

# Bridging the Gap

*International Research Activities by  
Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises*

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[www.ira-sme.net](http://www.ira-sme.net)

Supported by:



on the basis of a decision  
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# History



- Established 2004 as EraSME (initiated by VDI/VDE-IT)
- Initially 14 countries (later up to 19)
- End date 2008
- Funding prolonged → EraSME<sup>2</sup>
- From 2008 to 2010 (still managed by VDI/VDE-IT)

# Objectives



- Exchanging best practices
- Enhance existing funding programmes
- Raise programme efficiency, effectiveness and impact
- Create an **operational platform** for programme owners and managers
- Facilitate **transnational partnerships** of SMEs and RTOs
- Offer **joint calls** for proposals (2nd phase)

# Activities



- Exchange of experiences between funding parties
- Live meetings
- Experiments in different work packages
- In 2006: first call for proposals (as a try-out)
  - Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Austria, Belgium
- Follow-up calls with more parties joining
  - Use of national funding programmes

# Financial aspects



## EU Contribution :

- EraSME - €3,520,375
- EraSME<sup>2</sup> - €2,000,000
- In sum more than €5.5m

# Year 2011



## ~~EU Contribution :~~

- ~~• EraSME - €3,520,375~~
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? What to do now ?

## Transition phase (Information partially incomplete)



- German funding party approached the **Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs**
- EraSME was attached to the **ZIM cooperation projects**
  - Coordination moved to **AiF Projekt GmbH**
- Majority of partners dropped out of the Network
  - Lack of financing
  - Focus on EUREKA/ Eurostars
- **Austria, Germany, Wallonia, Flanders, Czech Republic, Sweden, Slovenia remained** (the last two dropped out soon after)

# Post EU-funding phase



- Coordination office at AiF Projekt GmbH was financed by BMWi
  - Call management
  - Council meetings
  - PR activities
  - Network extension
  - Stakeholder management
- Partners bring in their own resources
  - Hosting partnering events
  - Coordinate own programmes
  - Advertisement



## IraSME phase (part 1)



- **Mind-set** – away from EU connotation
  - Change from EraSME to IraSME
  - Structures were simplified
  - Templates were simplified
  - Less coordination effort in project selections

## IraSME phase (part 2)



- **New partners**
  - Russia (suspended)
  - Nord-Pas-de-Calais (dropped out again)
  - Alberta (Canada)
  - Brazil
  - Luxemburg
  - Türkiye
  - Switzerland
  - Others to follow

## IraSME phase (part 3)



- IraSME is highly valued by BMW
- Good addition to bilateral cooperation in ZIM
- Bilateral cooperation could pave the way to IraSME
- Good balance between personnel expenditure and number of partner countries
  
- Sometimes difficult to explain
- Potential partners limit budgets to one country
- Other networks with similar focus
- It is challenging to keep the network active

# What are important lessons?



- Keep the network active
- Meet in person
- Personal relations are key
- Develop ownership among the partners
- Limited management budgets at partner organisations are a challenge
- Offer additional services (f.e. matchmakings)
- Attract new partners

# Today: How IraSME is structured



- **Network** of ministries and funding agencies
- **Synchronized** national funding for transnational R&D projects
- **National / regional funding conditions** are binding
- **Coordination office** is based at AiF Projekt GmbH in Berlin, supported by German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE)

# Today: Countries/ Regions



## Alberta (Canada)

ECCIR – European-Canadian Centre for Innovation and Research

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## Austria

FFG – Austrian Research Promotion Agency

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## Brazil

EMBRAPII – Brazilian Company of Research and Industrial Innovation

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## Czech Republic

MPO – Czech Ministry of Industry and Trade

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## Flanders (Belgium)

VLAIO – Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship

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## Germany

ZIM – Zentrales Innovationsprogramm Mittelstand

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## Luxembourg

Luxinnovation – National Innovation Agency of Luxembourg

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## Switzerland

Innosuisse – Swiss Innovation Agency

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## Türkiye

TÜBİTAK – Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye

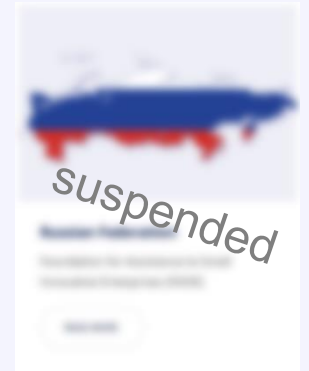
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## Wallonia (Belgium)

SPW – Service Public de Wallonie

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# Today: Project requirements



## **Development of new or significant improvement of existing products, processes and technical services**

- Bottom-up approach
- Up to prototype level (TRL 4-7)
- Significant technical risks for each partner



## **High market potential**

# Today: Joint calls



## Two calls for proposals per year

- Deadlines end of March and September
- **Documents:** IraSME proposal application form + national application form



## National Programme Portraits

on IraSME website: [www.ira-sme.net/countries-regions](http://www.ira-sme.net/countries-regions)



# Today: A typical IraSME project



**2-6 participants** – clearly distinct subprojects for each partner



**2 SMEs / 2 participating countries / regions**

→ RTOs as additional partners or subcontractors (*mandatory in Brazil and Switzerland!*)

→ *Austria: at least 3 companies (1 SME + 1 SME + 1 SME or larger)*



**average project partner costs €150,000 – €250,000**



**average duration 26 months**

# Today: Newsletter and webinars



For call and events announcements,  
please **subscribe to the IraSME newsletter!**

Web: [www.ira-sme.net](http://www.ira-sme.net)

We offer **IraSME webinars** on a **regular base**

# Today: Flagship event Innovation Day



## BMW's Innovation Day for SMEs

- Berlin, Germany
- > 300 exhibitors of R&D projects
- International Area
- Stage programme incl. panels + pitches
- Matchmaking
- Consultation services (BMW funding)



# Today: Matchmaking and other events



## IraSME / CORNET Partnering Events

- 1-2 per year at alternating locations (or online via B2Match)
- CORNET = Collective Research Networking (<https://cornet.online>)
- Funding initiatives, matchmaking, elevator pitch sessions, success stories



# Today: IraSME Team



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