

EURADA-NEWS
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EEN NEXT CALL

Publication of the call: mid-January 2014

Info day: probably 6 February 2014

Start of the new network: 1 January 2015

Duration of the implementation period: 1.1.2015 – 31.12.2021

Total budget: €356 million to provide grants to the network members and to animate the network

Activities to be delivered:

- Advisory services to SMEs in different fields: EU policy and programme, access to finance, innovation and knowledge transfer, internationalization, energy and resource efficiency, management capacity, sectorial specific issues;
- Cross-border support (brokerage, partner search for Horizon 2020, internationalization);
- Feedback of SME consultation on EU legislation;
- Support activities under Horizon 2020, i.e. enhancing innovation management capacity in SMEs and playing a role of key account manager for SMEs having received EU funding (coaching not provided by EEN themselves, but by accredited experts);
- EEN will be able to offer additional services.

It seems that DG Enterprise & Industry will make a more rigorous selection than in the past (capacity to deliver the services, skills experience, local presence with track records) and will select organizations embedded in a regional SME ecosystem (even if nobody can give a definition of what this concept means).

For those who are not familiar with EEN day-to-day work, we provide in attachment – only in English – the 2014 annual guidance note issued by DG Enterprise & Innovation.

ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK
ANNUAL GUIDANCE NOTE 2014

1. Introduction

The Annual Guidance Note for 2014 (AGN 2014) describes EU thematic priorities and focus areas for standard Network services and priorities for the functioning of the Network. It also lists optional EU thematic topics and activities based on proposals and suggestions from other Commission services. Each network partner and Sector Group should integrate some of these topics into their activities.

As explained in further detail below, hand in hand with the implementation of this guidance note, steps will be taken to enhance the visibility of the network towards Commission services and to foster closer cooperation in specific policy areas, in particular with the Sector Groups.

EASME¹ will ensure that specific messages are passed to the Network on the topics described in this note, concentrating on matters of interest to the Network and its SME clients. In cooperation with the Commission, EASME will also ensure a regular exchange of information between Sector Groups and other Commission services. Contact persons in the Commission and EASME will be designated for the main topics specified in this note.

Network partners are encouraged to provide EASME and the Commission with some examples of good practice activities related to the implementation of this guidance note. These will be used to illustrate good practice activities of the Network in promotion materials, press releases and briefings².

1.1 Activities for all consortia (key priorities, focus areas, “dissemination on request”, & feedback)

- **Key priorities for all consortia:**
 - COSME and #EUglocal communication
 - Internationalization, Missions for Growth and Trade
- **Six focus areas for capacity building and service delivery for all consortia:**
 - Access to finance³
 - Industrial policy
 - Innovation
 - R&D (including H2020)
 - Green entrepreneurship, environment and resource efficiency
 - Internal Market and Justice

¹ COSME will be managed by EASME, a new executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, building on the existing executive agency for competitiveness and innovation (EACI).

² For example, on the lines of the press release describing the Network’s services for EU finance, or the package prepared for the interview with Joanna Drake with Business Planet during the Annual Conference at Vilnius.

³ EU programmes, risk capital, guarantees and loans, Structural Funds, cross border claims and late payments.

- **“Dissemination on request”**

Network partners should inform SMEs about EU developments announced by EASME in the EU and Services Bulletin (these may concern any EU policy matter of relevance to SMEs).

- **Feedback**

Feedback remains important and Network partners should participate in as many feedback actions as possible. An indicative list of topics is given in Annex 2.

1.2 Optional additional thematic focus areas (Annex 1)

Optional thematic areas for **Network partners are outlined in Annex 1A. Each network partner is asked to implement some of these** and may also consider topics in Annex 1B.

Indicative thematic areas for **Sector Groups are outlined in Annex 1B.** Each group is also encouraged to implement some of the more general options in Annex 1A for their sector. Organizational focus areas for sector groups are described in point 3 (inside the network).

2. Key EU policy-related priorities, focus areas and activities for all consortia

Unless otherwise specified below, each Consortium is simply asked to take account of these themes in standard activities such as information, dissemination, advisory and partnership services, and to include some of these topics in network events where possible.

Key Priority 1 - COSME and #EUgolocal (contribution of the network to institutional communication)

- Integrate COSME and related themes into standard Network services and play an active role in #EUgolocal actions by disseminating DG Enterprise’s key corporate communication messages to local businesses via the most appropriate media. DG Enterprise will make available videos and other communications materials for dissemination via the Network.
- The #EUgolocal topics “Access to finance⁴, COSME and late payments” and “Missions for growth and internationalisation” are priorities for all Network partners. The Commission also seeks widespread Network involvement in #EUgolocal activities for “Industrial policy”, “the fight against counterfeiting - Stop Fakes” and “The EU makes doing business easier and better”⁵ (one of the seven priority themes for the Commission’s corporate communication for 2014). Relevant sector groups should play an active role in #EUgolocal Tourism and Space activities, and may be invited to participate in similar activities related to ICT.

⁴ This also includes cross-border claims

⁵ Common messages and communication activities focusing on how the EU makes doing business easier and better by enhancing the business environment (EU measures to reduce administrative burdens, messages to reverse the reputation of the EU generating red tape. This is channelled through the Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT).

Priorities for EASME:

- Capacity building (make sure that the Network is informed of ongoing developments with COSME, cover this in training for the network and encourage the Network to participate actively in #EUgolocal actions.

Key Priority 2 - Internationalization, Missions for growth, Europe 2020 Strategy for Growth missions and Trade

Missions for Growth and the Europe 2020 Strategy for Growth Missions

The term **Missions for Growth** in this guidance note refers to both Missions for Growth and the Europe 2020 Strategy for Growth Missions⁶;

- All activities related to preparation for, implementation of and follow-up of the Missions for Growth, including the identification and recruitment of SMEs to participate are a key priority.
- Third country "Business Cooperation Centres" must assist in the organization of the "Missions for Growth" events in their countries.

Internationalization

Internationalization is a priority area for standard Network services such as Business cooperation. Network partners should also continue to inform businesses of relevant policy developments, including actions related to the Communication "Small Business, Big World - a new partnership to help SMEs seize global opportunities"⁷, the market access strategy⁸, and promote relevant tools. In particular, they should:

- Use and promote the new portal on SME internationalization (to be launched soon) and the market access partnership tools, such as the market access database (MADB), and the export helpdesk. Training will be provided to the network on these tools;
- Promote (and cooperate with) clusters and networks for SME internationalization;
- Participate in activities for implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between DG Enterprise and Industry and the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Priorities for EASME

- Operational coordination of Missions for Growth, actions for stimulating Network partners to participate, and inclusion of internationalization topics in Network training.

Focus Area 1 - Access to Finance (EU programmes, financial instruments, Structural Funds, Cross border claims, Late payments)

- Inform business of and make use of the new portal on SME finance⁹

⁶ The EU 2020 Strategy for Growth missions are purely within the EU in areas of high youth unemployment. However, as their structure and organization are on similar lines to the Missions for Growth they are included under the same heading.

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/market-access/files/communication_sme_internationalisation_draft_en.pdf

⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/creating-opportunities/trade-topics/market-access/export-from-eu/>

⁹ More information: <http://access2eufinance.ec.europa.eu/>

- Capacity building for advisory services on the new generation of EU programmes and financial instruments, and ensure that SMEs receive all necessary information and advice as early as possible.
- Start to extend arrangements for signposting clients to providers of advice and support on other forms of financing (access to tailor-made financial advice such as business planning, investment readiness programmes);
- Inform SMEs about their financial rights (e.g. the right to ask feedback on ratings given by banks, late payments and cross-border claims legislation¹⁰) and/or signpost them to other sources of advice on this matter.

#EUglocal *actions in this area are described above.*

Priorities for EASME

- Access to finance and the new generation of EU programmes and financial instruments are key priorities for training and exchange of good practice.

Focus Area 2 - Industrial policy

- Inform businesses about EU industrial policy developments and cover industrial policy topics in network events;
- Include the six priority industrial policy sectors in standard Network services, in particular for partner search and advice to clients from these sectors (Key Enabling Technologies¹¹, advanced manufacturing technologies for clean production, bio-based products, sustainable construction and raw materials, clean vehicles and vessels and smart grids);
- in particular in response to circulars from EASME, disseminate information on matters such as integration in digital value chains and projects, KETs technology centres of excellence and examples of successful cooperation (mapping due to be prepared in 2014) and KETs technology platforms supported under H2020;
- Help SMEs to benefit from the Structural Funds for industrial innovation (smart specialization)

Additional themes are given in Annex 1. Eco-design and IPR are covered under innovation.

Focus Area 3 – Innovation

Key focus areas for services are: standards, eco-design, innovation topics such as design-driven innovation, public procurement for innovation, workplace innovation¹² and advanced manufacturing, and advice on EU funding for innovation. Network partners should also

¹⁰ And disseminate the teaching modules on cross-border credit and claims management to SMEs: <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/business-environment/cross-border-enforcement/>

¹¹ See also the EU strategy on Key Enabling Technologies and related actions http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/ict/key_technologies/index_en.htm

¹² In liaison with the European Workplace Innovation Network

identify and inform businesses of other innovation incentives available in their region under the new European Structural and Investment Funds such as innovation vouchers.

Other innovation themes and references are given under the innovation heading in Annex 1.

Focus Area 4 - Research and development including Horizon 2020

- Themes/areas for standard network services: H2020 and, in particular, the SME instrument, and H2020 financial instruments. Network partners should also raise awareness about the call for expressions of interest for evaluators;
- Top priorities for specialized network partners are to participate in the information days organized by DG RTD and to start preparing for taking on key account management and support for coaching for the dedicated SME instrument, in order to be operational by mid-2014.
- Cooperate with the NCPs for partner search and supporting SMEs' participation in H2020 and complement the work of NCPs by linking SMEs and project participants to relevant Enterprise Europe Network services.

Focus Area 5 - Green entrepreneurship, energy, environment and resource efficiency

- Themes to cover in standard Network services (information, advice, events and fostering uptake of good practice and relevant technologies): Green Entrepreneurship Action plan¹³, potential sources of EU funding for resource efficiency improvements and environmental key themes (LIFE, COSME and Horizon 2020), Energy Efficiency Directive¹⁴ and related local or regional actions for SMEs such as publicly supported energy audits, eco-design and eco-innovation¹⁵, the Environmental Technology Verification (ETV)¹⁶ programme, the Business and Biodiversity Platform and the forthcoming phase two¹⁷, Horizon 2020 – including calls for market replication, public procurement of innovation, and clusters.
- Network members should enhance their understanding of how their services fit into their local SME advisory eco system and enhance cooperation with other local SME support services relevant to these topics (e.g. environment service providers, national/regional authorities for the energy efficiency directive, eco-innovation fora).

EASME

- Network Training should include exchanges of experience to help strengthen local cooperation in these specific areas. More information on “greening your business” should be added to the intranet portal of the Network in so far as possible.

¹³ indicative date for adoption Q1 2014

¹⁴ Directive 2012/27/EU: Article 8 of the Directive requires Member States to develop programmes to encourage SMEs to undergo energy audits and implement the recommendations from these audits.

¹⁵ Including dissemination of information published in the eco-innovation action plan and on the CIP eco-innovation websites

¹⁶ A third-party service for validating claims about the performance of innovative environmental technologies

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/etv/>

¹⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/biodiversity/business/news-and-events/news/index_en.html

- Subject to availability of resources, EASME may also be asked to start work on the preparation of a qualification mechanism for resource efficiency experts.

Focus Area 6 – Internal Market and justice

Internal Market

Informing and advising businesses on internal market matters remains an important core service of the Network. Two focus areas for 2014 are to inform SMEs of the forthcoming European Patent with unitary effect¹⁸ and to continue to raise SMEs' awareness of the Points of Single Contact and their services. The Commission is also interested in receiving some examples of success stories related to internal market advisory services or events;

Justice

Topics identified for 2014 include ongoing work to improve the insolvency law package, revised rules on Misleading Marketing Practices, including the risks of B2B marketing, the Consumer Rights Directive and the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive. Guidance will be made available on both of these directives, dissemination for an awareness-raising campaign on consumer rights due to take place from March to December 2014 (which will also target traders and SMEs).

“Dissemination on request”

All Network partners are also invited to **disseminate information to businesses in response to requests published by EASME in the EU and Services Bulletin**¹⁹. These may cover any EU policy area. The following topics have already been announced for 2014:

- Additional information on the policy areas mentioned above
- Sectoral #EUglocal actions described in Annex 1 (space, tourism, and possibly information and communications technologies)
- Information on actions and good practice in Enterprise sectoral policy areas (also including areas such as defence and textiles)
- Information technologies, education and culture, internal market, taxation, entrepreneurship, the Small Business Act, legislative simplification, health and safety, disaster prevention and maritime affairs.

Network partners may also choose to get involved in additional cooperation in these fields, as described in in annex. **A special effort should be made for all #EUglocal actions.**

3. Key Network focus areas

The main internal focus areas for the Network in 2013 will be:

- **Strengthen communication** to ensure increased visibility of the network
- Enhancing quality and performance

¹⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/indprop/patent/index_en.htm.

¹⁹ <http://portal.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu/my/intranet/eu-services-bulletin>

- Change management

2. Visibility – Communication

All consortia must make further efforts to increase the visibility of the Network and are reminded of the need to systematically use the Network logo and the branding tool box. Specific focus areas for 2014 are to:

- Further increase local visibility and cooperate with local partners, the EU representations and the Europe Direct Network for communication activities.
- Contribute information for national and European communications activities for the Network where required. A focus area at European level is to pass more messages on the value-added and effort that goes into delivering Network services. Network partners are invited to include information on this in success stories sent to EASME, and provide examples of activities for press releases and other communications materials.

The Communications Correspondents should play a leading role in this field.

3. Performance and quality

- Reports should provide hard evidence of the outputs, quality, impact and benefits of the Network's services. It is still necessary to show a gradual progression in the Network's outputs and outcomes and demonstrate the added value and the contribution of the Network to smart and inclusive growth in the EU. Network partners should also contribute actively to qualitative reporting (e.g. the benefits survey).
- All Network partners are strongly encouraged to sign the code of conduct, adhere to its principles and ensure that all staff are trained and briefed on this.
- A pilot scheme on revised, simplified output and impact indicators for the future Network may be implemented in 2014.
- Participate actively in the continuous review of Network methodologies, practices and tools.
- EASME should continue to include performance and quality matters and good practice in training.

4. Change management

- Network partners should strengthen their competence related to Horizon 2020, access to finance, and energy and resource efficiency and enhance local cooperation. Those with good practice in these areas should share them with the rest of the Network.
- EASME should put in place training schemes on matters such as COSME, access to finance and foster exchanges of experience on topics such as local cooperation.

5. Governance and contribution to the Network Effect

- Network partners that do not already network and cooperate on a regular basis with colleagues in other countries should make greater efforts to participate in the activities of the Network (cooperation for delivery of cross-border Network services and activities,

active participation in National and Network-level activities including meetings, training and exchange of information and best practice

- Members of Network groups (SAG, Sector Groups, working groups, or other forums) should participate actively in the work of these groups.

6. Local cooperation and cooperation with other EU Networks

- Review local partnership arrangements, consider extending the range of stakeholders (e.g. to include activity areas described in COSME), examine ways of making cooperation more durable and take on board best practice from other Network partners.
- Participants in local visibility projects should share their experiences with the Network.
- Enhance synergies with other EU networks (e.g. the National Contact Points, SOLVIT, the Europe Direct Centres and EURES) and cooperate with EU contact points focusing on specific regions and/or sectors.
- Organize at least 2 visible events in 2014 targeting these stakeholders and provide a simple report on the main outcomes after each event

EASME should set up and animate a forum to encourage participants in local cooperation projects to share their experiences with the Network. Training and Network events should also cover local cooperation topics.

7. Partnership

Missions for Growth are a key priority. Network partners are also urged to pay specific attention to the quality of partnering profiles entered in the databases. A third priority is to rationalize the number of network brokerage and B2B events. Network partners should make systematic use of the Network events tool and in cases where similar events are being planned, they should merge the proposals and cooperate for organizing a single event.

8. Your Europe Business

All Network partners should use the Your Europe portal and promote it. They may also be invited to participate in further user testing (especially linked to the planned 2014 revamp of the national content) and promotional activities.

9. Sector Groups

Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry and EASME will help the Sector Groups forge closer relations with other Commission services. As part of this process, these services will be informed about the specific EU thematic activities that the relevant Sector Group has the resources to implement.

All Sector Groups must commit to providing concrete deliverables²⁰ and all members must contribute actively to this work. Thematic and over-arching topics for SGs and the process for confirming which activities will be implemented by each group are described in Annex 1B.

²⁰ To inform business of and /or promote sectoral actions, legislation, programmes, tools and good practice.

Annex 1 Optional additional activities

Point A describes **optional activities for all Network partners**. Sector groups are also encouraged to implement some of these in their sector. Point B lists topics for Sector Groups.

A. Optional activities (all Network partners to select some of these options)

1. Additional activities for access to finance

- Assist the Commission with organising the EU finance days (promotion of these events is a core #EUgolocal service)²¹.
- EEN partners with financial competences: advise SMEs on preparing a business plan, improve financial skills and strengthen investment readiness
- More active role in promoting the late payments and the cross-border claims campaigns, organization of other events and training of SMEs on access to finance, including matching events with investors, and possible contribution to training, good practice and information exchange on synergies between ERDF, Horizon 2020 and COSME.

2. Additional Industrial Policy activities – including sectors

- Network partners with a critical mass of clients in one or several of the 6 key industrial policy sectors and members of relevant sector groups may wish to offer more extensive industrial policy services and play a more active role in mobilizing businesses for Missions for Growth with these topics on the agenda²²
- A specific activity for KETs is also to advise SMEs on how to benefit from KETs technology platforms supported under H2020 and to explore the possibility for cooperation with KETs technology centres of excellence.

3. Additional Innovation policy themes – also relevant to sector groups

- Standards: cooperate with European and national standards organizations, help identify gaps in communication to SMEs on standardization, provide training for SMEs on standards, possible input from some SGs to the standardization process
- Design-driven innovation, public procurement for innovation, workplace innovation²³, advanced manufacturing, and eco-design
- Cooperate with the technology supply partners (CERN, ESA, JSA) for lab-to-market and knowledge transfer activities and help SMEs in other sectors (and/or in a specific SG sector) benefit from space technologies/GNSS
- Cooperate with clusters²⁴ and with other platforms and projects relevant to innovation

²¹ Further information: <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/finance/>

²² Advanced manufacturing technologies, Bio-based products, Construction and raw materials, Clean vehicles and smart grids, Smart ICT and Key enabling technologies, #golocal actions on ICT for Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology.

²³ Innovation in the way enterprises are structured and in how they manage certain resources and processes such as human resources, internal decision-making, innovation processes, relationships with clients or suppliers, the work environment and the internal support systems:

²⁴ See also the European Cluster Collaboration Platform and the European Cluster Excellence Initiative

- ICT: Participate in #EUglocal actions on ICT for Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, foster Smart use of ICT and integration of SMEs in digital value chains (also covers service areas such as logistics)
- Encourage SMEs to take on good practices from EU projects such as Startup Europe for ICT and web entrepreneurs²⁵
- Other possible topics include open innovation, smart specialization²⁶, innovation in the six industrial policy priority sectors
- Possible participation in meetings of the European Forum for Science and Industry managed by the Joint Research Centre²⁷, inform clients and other relevant local stakeholders of the Bio-economy observatory and the Science parks initiative.

EASME should cover the above-mentioned topics on the portal. Standards in particular, should be covered in training.

4. Chemicals: REACH, CLP and biocidal products:

Specific themes for Network services and events: how to comply with obligations and formalities related to REACH, Classification and labelling – CLP, biocidal products and bioeconomy

- REACH: cooperate with the organization of the campaign, participate in training for the Network, organize/contribute to awareness actions for businesses, possible feedback on which Network services have been successful in helping SMEs to comply with REACH);
- Serve as multipliers for a conference on CLP scheduled for 16 September 2014, for an information campaign on CLP and for a business planet video on this topic.

5. Small Business Act and legislative simplification

- Participate in SBA related events, including the European Enterprise Promotion Awards and/or the European SME Week, and organize events for the SME week where possible²⁸
- Other possible activities relating to legislative simplification and the Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT).

6. Education and Training

Specific themes for information activities: opportunities for SMEs under ERASMUS+ (including the possibility to host trainees and to develop partnerships with education institutions, and opportunities linked to corporate social responsibility), the European Alliance for Apprenticeships, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (and the forthcoming promotional campaign), the Commission's activities and events for cooperation between higher institutions and businesses, ERASMUS+ Sport, the Creative Europe MEDIA subprogramme.

Other optional Network activities:

²⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/startup-europe>

²⁶ Further information on Smart specialization strategies is given in the following guide for regional authorities: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/presenta/green_growth/greengrowth.pdf

²⁷ This covers the Clean transport, Energy, Environment and climate change, Water, Eco-Industry and biotechnologies, ICT, Health, Nanotechnologies, Food security, Danube strategy, Behavioural and humanity social sciences sectors.

²⁸ Organization of events is also a key priority (see optional activities in annex 1).

- Engagement of the Network with “We Mean Business” by linking to the relevant information page <http://we-mean-business.europa.eu/en/next-steps/leonardo>
- Highlight opportunities offered by involvement in the European Alliance for Apprenticeships and identify success stories involving EEN members
- Help identify interesting companies and examples of cooperation to present at events concerning cooperation between higher education institutions and companies
- Cooperate with relevant networks (eg Maria Sklodowska-Curie National Contact points, possible cooperation with international alumni networks related to Erasmus+

See also feedback (cooperation of SMEs with higher education institutions) and the healthcare, creative industries and tourism/cultural heritage SGs

7. Disaster management

Dissemination of information and good practice on business continuity actions to help enterprises prepare and cope with natural and man-made disasters (eg floods, tropical storms and earthquakes)²⁹. More specific cooperation with sector groups is requested for action to promote 'disaster resilient' construction and in the area of Space and ICT technologies.

8. Safety and health at work

Cooperation with the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), its Focal Points Network and the Communication Partnership Project Working Group (CPPWG)

EEN OSH Ambassadors should promote OSH information in the Network, disseminate information to businesses, and inform EU-OSHA about these promotion activities. They should also organize Information Sessions on OSH with or for Network partners, participate in the 2014 EEN OSH Award and events, and exchange experience with EU-OSHA network partners and other SME intermediaries. Other Network partners may participate in these activities.

9. Defence

Support SMEs engaged in dual-use activities³⁰ by stimulating increased cross-sector fertilisation between civil and defence industrial sectors through partnerships, networking, technology transfers and exchange of good practices.

The Network should help SMEs to take advantage of innovative solutions and good practices, increase their access to markets outside Europe, participate in new value chains with businesses from different sectors and to face up to global competition.

10. Internal market and justice

Internal Market

²⁹In 2014 the Commission will adopt a Communication setting out the potential EU contribution to the UN framework for disaster risk reduction due to be adopted in 2015, including [specific actions/objectives for the private sector](#).

³⁰ Many everyday applications like the internet, GPS and microwave technologies have their roots in defence. Cross-fertilisation also happens in the other way, as armed forces rely increasingly on products originating from civil technologies. As the traditional dividing line between civil and defence sectors is becoming increasingly blurred, new opportunities are opening up for increased cross-fertilization.

Continue to strengthen cooperation between Network partners and SOLVIT³¹ at national level. See also Services and Retail Sector Group below concerning awareness raising about the single points of contact and cross-border provision of services.

Justice

Feedback actions on **Cloud computing contract terms** and on **insolvency** (see Annex 2)

Consumer rights awareness campaign (Justice)

Network partners may be interested in cooperating as multipliers to help target messages to SMEs in return for being given visibility during the campaign.

B. Specific Sector Group (SG) topics

All SGs should implement some of the options in point A and most of the themes for their specific group listed below, but they may opt to simply provide “dissemination on request”³² services for some themes.

Each SG will be provided with a more detailed summary of the themes outlined below and will be asked to submit a **short 1-page work plan to DG Enterprise by the end of January 2014**. This will form part of the rolling plan for the group.

SGs are also asked to provide some examples of their activities in this area for promotional purposes and for illustrating good practices to other Commission Services.

Indicative EU thematic topics for Sector Groups

Aeronautics and Space

Proposed EU themes for SG activities: Dissemination for DG Enterprise’s #EUglocal Space (Galileo and Copernicus) campaign, industrial policy, clean vehicles, smart ICT, key enabling technologies, IPR, cooperation with the European GNSS Agency (GSA) for informing businesses in the aeronautics and space sectors of opportunities, actions and events (e.g. Funding Guide for SMEs, yearly Market Report, new developments, European Space Solutions and the European Satellite Navigation Competition), promotion of Commission/GSA events and possible involvement in such events, cooperation for transfer of space technologies (including to the automotive sector).

Agro food

Proposed EU theme: Smart use of ICT (more targeted action to help SMEs benefit from good practice under the “Smart use of ICT and integration of SMEs in digital value chains” demonstration actions in the food sector). Other possible EU-related themes: food safety, regulatory framework, R&D, innovation, resource efficiency, international cooperation, relevant EU funding programmes, other specific innovation policy themes.

Automotive, transport and logistics

Proposed EU themes: Industrial policy, clean vehicles, smart ICT, KETs, IPR, cooperation for transfer of space technologies to the automotive sector, identification of and cooperation with clusters, other topics in point A including industrial and innovation policy topics.

BioChemTech

³¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/>

³² Disseminate information in response to information circulated by the Commission or EASME.

Proposed EU themes: Chemicals (REACH - see point A4, CLP, biocidal products, biotech standards, biotech registration, industrial policy (in particular bio-based products), blue biotechnology³³ (information and possible feedback), cooperation with clusters, standards, other innovation or industrial policy topics, internationalization, including biotech cooperation with the USA, inform clients about the European Forum for Science and Industry (JRC) and the bio-economy observatory. The group could also provide feedback on new research trends and topics if requested and is interested in cooperating with stakeholders such as Europa Bio, ATE (American trade institute), EMA (European Medicines Agency).

Creative Industries

Proposed EU themes: #EUglocal, stop fakes campaign and possible participation in #EUglocal actions for DG Connect (Communications Networks, Content and Technology), Eco-design, design, design-driven innovation, relevant EU funding, enhance financial knowledge of SMEs in this sector, education and training, EU education and culture programmes (Creative Europe MEDIA - and promote contacts between Creative Europe Desks and SMEs), the Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility, smart ICT, explore possible opportunities for cultural and creative businesses in relation to the H2020 SME instrument, other relevant innovation topics, feedback to DG Justice on issues such as cloud computing, cooperation with the European Creative Industries Alliance.

Environment

Proposed EU themes: Enhance environmental support services for SMEs, inform businesses about the Business and Biodiversity Platform and possibilities to get involved in the forthcoming Phase 2 of this platform (showcasing good practice and relevant innovation projects), promote and organise activities with EMAS and/or Eco label registered companies, activities for green entrepreneurship and energy referred to in the focus areas, advice on funding.

Healthcare

Proposed EU themes: Medical devices, R&D, innovation, clusters, ICT for the healthcare sector (see for example ICT industry and services group below), EU developments in the field of sport and physical activity, European and international cooperation and or any other relevant themes from point A.

ICT industry and services

Proposed EU themes: Participate in #EUglocal actions on ICT for Directorate General Communications Networks, Content and Technology, more active efforts to encourage businesses to take advantage of ICT innovation vouchers available under the EU Structural and Investment Funds, advice and support on funding available for ICT and either, assist SMEs directly with capacity building for seeking equity investment or develop relations with local stakeholders for signposting, innovation (standards), industrial policy: smart use of ICT, cooperation for transfer of technology from the space sector, Promote Start-up Europe³⁴, an information and networking platform for European ICT and web entrepreneurs, feedback on contract law issues for cloud computing (DG Justice), inform businesses of the European Forum for Science and Industry and/or possible participation in meetings (JRC).

³³ The Commission will outline the way forward early in 2014, based on a consultation held at the end of 2013 and an impact assessment.

³⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/startup-europe>

Intelligent Energy

Proposed EU themes: More intensive support related to the Energy Efficiency Directive³⁵: create links with national/regional services responsible for energy audits and signpost clients to these services, Help obtain feedback from SMEs on issues related to Blue Growth, consider the scope for other SG activities in any other area outlined in the AGN (innovation, resource efficiency, advice on EU programmes and funding, cooperation with clusters, inventory of local stakeholders for energy advisory services).

Maritime Industry and Services

Proposed EU themes: EU funding opportunities and other potential sources of funding (including European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF), Horizon 2020, COSME, LIFE+, etc) for this sector, the Blue Growth strategy and related initiatives, the Atlantic Action Plan which concerns ES, FR, IE, PT and UK (COM(2013)279) and the forthcoming guide on coastal and maritime tourism, help SMEs in the focus areas of Blue Growth to establish links across borders and to cooperate, help obtain feedback from SMEs on issues related to Blue Growth (e.g. public consultations on matters such as Blue Biotechnology and marine mineral mining)

Materials

Proposed EU themes: innovation policy, industrial policy (materials is one of the priority areas within industrial policy), specific innovation policy and industrial policy topics, green entrepreneurship, environment and resource efficiency matters, or other topics in point A, synergies with other sectors, cooperation to foster uptake of space technologies, cooperation with technology supply partners inform clients and stakeholders about the European Forum for Science and Industry (JRC).

Nano and micro-technologies

Proposed EU themes: Industrial policy, key enabling technologies and other specific innovation policy and industrial policy topics, green entrepreneurship, environment and resource efficiency matters, or other topics in point A, synergies with other sectors, cooperation to foster uptake of space technologies in the nano-technology sector, and cooperation with technology supply partners, inform clients and stakeholders about the European Forum for Science and Industry (JRC).

Services and Retail

Proposed EU themes: raise SMEs' awareness of the single points of Contact and provide the Commission with further information from Network members on their experience in the cross-border provision of services, strengthened cooperation between Network partners and SOLVIT³⁶ at national level, #EUgolocal: promotion/ multipliers for the stop fakes campaign, smart ICT, and possible role as multipliers to businesses concerning an awareness raising campaign on consumer rights, any other relevant activities in point A.

Sustainable Construction

Proposed EU themes: Safety and health, industrial policy and contribution to actions for the construction industry (one of the 6 priority industrial policy sectors), more targeted action to

³⁵ Directive 2012/27/EU obliges MS to bring to the attention of SMEs concrete examples of how energy management systems could help their businesses. The Sector Group should consider the possibility of collecting examples of best practices in this domain and communicating them to the Commission

³⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/>

help SMEs in the construction sector benefit from good practice under the “Smart use of ICT and integration of SMEs in digital value chains” demonstration projects, disaster management, green action plan and resource efficiency, relevant sectoral legislation³⁷ (e.g. proposals to allow on-line publication of the mandatory “Declarations of performance”³⁸), sources of financing for SMEs in the construction sector, including support for resource efficiency improvements, eco-innovation, and/or any other relevant theme defined in point A.

Textile and fashion

Proposed EU themes: Make special efforts for Missions for Growth (textiles is a priority sector), enhance awareness of REACH amongst textiles businesses, #EUglocal: stop fakes campaign (and explore the possibility to reach other target groups relevant to the textiles sector), best practice from “Smart use of ICT and integration of SMEs in digital value chains” demonstration actions for the fashion sector, other relevant industrial policy areas, innovation. Develop relationships with European and national textiles organizations, cooperate with these organizations and exchange good practice,

Tourism and cultural heritage

Proposed EU themes: Missions for Growth, #EUglocal tourism (Help DG Enterprise reach more local SMEs with its key corporate communications messages), funding opportunities for SMEs in the tourism sector (including the forthcoming guide on this theme), support measures for the tourism and cultural heritage sectors, coastal and maritime tourism, EURES jobs platform – hospitality section, the Kurbits business development programme for tourism SMEs, e-calypso (European Network for Accessible Tourism), Tourism Link and the ICT platform; possible Test Panel on the Timeshare Directive (DG Justice), EU programmes and funding for the cultural sector (DG Education and Culture), public consultation on Blue Growth (DG Maritime Affairs); Cooperate with other transnational and EU tourism networks and encourage businesses to make use of their best practice tools and methodologies.

Woman entrepreneurship

Proposed EU themes: Cooperation with the European Mentors’ Network for women entrepreneurs, provide women entrepreneurs with advice on good practice and tailor made support services for setting up and running their businesses, possible specific communications measures to encourage women entrepreneurs to make use of Network services, promotion of the startup Europe initiative for ICT and web entrepreneurs, consider other themes in point A including innovation, smart use of ICT, etc.

³⁷ Construction Products Regulation (EU) 305/2011 which came into force on 1 July 2013.

³⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=7033&lang=en

Annex 2 SME Feedback

Eligible feedback activities comprise the work of the SME feedback contact persons in each consortium, work related to SME panels, public consultations, the SME feedback database and potentially new feedback related activities. Further information will be made available either on the home page of the Enterprise Europe Intranet, or in the EU and Services Bulletin.

Up to 10 SME panel consultations will be launched in 2014. An indication of topics from which a selection will be made is given below. These topics will be reviewed during the year, taking account of the latest developments and additional topics may be announced. All feedback actions notified to the Network via formal channels will be eligible

Indicative list of feedback topics

Justice

SME Panel on contract law related issues in cloud Computing. This would provide input to proposals for "Safe and Fair Contract Terms" on this topic to be presented by mid 2014³⁹.

An SME Panel Survey on insurance contract law. whether and to what extent SMEs have problems with cross-border use of insurance products and if so the insurance areas and types of insurance products which may play a particular role in crossborder activities of SMEs.

SME Test Panel in the first half of 2014 on the Timeshare Directive (2008/122/EC) to help the Commission gather data on the costs related to the implementation of the directive and to support the Commission's assessment of the directive.

Future improvements in insolvency law – in particular, the preventive pre-insolvency procedures and the second chance for failed but honest entrepreneurs

Education and Culture

Views of companies (SMEs) on cooperation with higher education institutions (identify SMEs and encourage them to participate in a light weight IPM survey)

Secretariat General

Other possible activities for the Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT).

Other types of feedback

Chemicals: Directorate General Enterprise and Industry: best practices of how EEN members have successfully supported SMEs in complying with REACH and feedback from SMEs for the follow-up of the REACH Review recommendations and for preparing the next deadline.

Development: Feedback and suggestions in relation to a new communication on "Strengthening the Role of the Private Sector in Achieving Inclusive and Sustainable Growth in Developing Countries" (to be drafted in 2014)⁴⁰.

Maritime Affairs and Fisheries: Help obtain feedback from SMEs on issues related to Blue Growth (e.g. Blue Biotechnology and marine mineral mining)⁴¹.

³⁹ Foreseen in Commission Communication "Unleashing the Potential of Cloud Computing in Europe.

⁴⁰ Amongst other things, this will explore ways of enhancing the effectiveness of EU support, engaging the private sector, and private-public collaboration to stimulate private sector development in developing countries.

⁴¹ Network partners in coastal regions and relevant sector groups (BioChemTech, Maritime Industry and Services, Tourism and Cultural Heritage and Intelligent Energy):