the Single Market Programme will require International Network Partners any membership fees or if it will remain free of charge as it is until today.**

Answer: Our International Network Partners will not be asked to contribute any fees for remaining/becoming member of the Enterprise Europe Network.

**Question: How will you handle the questions of charging fees for events or services under EEN for International Network Partners? They must fund all activities from their own pockets, so asking for some fees seems reasonable.**

Answer: We are looking for organisation with strong regional/national mandate supporting the internationalisation / innovation processes of local companies. These organisations need to have the necessary financial capacity to offer business services under the umbrella of the Enterprise Europe Network.

As a general rule, Network partners don’t charge each other or their clients’ fees for typical EEN services. However, in exceptional cases it will be possible for Network partners to charge fees, e.g. for costly high profile matchmaking events at major fairs. Please see also section 6.5. COOPERATION WITH EUROPEAN NETWORK PARTNERS in call description for more information.

**Question: Could an organisation part of the wider consortium charge a service fee? I mean the stakeholder or sub-contractor etc...**

Answer: The same terms and conditions apply for organisations part of the wider consortium.

**Question: Will our current Cooperation Agreement still be valid if our application is submitted after the first deadline?**

Answer: Your current Cooperation Agreement will expire on 31 December 2021. If an application is submitted by 30 September 2021, we can ensure the continuity of our contractual relations (if the application is successful). The next submission deadline will be 31 March 2022 and the final one on 15 December 2022.

**Question: It is quite difficult to set targets. Is it possible to change them in the middle of the year?**

Answer: Amendments to the Cooperation Agreement (and consequently targets) will be possible if both parties agree, i.e. EISMEA and the International Network Partner.

## OTHER QUESTIONS

**Question: Will there be an Info Day on the call for expressions of interest?**

Answer: The Info Day took place on 3 August from 12:00 – 15:00.

We have published the slide presentation and the recorded Info Day on the official call page:

[https://eisma.ec.europa.eu/news/call-expressions-interest-international-network-partners-enterprise-europe-network-now-open\\_en](https://eisma.ec.europa.eu/news/call-expressions-interest-international-network-partners-enterprise-europe-network-now-open_en)

**Question: What documents do we need to send along with the expression of interest?**

Answer: Applicants need to submit the 'Application form for International Network partners' and a 'letter of recommendation' from the local EU Delegation. Both documents need to be submitted via the EUSURVEY platform. See section 8. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS in the call description for more information.

**Question: Different areas deal with distinct eco-systems and in large countries it would seem sensible to have thematic focus in the EEN International Network Partners. It is a matter of effectiveness and ability to deliver actual results. This could translate into allowing for more than one International**

**Network Partner according to the thematic area. What is your view?**

Answer: Absolutely. We encourage our International Network Partners to join the Network's sector groups, e.g., in the automotive, agri-food, textiles and many other sectors. These sector groups are made up of sectorial experts (EEN Business advisers) from European regions specialised in certain industries.

**Question: Does EEN try to generate synergies with other EU internationalisation and innovation projects (e.g., such as Enrich)?**

Answer: Our Enterprise Europe Network partners, and in this case, our International Network Partners are expected to cooperate with other EU projects with complementary objectives and target groups. This includes of course also Enrich but in principle also all other EU internationalisation / innovation projects (e.g., for clusters). For example, the EEN systematically co-organises events or promotes the activities and services of other EU projects.

**Question: Will International Network Partner staff members be allowed to chair Sector or Thematic Groups?**

Answer: Such requests will be analysed and evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The chair of EEN Sector Groups and Thematic Groups should have an advanced knowledge in the given area and needs to demonstrate his/her commitment to drive a large group of experts. These are important requirements for chairs irrespective if they are working for European or International member organisations of the Enterprise Europe Network.

**Question: How can an organisation demonstrate their financial capacity?**

Answer: International Network Partners must have the financial capacity to offer the Network services described above without charging European Network Partners and their Network clients any fees. In the application form, applicants will be able to highlight any national grants they might receive, or financial support they receive for their EEN membership from their own organisation, or outline their business model, i.e., how they intend to re-finance the delivery of EEN services.

**Question: What are some examples of innovative elements of an application? Could you provide some examples so we may get an idea?**

Answer: Applicants may include ideas for additional/new services fostering innovation and cross-border commercial cooperation between local and European companies. This could be new forms of innovation challenges or hackathons.

**Question: Is it required to have a national ministry to endorse our application?**

Answer: Applicants are strongly encouraged to approach national or regional policy makers to endorse the application. Ideally, the participation in the Enterprise Europe Network should be integrated into the national/regional internationalisation and innovation strategy of the responsible ministry.

**Question: What is the process of endorsing the application by the EU delegation?**

Answer: Applicants are required to contact the EU Delegation in country to endorse the application. Contact details can be found on the following website:

[https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/area/geo\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/area/geo_en)

**Question: If the financial support is fully implemented by the regional authorities (like provincial level), should we still be asked for endorsement by national level authority?**

Answer: No. This won't be necessary if the regional authorities have already committed to financially support an application.