



Guidelines for Applicants

EraSME 8th Call for Proposals

Closing Date: September 30, 2010

*EraSME – ERA-NET on National and Regional Programmes
to promote innovation, networking and cooperation between
Small and Medium Sized Enterprises and Research Organisations*

EraSME is supported by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme



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1 Background and Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide interested parties with information about participation in the EraSME 8th Call for transnational projects of the EraSME partnership. It is targeted at international research, technology, development and innovation (RTDI) projects between small and medium sized enterprises (SME) and research and technology organisations (RTO).

The European initiative EraSME is funded within the ERA-NET scheme of the Seventh European Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. EraSME strives to strengthen the market position of SMEs in search of enhanced access to research capacities by establishing a fruitful cooperation with research and technology organisations on a transnational level. Conversely, RTOs are given the opportunity to benefit from the business expertise of SMEs.

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) play a vital economic and technological role as generators of innovation, still they often lack the facilities, capability and time to perform the necessary research that is needed to develop and test their innovative ideas. Research and technology organisations (RTOs) and universities, on the other hand, have excellent resources and skills but may lack the business expertise found in SMEs.

Against this background, EraSME offers a combined European approach to strengthen and enhance the competitive capacity of SMEs by means of:

- initiating collaboration between SMEs from different countries and regions,
- helping SMEs to link up with those RTOs that can provide help in tackling the SMEs' unique research and development challenges,
- increasing the cooperative and competitive capability of SMEs to work in international Research and Development (R&D) networks,
- expanding the ability of RTOs to cooperate with European SMEs.

The following regions/countries are participating in the EraSME 8th Call:

Austria,
Belgium/Flanders,
Czech Republic,
(Denmark)*
Germany,
Iceland,
Norway,
(Slovenia)*,
Spain/Madrid.

** final decision about participation is still pending*

Project partners from the above mentioned countries/regions can be funded according to the rules of the respective regional/national funding programme. Partners from other regions/countries are welcome to participate, although no funding possibilities can be guaranteed.

2 Basic Requirements

In addition to the basic EraSME requirements national or regional rules may apply. They are listed in an overview of the respective regional/national funding schemes and are described in more detail in the regional/national Programme Portraits. It is strongly recommended to check the **Overview of Funding Schemes** and **Programme Portraits** (www.era-sme.net) relevant for your project and please get in contact with your **Local Agency!**

Requirements for Projects

Projects must be innovative and must aim to develop new or to improve existing products, processes or services. Projects must also demonstrate real market potential.

General conditions for projects are:

- balanced participation of the partners in the RTDI efforts,
- at least 50% of the work should be performed by industrial partners,
- if large companies (LC) participate in a project, at least 25% of the work must be performed by SMEs,
- at least 25% of the work should be performed by RTOs,
- **but regional/national rules will prevail, please check the *Programme Portraits and Overview of Funding Schemes* for details.**

To exemplify, some regional/national rules are listed here:

- RTOs may be funded directly or treated as subcontractors.
- Large companies from the participating countries can be involved in the consortium, and may receive funding.
- Other partners (large companies, other SMEs, RTOs, etc.) from other regions/countries which do not take part in this call may be part of the project consortium, if their contribution is essential to reach the project goals. However, funding will not normally be available for them.
- Parts of the work may be outsourced to subcontractors.

Project Duration

The duration of projects can be up to 36 months (according to regional/national rules, please see the overview of funding schemes).

Project Formats

Two main categories of projects may be funded:

- consortium type projects (CTP) and
- small cooperation projects (SCP).

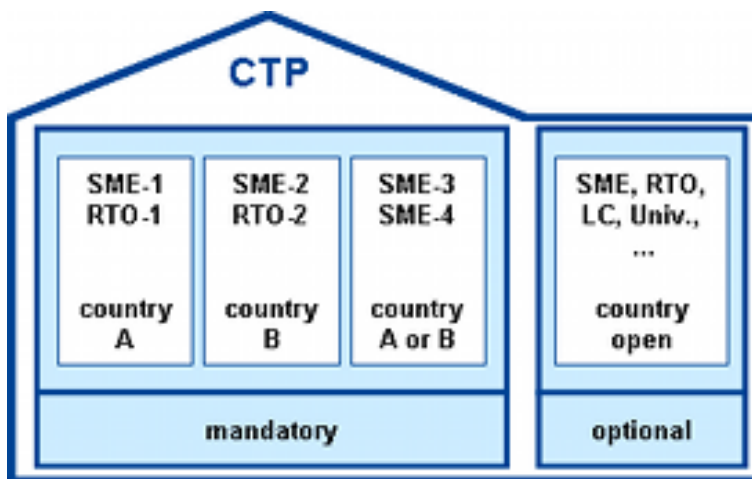
Some regions/countries only support one of the two types of projects. To see what is applicable for your region/country, please refer to the ***Overview of Funding Schemes***.

If the knowledge necessary to carry out the project is not available in the participating regions/countries (see page 2), one or more SMEs and/or RTOs from other European countries can be involved in the project. Funding for them will be examined case by case.

Consortium Type Projects (CTP)

Minimum configuration for a **consortium type project** is as follows:

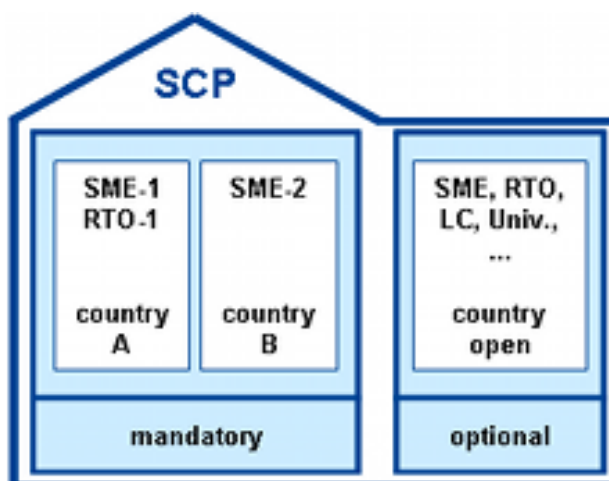
- at least 4 SMEs from 2 different countries/regions
- at least 2 RTOs, one from each of the countries /regions of the SMEs involved in the project.



Small Cooperation Projects (SCP), subset of CTP

The minimum configuration for a **small cooperation project** is as follows:

- at least 2 SMEs from 2 different countries/regions,
- at least 1 RTO originating from one of the countries /regions of one of the SMEs involved in the project.



Please check the **overview of funding schemes** to see which project format applies in your region or country. It is strongly recommended to contact your regional/national agency!

3 Time Schedule EraSME 8th Call

- June, 2010** Joint call announcement – opening of the call.
- Guidelines for applicants and help desk available on the EraSME website: www.era-sme.net.
 - Registration and proposal submission: www.erasme-submission.net
- September 30, 2010** Deadline for proposal submission, 12:00 Brussels time.
- November 15, 2010** Communication of the results of the eligibility check (email to project coordinator), indicating whether the project application fulfils the minimum requirements and will be evaluated for respective regional/national funding.
- end January, 2011** Communication of funding decisions (email to coordinator).
- Project meetings: not mandatory, but strongly recommended.
 - Further elaboration of detailed project plan if necessary.
 - Cooperation contract negotiation between the participating partners and funding negotiations can start (or continue), according to the respective regional/national rules.
- April 30, 2011** Deadline for delivering the final regional/national application (final cooperation contract, final project plan, possible regional/national forms) to the involved agencies.

4 Application Procedure

Eligibility Criteria

Your project application must meet all the eligibility criteria; otherwise it will not be put forward for independent assessment and evaluation.

These are the questions asked to ensure only eligible projects are taken forward:

- Proposal must be submitted before September 30, 2010, 12:00 Brussels time.
- Proposal must be submitted by means of the online upload facility on the EraSME website: www.erasme-submission.net
- Fulfilment of the formal criteria regarding the proposal:
 - written in English,
 - all mandatory forms complete:
 - application form,
 - commitment and signature forms for each partner to be merged and uploaded as one Portable Document Format (pdf) document,
 - draft consortium agreement to be uploaded as pdf document.
- Fulfilment of the minimum partner criteria for a SCP or CTP project.
- National requirements for participation fulfilled (please see ***Overview of Funding Schemes, Programme Portraits*** and **please contact your local agency**).
- Maximum duration of the project is 36 months (but regional/national rules will prevail).

If all the above eligibility criteria are met, your EraSME proposal will be taken forward to the independent assessment, evaluation and ranking stage.

Documents to be submitted

English is the only accepted language for completion of the project application form; Annexed documents should preferably be in Portable Document Format (pdf). The size of each annexed document must not exceed 10MB.

Your application must include:

- A completed EraSME project application form (application form can be downloaded after registration on www.erasme-submission.net).
- Complete commitment and signature form for each partner to be merged and uploaded as **one** pdf document.
- A draft consortium agreement between all the project partners is mandatory. It will regulate, inter alia, the following:
 - identity of the partners,
 - IPR ownership, IPR use and exploitation of the results,
 - contributions of each partner to the project,
 - confidentiality,
 - publications.

Your application may include:

- one additional annex document containing additional information like illustrations or graphics (maximum size 10 MB, 10 pages).

Project Proposal

Proposal Submission

The project proposal shall only be submitted by the project coordinator through the electronic tool available on the EraSME website: www.erasme-submission.net

Only proposals submitted before September 30, 2010, 12:00 h Brussels time will be accepted. The project proposal must be written in English.

You must use the pdf **Application Form** provided via the EraSME proposal submission website. Applications will not be accepted in any other format. The form must not be altered, converted or renamed.

The **Guidelines for Applicants**, the **Commitment and Signature Form**, the **Overview of the Funding Schemes** and the **Programme Portraits** are available on the EraSME website and will help you to complete the forms. <http://www.era-sme.net/public/help-desk>.

The application form contains specific form fields that all have to be filled in. Incomplete application forms will be rejected.

The space given in each field of the form is limited to a fixed number of characters. You must restrict the content of your response in each of the fields to the space provided. The number of characters in each field and additional information is displayed as pop-up information.

The typeface, font size and colour are predetermined and can not be changed. Illustrations and graphics can not be included in the application form, although they may be included in the annexes.

Annexes to the application form

Two annexes are mandatory:

- draft consortium agreement,
- commitment and signature forms for each partner compiled in one pdf document.

The third annex is optional:

- additional information to the application form: including illustrations, graphics and tables.

Annexes have to be compiled in single documents (one per annex), not exceeding 10 MB. It is possible to upload three annexes at the maximum. An annex should consist of approximately 5 pages and not exceed 10 pages - except for the annex “commitment and signature forms” whose number of pages is equal to the number of project partners (one form for each partner).

All annexes must be provided in English.

Commitment and signature form

One commitment and signature form for each partner needs to be completed and merged and uploaded as one pdf document. The following synopsis provides guidance on the completion of fields of the commitment and signature form.

Legal entity: Indicate full name and address.

Authorised representative: Indicate first and last name and function within the organisation.

Declaration:

- all necessary internal authorisations have been obtained in order to permit the legal entity I represent to submit this application.
- all the information given in relation with this application are complete, accurate and correct.
- the legal entity I represent is committed to participate in and cooperate within the project, as described in this application, in accordance with the provisions set out in the agreement to be signed with the funding body.
- the legal entity I represent has stable and sufficient funding to maintain its activity throughout its participation to the project as described in this application.
- the legal entity I represent has or will have the necessary resources to carry out its involvement in the project as described in this application.

Exclusion of technical expert(s): If necessary, indicate the technical expert(s) that cannot be involved in the assessment of your application.

Signature: Sign this document to fully complete your application.

Synopsis of the application form

The following synopsis provides guidance on the completion of fields of the application form, where extra clarification seems necessary.

Unless stated otherwise, the information you enter in the application form is published and publicly available. If a particular field is marked 'CONFIDENTIAL', this means that access to the information within it is only available to EraSME National Project Coordinators from the involved regions/countries, the funding agencies of those regions/countries, the EraSME call manager, the two technical experts who will assess the application and members of the Independent Evaluation Panel (IEP) who will rank the application.

1. General information

- Enter the acronym and title for your project.
- Provide a small summary of the content and objectives of your project including what is Innovative about it.
- Select the technological and market area your project addresses.

- Estimated project costs in Euros: This information will appear automatically after completion of the form.
- Partners contribution: This information will appear automatically after completion of the form.
- Cost & Duration: The start and end date of the project must be entered manually. On the basis of this information, the duration is processed.

2. Project Outline

2.1 Project summary (public): Describe the goal and background of your project including technical and market applications. Give a general description of the project consortium.

2.2 Technological development envisaged (confidential)

2.2.1 Situate your project vis-a-vis the state of the art: Clearly identify the innovative aspects about your project. What is the level of this innovation and how far will this push boundaries and knowledge past current leading-edge work? Alternatively, how does your project apply existing technologies to the new areas? For example this should include details of the technical breakthrough being sought.

2.2.2 Description of the technological developments envisaged in the project

2.2.2.1 What is the overall aim of the project? Explain specific problems and demands to be solved within the project.

2.2.2.2 Give a short description of the technological approach to solve the problems and/or to fulfil the demands. Please note: a description of a detailed project plan with work packages and milestones follows in section 2.5

2.2.2.3 Describe the technological and/or scientific challenge and feasibility of the project. What are the technological alternatives, their advantages and disadvantages compared to the technological developments envisaged in your project?

2.2.2.4 What are the technological risks? Please explain how you plan to overcome the risks.

2.2.3 What are the expected project results? Describe the concrete results expected at the end of your project (new products, prototype, IPR, process, etc).

2.3 Market application and exploitation (confidential)

2.3.1 Describe the market you are aiming at (market needs and potential) and the potential for the involved SMEs.

2.3.2 What is the estimated market size and expected market share? Describe the estimated market size and expected market share of your project.

2.3.3 Describe the partners positions on the market before the project. What is the status of competition on the market(s)? What is the impact of the project results on SMEs competitiveness and growth?

2.3.4 Describe your overall commercialisation plan/ go-to market strategy and (if applicable) your dissemination plan.

2.3.5 What is the expected time to market?

2.4 Cooperation (confidential)

2.4.1 Please describe the consortium and provide a list of all project partners: interaction of the project partners, their role in the project and reasoning for being partner in the project (explain why each partner is integrated). Describe the added value through the cooperation.

2.4.2 Describe the IPR concept of the consortium. Please describe how new results achieved within the scope of the project will be secured and protected. Give an impression/overview how these results will be divided among the project partners in order to enable rewarding exploitation.

2.4.3 How is your project management set up? Describe your project management structure.

2.4.4 Describe the economic impact on society and a possible socio-economic impact.

2.5 Project execution (confidential)

2.5.1 Please explain the project plan. Describe the overall goal and what technological problems need to be solved. Give clear goals, sub-goals and milestones (content and date).

2.5.2 Work Packages: Complete the different work packages involved in your project by stating the work package, indicating the planned start and end date and describing it's content (include a list with the involved partners and their tasks in this work package).

3. Project Coordinator

3.1 Organisation: Enter details of your organisation as prompted by the fields.

3.2 Contact person data: Enter details of your project's main contact person as prompted by the fields.

3.3 Organisation Type: Enter details of your organisation type as prompted by the fields.

3.4 Expertise (confidential)

3.4.1 Products and / or services offered in the market

3.4.2 NACE Code or similar

3.4.3 Managerial expertise: Describe your managerial expertise with regard to R&D projects.

3.5 Contribution to the project (confidential)

3.5.1 Technical contribution: Describe the specific technical expertise you contribute to the project.

3.5.2 Goal in project participation: Explain what you expect as a result of the project in terms of new technology, products, services, processes, IPR and market access.

3.5.3 Detailed cost contribution in Euro: Describe the main participant's detailed contribution costs in €.

3.5.4 Detailed contribution per Work package: Describe the detailed role of participant in the work package.

3.6 Economic Impact (confidential): Describe the project's economic results and valorisation in your organisation and the time and cost for their market introduction. In figures, describe what you expect as a result of the project in terms of new technology, products, services, processes, employees, IPR and market access. Please note: the information in this section will be treated as confidential.

4. Partner

4.1 Organisation: Enter details of the organisation as prompted by the fields.

4.2 Contact person data: Enter details of the organisation project's contact person as prompted by the fields.

4.3 Organisation type: Enter details of the organisation type as prompted by the fields.

4.4 Expertise (confidential)

4.4.1 Expertise and core business: Please explain products and / or services offered in the market

4.4.2 NACE code or similar

4.4.2 Managerial expertise: Describe the managerial expertise of the organisation with regard to R&D projects.

4.5 Contribution to the project (confidential)

4.5.1 Technical contribution: Describe the specific technical expertise the organisation contributes to the project.

4.5.2 Goal in project participation: Explain what the organisation expects as a result of the project in terms of new technology, products, services, processes, IPR, market access.

4.5.3 Detailed cost contribution in Euro: Describe the partners detailed contribution costs in Euro.

4.5.4 Detailed contribution per Work package: Describe the detailed role of the partner in the work package.

4.6 Economic impact (confidential): Describe the project's economic results and valorisation in your organisation and the time and cost for their market introduction. In figures, describe what you expect as a result of the project in terms of new technology, products, services, processes, employees, IPR and market access. Please note: the information in this section will be treated as confidential.

What happens after I have submitted my application?

Application documents (i.e. application form, draft cooperation contract) may be modified until the deadline (cut-off date) of the call. After each cut-off date, the EraSME secretariat will check if the application is duly completed. Only applications which are complete at the cut-off date of the call will be accepted. Any application received after the deadline of the cut-off date will be automatically registered for the next cut-off date.

You will receive an acknowledgement by e-mail confirming receipt of your complete application. If you have not received confirmation within 48 hours, please contact Dr. Andreas Berns by email berns@vdivde-it.de or phone: 0049/30/310078-323.

Additional Information Required

Any additional information needed by countries/regions for the project evaluation and/or for their funding decisions, e.g. detailed financial information, will be requested by the respective agencies after the eligibility check.

The assessment and evaluation process

A common assessment and evaluation process applies to all applications. It follows a two-step procedure; first a technical assessment by two independent experts, and then evaluation and ranking by the Independent Evaluation Panel (IEP).

Through a careful selection process, recognised specialists in their relevant fields are appointed as technical experts and members of the IEP to assess, evaluate and rank all EraSME applications.

- Technical experts and IEP members are required to sign confidentiality agreements and to declare any potential conflicts of interest. They shall refrain from assessing applications in which they have a conflict of interest. Applicants have the right to request exclusion of specific experts by quoting the companies and/or organisations that should not be involved in the evaluation of the application in the “Commitment and signature form”. To guarantee their independence, the identities of the technical experts and IEP members will however remain confidential.
- Technical experts and IEP members are required to treat applications in the strictest confidence. They are engaged as individuals, not as representatives of their employer or any other entity. They are required to carry out the evaluations themselves and not ask someone to evaluate the application in their place. They must not ask anyone to give another opinion of their assessment.

Technical experts

Applications will be assessed by two assessors - technical experts commissioned by the EraSME Secretariat. The most appropriate technical experts will be selected. The Technical Expert Report produced will consist of an analysis and an assessment of the project management and the project consortium, the technological innovation envisaged and the economic impact of the project. The assessors will rate applications on each criterion by using the quality indicators ‘Poor, Average, Good or Excellent’ on the Technical Expert Report.

Independent Evaluation Panel

Each application is then collectively reviewed and ranked by an Independent Evaluation Panel (IEP) in an IEP Meeting, where the members meet to discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses of each application against the set criteria on the basis of the following information:

- the EraSME application form
- the draft consortium agreement
- the two Technical Expert Reports drafted by the technical experts
- a cover note prepared by the funding agency of each region/country involved

The ranking system

All proposals will be scored and ranked according to the three main categories: Basic Assessment, Technology and Innovation and Market and Competition. Each category is considered of equal importance.

Basic Assessment relates to the partnership, participants and project structure. It deals with the project plan and the capabilities of the participants in relation to their tasks in the project. Aspects to be considered include:

- well-balanced partnership
- added value through cooperation
- technological capacity of all participants
- financial resources of each company
- managerial capacity of all participants
- methodology and planning approach
- milestones and deliverables
- cost and financing structure

Technology and Innovation relates to the requirement that the technological and innovative level of the project is a step forward compared to the state-of-the-art in the relevant sector. Aspects to be considered include:

- technology/scientific excellence
- innovation novelty level
- technological and innovative progress for the involved SMEs

Market and Competition relates to the market targeted, the profitability of the project results and the competitive advantages for the participants involved. Assessment aspects include:

- exploitation/valorisation of knowledge and results
- impact in SMEs competitiveness and growth
- return on investment
- market potential for SMEs
- time to market
- socio-economic impact on the society
- dissemination of results/knowledge

Project Meeting

A meeting of all partners in the project (after funding decision but prior to concluding the project funding agreement) is highly recommended, especially for consortium type projects. A meeting may be required by the relevant funding agencies. The aim of the meeting is to:

- further clarify the roles of the different participants in the project,
- elaborate a detailed final project plan (including milestones/deliverables),
- define IPR challenges and corresponding strategies,
- clarify important points in the cooperation contract to be made among the participants.

Representatives from the agencies involved are to be invited and may assist at the meeting. All participants must appoint one responsible contact person and a proxy to replace the responsible person when the latter is unavailable.

Final Documents, Agreements and Contracts

Final Project Plan

In some cases especially in the case of consortium type projects with many partners and activities a detailed plan is required as a basis for the cooperation contract and the official funding decision. In order to avoid unnecessary detailed work, the final project plan can be developed after proposal submission and communication of the funding decision. The respective agencies will request the necessary information directly from the project coordinator after the eligibility check and evaluation.

Funding Agreement

Matters related to funding will be determined following the respective regional/national agencies rules.

Cooperation Contract

A cooperation contract between all the project partners is mandatory. The cooperation contract should be signed before April, 2011. An example of a cooperation contract will be available for download (www.era-sme.net). It will regulate, inter alia, the following:

- identity of the partners,
- IPR ownership, IPR use and exploitation of the results,
- contributions of each partner to the project,
- confidentiality,
- publications.

Project Reporting and Monitoring

Projects will be monitored according to the rules of the respective country/region. Hence, technical as well as financial reporting according to national/regional rules will be required. Arrangements will be made during the funding negotiation process.

The project coordinator will be required, in addition, to deliver a final report and a project portrait on the overall project.

5 Budget and Funding Procedures

Funding Budget

Projects will be funded out of current programmes of the involved agencies. Projects for this call should range between € 0.3 and € 2 million (total cost).

National Funding Procedures and Requirements

Funding will be provided to project partners by the corresponding national/regional agencies according to their respective national/regional regulations (please see **Overview of Funding Schemes** and **Programme Portraits**).

The amount of funding and costs eligible for funding will follow regional/national rules and procedures. It may therefore vary between EraSME partner countries.

Each project-partner is advised to contact their EraSME local agency (listed at www.era-sme.net) for information on the applicable funding rules and the availability of funding.

The first payment will be made after the cooperation contract has been signed and funding has been approved.

6 The regional/national Funding Agencies

For additional information and support, it is strongly recommended to contact the respective regional/national agencies. Please refer to the list of regional/national contacts on the website: www.era-sme.net.

7 Definitions

Cooperation contract: A contract between all project partners regulating the terms of their cooperation, including the handling of IPR.

Funding agencies: Agencies which manage the relevant funding programme(s) in the respective country/region.

Funding agreement: Agreement between the funding agency and the funded project partner(s) in the respective country/region.

IEP: Independent Evaluation Panel

IPR: Intellectual property rights. You can find examples and detailed information on possible IPR following the link:

<http://www.iprhelppdesk.org/controlador/principal?seccion=principal&len=en>

Project coordinator: One of the project partners. The coordinator submits the proposal, leads the project and reports on progress. The coordinator can be replaced between the proposal submission and the submission of the final project plan if necessary.

Project partners: All the participants/partners involved in a project consortium (including subcontractors performing R&D).

Proposal: A project description plus company profiles and RTO profiles submitted by the project coordinator.

RTDI: Research, Technology, Development and Innovation.

RTO: Research and Technology Organisation. An organisation which conducts research or development as a main activity, e.g. university, higher education institute, research institute, technology centre, etc.

SME: Small and medium-sized enterprises The SME must be independent. See the definition of the European Commission dated January 1, 2005:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/sme_definition/index_en.htm.

An overview of the definition is given in the following table:

Headcount	Turnover (€)	or	Balance sheet total (€)
< 250	<= 50 million		<= 43 million

... and if you don't know if you really are an SME, just take the test:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/sme-techweb/index_en.cfm

Transnational project: A project that includes partners from at least two countries.