



ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΑΙΓΑΙΟΥ

Horizon 2020 SME Innovation Associate – Funding PhD recruitment in SMEs CALLS IN H2020

ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΑΙΓΑΙΟΥ - ΕΙΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΑΡΙΑΣΜΟΣ ΕΡΕΥΝΑΣ
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GENERAL

The Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME) runs a new initiative to help European SMEs recruit post-doctoral researchers from other countries to explore a business innovation idea.

The European Union is funding the salary and related costs of **90 post-doctoral researchers** as part of a pilot action to help European SMEs and start-ups take advantage of the world's best talent for developing their innovative business.

OBJECTIVE

The action aims at overcoming barriers for EU SMEs to the recruitment of highly qualified specialists (PhD or equivalent) that are not available on the national job market (either because the required skills are not available or because they are not affordable), but whose knowledge would be crucial to open up opportunities for innovation and significant growth for the enterprise.

TARGET AUDIENCES

The call aims at creating a "bridge of knowledge" connecting enterprises and researchers.

Researchers from all over the world meeting the following criteria:

- ✓ **PhD holder** or equivalent (**Recognised Researcher R2 level** minimum);
- ✓ **Demonstrated expertise** in line with the job advertisement;
- ✓ **Transnational mobility** as defined in the mobility rule of the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA): *"at the time of recruitment, researchers must have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country where the SME is established for no more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the reference date. Compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account"*.

KEY POINTS

- ✓ Early stage support
- ✓ EU Grant covering the salary of the researcher for a period of one year
- ✓ Key opportunity to acquire or reinforce experience in the private sector;
- ✓ Opportunity to work on highly-innovative projects selected by the EU Grant
- ✓ Training Package for Enterprises and Researchers
- ✓ "Light" application
- ✓ Attractive salary + benefits (reallocation etc) sponsored by the EU
- ✓ Internationalisation, mobility, innovation, excellence.

THE ENTERPRISE

Horizon 2020 actively supports small businesses by providing direct financial support to innovative SMEs and indirect support to increase their innovation capacity.

The Enterprise Only SMEs (including start-up companies) established in the EU Member States and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) or countries associated¹ to Horizon 2020 are eligible. Applicants must complete the SME self-assessment questionnaire in the Beneficiary Register of the Research and **Innovation Participant Portal** to apply for a grant under this programme.

Organisations will only be eligible to participate if this self-assessment confirms their status² as small and medium-sized enterprise.

SUPPORT BY THE EU

International Visibility All applicants, whether successful or not, will have the possibility to benefit, free of charge, from the EU's researcher mobility portal [EURAXESS](#), thus making the job vacancy visible to researchers all around Europe and beyond.

Financial Support Successful applicants (recruiting SMEs) will furthermore receive an individual grant covering salary and related costs of employing a post-doctoral research associates recruited in the context of the programme from a country other than the home country of the

company. The following costs are eligible under this programme:

- ✓ **The salary of the researcher** for a period of one year
- ✓ Relocation cost for the researcher (at the beginning and at the end of the 12 month assignment under this programme), up to a **maximum total of €5000**
- ✓ Travel and subsistence costs related to the training

Training package The training package is composed by two parallel programmes:

1. Core training programme is made available for all researchers participating in the programme as Innovation Associate. This training programme is managed and organised under the responsibility of the European Commission and will address the general needs/requirements of Innovation Associates.

2. Tailored training programme organised by the enterprise as a personal training and development plan for the Innovation Associate intended to maximise the potential of the recruitment and multiply its effects while assuring a smooth integration of the researcher in the structure and cultural environment of the enterprise.

PARTICIPATION PHASES

Phase one (optional): 11/02-30/06/2016 - Testing ideas and job vacancies SMEs can test the attractiveness of both their ideas and vacancy notice in advance (i.e. before

submitting their proposal for this pilot action) by publishing their call for manifestation of interest on EURAXESS, the European Job Platform for Researchers, and other international or globally accessible web-based resources. This pre-publication will allow to:

- ✓ Test the business idea
- ✓ Fine-tune the vacancy notice
- ✓ Create contacts with potential candidates

Phase two (optional): 01/07/2016 28/02/2017 Parallel recruiting phase

During the testing phase (phase one), companies can decide whether they want to make the vacancy conditional on the award of an EU grant.

By making the offer non-conditional on the EU financial support, SMEs and Start-ups can keep the opportunity of recruiting experts as soon as they are available/identified without having to wait for 1st September 2017 (the official starting date of the positions supported by the European Union).

Phase three: 01/03-30/04/2017 – Publish the job offer. Once the European Commission has selected the (up-to) 90 SMEs and Start-ups with the most innovative ideas and best recruitment plans, job vacancies will be published on EURAXESS and other international or globally accessible web-based resources from 1st March 2017 to 30 April 2017.

The recruitment will take place in May-June 2017 and the new positions will start in September 2017 for a period of 12 months.

MILESTONES

- ✓ **Call opens on: 11 February 2016**
- ✓ **Deadline for applications: 30 June 2016.**
- ✓ **Testing phase:** between 11 February 2016 and 30 June 2016.
- ✓ **Awarding and Signature of the Grants:** 28 February 2017 (at the latest).
- ✓ **Publication of the Vacancies:** between 1 March 2017 (or before) and 30 April 2017.
- ✓ **Recruitment phase:** May-June 2017.
- ✓ **Start date for the position: 1 September 2017.**

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The application is simple and paperless:

- ✓ Register your SME or Start-up at the [EU Participant Portal](#) - the single gateway to EU research funding. The process will take no more than 10 minutes;
- ✓ Complete the SME self-assessment
- ✓ Read carefully the [call for application of the H2020 SME innovation Associate](#)
- ✓ Prepare a short application (see below)
- ✓ Submit the application online by 30/06/2016 at 17:00:00 (Brussels time)

THE SME INSTRUMENT

SMEs are encouraged to participate across the whole Horizon 2020 (research & innovation) programme. They can engage in collaborative projects as part of a consortium but there is also a new dedicated SME instrument designed specifically for innovative smaller companies.

The SME instrument targets highly innovative SMEs showing a strong ambition to develop, grow and internationalise, regardless of whether they are high-tech and research-driven or non-research conducting, social or service companies. It provides easy access with simple rules and procedures.

Support is provided in three different stages covering the whole innovation cycle. Successful completion of one stage will allow an SME to move on to the next:

Phase 1: Concept and feasibility assessment – lump sum up to €50,000

Phase 2: R&D, demonstration – reimbursement up to 70% €0.5-2.5m

Phase 3: Commercialisation – no direct funding but facilitated access to debt and equity financial instruments as well as other support

For 2016/17, Horizon 2020 will fund innovation support to SMEs through specific activities, including:

- cluster-facilitated projects for new industrial value chains

- European SME innovation associate
- improving access to advanced manufacturing technologies for clean production
- creating an online ‘challenge platform’ to facilitate social innovation
- peer learning of innovation agencies
- analysis of innovating SMEs to better understand innovation support requirements
- better access to industrial technologies developed overseas

More information at: [For a better innovation support to SMEs](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

- ✓ Consult the webpage: <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/h2020-sme-innovation-associate>
- ✓ Contact by e-Mail: EASME-INNOVATION-ASSOCIATE@ec.europa.eu
- ✓ H2020 FAQ related to this call: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/support/faq.html>
- ✓ Enterprise Europe Network Contact point : <http://een.ec.europa.eu/about/branches/greece>
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