Outcome of the Working Group (WG) on cooperation with the FP7 National Contact Points

Recommendations for the cooperation between the Enterprise Europe Network and the NCP networks

This document outlines “Needs and requirements for the collaboration between the Enterprise Europe Network and the NCP network and foreseen actions” and contains in each of the sections some simple recommendations by the WG in order to facilitate the collaboration between the two networks as well as some successful collaboration examples.

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Introduction

The Enterprise Europe Network and the National Contact Points (NCP) network are networks (21 in total, including the 10 FP7 thematic priorities NCP networks) which have existed in parallel for a long time on occasion working together but without any formal collaboration between them. The Enterprise Europe Network, in existence with its present identity since January 2008 formed from two previous networks, the Innovation Relay Centre Network (IRC) and the Euro Info Centre Network (EIC), both with a long history and a successful track record and a number of new organisations. The NCP network has been in existence since 1999 with the launch of the 5th Framework Programme (FP) with the aim to provide information and support for the participation to the Framework Programmes at National level.

Whilst the Enterprise Europe Network is co-financed by the European Commission (under the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme) and the selection of its partners (at a consortium level) is based on competitive calls for proposals, the National Contact Points are individuals (based in hosting organisations) nominated nationally through various selection processes (e.g. competitive calls, administrative decisions, calls for tender) with their management and financing decided at a national level.

All consortia and individual partners of the Enterprise Europe Network work based on a structured work plan and common guidelines approved by the Commission (DG Enterprise) and are animated / monitored centrally by the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI). On the other hand, the National Contact Point network operates based on the Guiding Principles agreed by the member states and issued by DG Research and are animated and monitored by national authorities with DG Research (DG RTD) ensuring the information flow and co-ordination at European level.

The reasons why these two networks could benefit from closer collaboration and can promote synergies are apparent:

- The National Contact Point network assist any type of proposers in their participation in FP7 projects and, in line with their remit, should increase their engagement with SMEs with a view to increasing their participation in FP7. The Enterprise Europe Network with its experience, long-term connection with the business community and focus on SMEs can increase the SME participation;

- The NCP network are normally centralised whilst the Enterprise Europe Network is set up in a very regional or local level, daily and directly reaching out to both existing and potential FP7 SME participants;

- The NCP network does not in many cases have funding to organise networking or other types of events whilst the Enterprise Europe Network has a dedicated budget in order to deliver networking and awareness raising activities;

- By co-operating, both networks can offer added value and more effective support to their clients, generating also satisfaction for the two networks – a real win-win situation.
This Working Group (WG) has been set up in order to examine the possibilities of collaboration between the two networks, to identify the areas and the ways for collaboration as well as to pinpoint the actions for collaboration. This document outlines “Needs and requirements for the cooperation between the Enterprise Europe Network and the NCP network and foreseen actions” and contains in each of the sections some simple recommendations by the WG in order to facilitate the collaboration between the two networks as well as some successful collaboration examples.

It is also worth stressing here that a prerequisite for the successful and more effective collaboration between the Enterprise Europe Network and the NCP networks is the open communication at local and/or national level and constant support by the DGs involved in these networks, mainly DG RTD and DG Enterprise as well as other major players such as national and regional authorities as well as other relevant DG such as DG Communication.

Main opportunities for collaboration between the two networks

The following were identified as the main opportunities for collaboration between the two Networks:

1. Information sharing
2. Support for awareness raising
3. Capacity building of SMEs in their participation to FP7
4. Cooperation in engaging new SMEs in FP7 proposals
5. Mutual signposting
6. Partner search
7. National Working Groups to promote collaboration and joint actions
8. Cooperation in the open consultation of call topics in Work Programmes
9. Cooperation in recruiting new evaluation experts from SMEs

For each of the areas of collaboration the following actions and recommendations have been identified:
1. Information sharing

1.1. Linking between the websites

1.1.1. Web links of the different thematic (and horizontal) NCP networks to the Enterprise Europe Network site and vice versa

1.1.2. Between same sectors e.g. NMP NCP network with Sector Group (SG) Micro & Nano Technologies and SG Materials, Security Network with SG Security, Space Network with SG Space etc. Links through the official EC thematic priorities sites (under Co-operation programme) and horizontal activities (e.g. SME programme under Capacities or INCO under capacities etc.)

Recommendation:
- Insert Enterprise Europe Network link and logo in NCP entry points in: a. CORDIS, b. NCP network projects, c. National NCP websites and in the various NCP network projects sites.
- Insert the link of the NCP network (a single entry point) in the Enterprise Europe Network intranet, in the central Enterprise Europe Network website and in the different national / regional Enterprise Europe Network websites.

1.2. Exchange of newsletters (mostly electronic but also paper if applicable) and dissemination e.g. newsletters / brochures from NCPs be made available at Enterprise Europe Network partners offices and information stands for dissemination and vice versa.

Recommendation:
Identify material of interest (events, call information etc), relevant newsletters, deadlines and key contact person in both Enterprise Europe Network and the NCP networks.

1.3. Exchange of calendars of events in order to avoid overlaps. This is only possible in cases where a calendar of events exists on an official NCP network site and can easily be accessed. The calendars can be posted on Enterprise Europe Network sites in the relevant Sector Group sites or a special dedicated place on the intranet and also in the NCP sites and the thematic priority sites. The utilisation of both networks calendars would attract a larger potential audience to events and would prevent overlapping of events. Where appropriate, Enterprise Europe Network partners could make a presentation on the services provided by the Enterprise Europe Network and NCPs could participate in project labs (or surgeries) in the events organised by the Enterprise Europe Network. This exchange of calendars is not binding for any network and it is purely for information distribution multiplication purposes.
**Recommendation:**

Enterprise Europe Network public calendar can be offered for use to the NCP networks projects (own sites) and the national NCP websites on a regular basis (once a month). The Enterprise Europe Network national event calendar may also be exchanged on an individual basis. On the side of the NCP network, the ones of interest should be identified and the relevant person contacted.

1.4. Sharing of call information (FP7 or CIP). NCPs sharing with Enterprise Europe Network any information for public dissemination in advance of the forthcoming calls, general statistical information on the previous calls (e.g. % of partners per country, % of SMEs per call etc) and other useful information communicated to the NCPs in their network concerning FP issues. Enterprise Europe Network should share with their NCP colleagues any relevant call information under CIP (e.g. Intelligent Energy Europe) as CIP awareness falls also within the NCP mandate as indicated in the NCP Guiding Principles.

**Successful collaboration example:**

The French Enterprise Europe Network partners have identified all individuals in France responsible for module C activities (around 40 persons). This list jointly updated by the Enterprise Europe Network and the SME NCP has been made available to all NCPs during the first semester 2008. The SME NCP has started using it in autumn 2008 by sending a dedicated monthly e-newsletter containing relevant information with the aim of bringing practical help closer to SMEs: calls info, partner searches, national and European events, other SME-relevant information. These contents are selected from the French NCPs national website (http://www.eurosfaire.prd.fr).

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2. Support for awareness raising

2.1. Joint regional and national information days and promotional events with NCP speakers invited to speak to Enterprise Europe Network events and Enterprise Europe Network speakers invited to speak to NCP events specifically on dissemination and exploitation issues of RTD projects or other issues in which the NCPs are less familiar or the Enterprise Europe Network is more specialised in. These awareness raising events could also aim at attracting SMEs that are new to FP7.

**Recommendation:**

Meetings for planning, Enterprise Europe Network to act as multipliers for SMEs, share out the event presentations according to the Enterprise Europe Network mandate and expertise, send out a joint invitation with both logos, use of the same tool in case of brokerage event profiles submission (Enterprise Europe Network to allow the use of BEMT -
the Network’s event preparation tool), have one joint profiles catalogue, coordinate mailing lists.

2.2. Joint stands at national and international events, exhibitions, fairs initiated by the Enterprise Europe Network or the NCP network. This type of joint actions could prove very cost effective.

**Recommendation:**
Both logos on the joint stands, sharing of stand related costs and personnel at the stand

2.3. Joint specialised events aiming at targeting a selected group of high potential SMEs new to FP7. Examples include joint experience sharing events inviting SMEs and research organisations already participating in FP7 to share their experience.

2.4. Joint promotional material such as fact-sheets, newsletters, brochures and summaries of regions or country participation in the Framework Programme. Difficult to realise as it requires dedicated funding and resources, this could work in thematic cases if funding is available in the NCP network. It is perhaps easier to just exchange information and material for each other’s bulletins.

**Recommendation:**
Enterprise Europe Network can offer to print joint promotional material with the NCP network if the national NCPs do not have any budget available. Enterprise Europe Network can offer the IT tools (such as BEMT) for the preparation of the brokerage to be used jointly with the NCPs.

**Successful collaboration examples:**

LATVIA: FP7 regional information days organised by Enterprise Europe Network with speakers from the NCP network

In the beginning of 2009, Enterprise Europe Network Latvia organised a regional information day about the Seventh Framework Program in *Latgale* region as part of the first European SME Week. Target audience of this seminar was small and medium enterprises from this particular part of the country. The hosts of this event – Enterprise Europe Network Latvia – provided the technical organisation of the seminar and also did presentations on Enterprise Europe Network activities and services. Two NCP speakers were invited to talk about SME participation in the 7th FP and about financial issues that are important in this context.

The benefits for both involved parties are clear: Enterprise Europe Network Latvia had a chance to provide qualitative presentations and information for SME’s, because NCP speakers are experts in their field, but the benefit for the NCP experts was the chance to speak with regional SMEs and therefore to reach wider public, as NCPs do not organise regional events specifically for SMEs. In the end, SMEs are those who benefited the most, because they received first – class information about European programs, Enterprise Europe Network services and the FP7. The evaluation questionnaires that where filled by the participants of the seminar show that all of the participants where highly satisfied with the event.

*Contact: Anete Vitola, anete.vitola@liaa.gov.lv*
In 2008, the German NCP for ICT and several German Enterprise Europe Network partners such as Enterprise Europe Network Hamburg – Schleswig-Holstein cooperated in the organisation of regional information days on the FP7 ICT-call.

Several months before the call publication, the NCP ICT sent out to several multipliers in the region of Schleswig-Holstein a call for expression of interest to organise a regional information event on the upcoming ICT call. Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein as coordinator of Enterprise Europe Network Hamburg – Schleswig-Holstein responded immediately and a date was fixed. The NCP suggested a basic standard programme which the Enterprise Europe Network adapted to the local audience. The NCP also helped to find a speaker, an evaluation expert giving information from his perspective. Enterprise Europe Network Hamburg – Schleswig-Holstein disseminated information on this event in the region and sent out invitations; in order to reach the scientific community, close collaboration with the Kiel University took place. The Enterprise Europe Network organised the event locally in Kiel. It was a successful event with about 35 participants, with a good share of SMEs among them.

This is one example of many on how NCPs cooperate with the German Enterprise Europe Network partners.

In general, both the NCP and the Enterprise Europe Network benefit from this cooperation.

An NCP benefits because the organisation of the event, including the logistics, dissemination and invitation to the event etc. are taken care of by the regional Enterprise Europe Network partner. The NCP only has to cover the travel expenses. The NCPs also benefit from this arrangement since it allows them to speak at a number of regional events, thus reaching a larger audience all over Germany.

The Enterprise Europe Network partner benefits since the NCP helps to set up the programme and to find speakers. At the same time, Enterprise Europe Network has enough flexibility to adapt it to the needs of the regional target audience. In addition, Enterprise Europe Network also saves on resources since they do not have to pay neither the travel and accommodation costs nor a fee for the NCP speaker. Enterprise Europe Network benefits from the expertise of the NCP who knows the call and the work programme in detail and can give in-depth advice on topics. In addition, the NCPs also offer potential applicants individual consultations which may go beyond the consultations given by Enterprise Europe Network according to their mandate. Further, the potential applicants including companies benefit since they can visit information days in their own region and do not have to travel long distances to one national event.

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Professional and funding opportunities for the biotech sector - From clusters until the EU 7th Framework Programme.

The main objective of the event was to raise awareness of the Hungarian biotech sector’s stakeholders on FP7, on the open calls and to give a clear picture on the way of project generation, on benefits and threats of participation in European funded projects through implemented projects. The event took place in Budapest on 21 January 2009. The Hungarian thematic NCP presented an overview of the Hungarian participation in FP7 and informed the participants on the open calls.

Several similar events have been organised focusing on other thematic areas (IT, energy, biotech, environmental technologies).

The Hungarian NCPs are collaborating very often with the Enterprise Europe Network (and also with other organisations dealing with FP7) in the co-organisation of thematic information days (mainly in Budapest, but sometimes also in other cities). The benefit of the collaboration for the NCP is that all the organisational work is done by the Enterprise Europe Network while the NCP has the necessary knowledge on the participation of Hungarian entities in FP7 and on the actual calls for proposals. This complementary characteristic of the two organisations ensures the success of the event.

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3. Capacity building of SMEs in their participation to FP7

3.1. Assessment of the RTD capacity of the SMEs and their innovation / high technology needs for their participation in FP7 by the Enterprise Europe Network staff that has day-to-day interaction with SMEs. The NCP network would be called in for specialised assistance for only those SMEs that have been screened and are ready for FP7.

Recommendation:
Notify the relevant NCP of any identified company and check with the NCP if a profile is needed to be prepared.

3.2. Training (regional seminars with NCP speakers and Enterprise Europe Network logistics, specialised training for SMEs identified as capable of participating in FP7, training on certain more advanced topics e.g. project management, financing, etc.)

Recommendation:
The definition of the SMEs needs in FP7 related training can be done by a team of both NCPs and Enterprise Europe Network staff. Enterprise Europe Network may undertake the event logistics and speakers from both networks can be utilised based on expertise and availability.

3.3. Pre-screening of project ideas for SMEs proposers. This could be in the form of a regional event organised by the Enterprise Europe Network with the participation of
NCP experts or with experts nominated by the NCP network. Offer one-to-one consultations to SMEs as private advice.

**Successful collaboration examples:**

**UK: Joint company visits to potential participants by Enterprise Europe Network together with the NMP NCP for the UK**

In Scotland, client referrals come from both Enterprise Europe Network awareness raising activities and other organisations. When a client has shown demonstrably a serious interest in FP7 it can be engaged in a one-to-one session when the team member is joined by an appropriate NCP. The one-to-one session is a fixed format discussion designed to establish strengths and weaknesses, proposed aims and activities, determine the suitability of the company for a collaborative research engagement, what the opportunities are in FP with recommended next steps. The NCP gets the chance to meet a new potential applicant and the Enterprise Europe Network team get the benefit of the NCP evaluation for the company and their ideas, giving them confidence in supporting the client towards an FP7 project application.

Contact: Ken Gordon, Ken.Gordon@scotent.co.uk

**ITALY: Joint information day and workshop between the Enterprise Europe Network and the NCP network on Food and SMEs.**

Joint information day and workshop between the Enterprise Europe Network and the NCP network on Food.

**Organisations involved:**

- Unioncamere Piemonte partner of the ALPS Enterprise Europe Network
- Italian NCP KBBE, Federica Prete, APRE

In the framework of a Info day dedicated the call Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, Biotechnology of the FP7 (FP7-KBBE-2007-2B), we organised a training session together with the KBBE NCP in order to give tips and suggestions on how to write a successful proposal.

The Info day and training session were organised by the ALPS Enterprise Europe Network and the NCP was invited to present the call and to train how to present a successful proposal. Main items of the training session:

- How to build a good consortium, also with the help of NCP and Enterprise Europe Network
- Check the coherence between the research topics and the project idea
- How to write crucial sections of the Part B: summary, state of the art, European impact
- Help and assistance NCP can provide to proponents
Out of the 100 participants registered to Info day (RTD performers, SMEs, industry), half of them also attended the training session. Comments of the audience were positive and in general expressed the willing to get in contact with both network.

Contact: Katia Costa, k.costa@pie.camcom.it

During the first six months of 2009, after the effective launch of Enterprise Europe Network in Switzerland, Euresearch tried out how to path potential clients from Enterprise Europe Network to NCP and vice versa. It was done in a quite pragmatic manner, as Euresearch is responsible for the EEN Module b (Technology Transfer) activities in Switzerland and hosts all Swiss FP7 NCPs: the collaborators of Enterprise Europe Network informed their NCP colleagues during the weekly meeting and vice versa, e.g. after a company visit, a technological audit or an FP7 idea check. This way of doing allowed orienting some SMEs interested in FP7 to the EEN module b support when their needs were too short term and too close to market to have any chance in FP7, e.g. for a technology offer or request. It allowed also to identify some high potential SMEs for FP7 via the Enterprise Europe Network support and to pass them to the relevant FP7 NCP who took over to bring them into a FP7 project. These first experiences confirmed the complementarities of the Enterprise Europe Network and the NCP support services, offered at different stages in the innovation value chain. It showed also the necessity of understanding both support services and knowing the related European initiatives to be able to identify which support is adequate to whom at which stage of project/product. This is an essential condition for effective signposting, to avoid passing SMEs without FP7 potential from Enterprise Europe Network to NCP or, in the other direction, to enable NCP to pass SMEs and R&D organisations to Enterprise Europe Network only with appropriate funding, e.g. for brokerage but not for research. If it’s not the case, the signposting generates only doubling of work and related frustrations for the involved Enterprise Europe Network, NCP and SME!

After this 6 first months, Euresearch decided to go one step further in the direction of an integrated support for European R&D and innovation and to start a pilot action for the sectors related to Clean Technologies. The Swiss NCPs for ICT, NMP, Environment, Energy and Transport as well as the Swiss Enterprise Europe Network staff are involved. Some visits to SMEs / R&D institutions will be done jointly by Enterprise Europe Network and NCPs to learn from each other how the needs are identified and matched with the appropriate support service (R&D-FP7 or Innovation- Enterprise Europe Network). NCPs will then be involved for Innovation- Enterprise Europe Network support services and Enterprise Europe Network collaborators will be involved for FP7-R&D support services, to allow a mutual learning how this support is given and how the respective IT tools can be used. An important international Brokerage Event for Clean Technologies will be the highlight of this pilot action, in the second half of 2010. The aim of this pilot action is to define jointly procedures and interfaces to pass SMEs from Enterprise Europe Network to FP7 and vice versa effectively and efficiently. In other words, the aim is to implement the concept of “no wrong door”.

Contact: Cédric Höllmüller, cedric.hoellmueller@euresearch.ch

SWITZERLAND: Provision of integrated services for Innovation and R&D support to SMEs (the pathway between Enterprise Europe Network and NCP)
4. Cooperation in engaging new SMEs

4.1. Enterprise Europe Network partners can identify profiles of SMEs interested in FP7 and with the right competence to do RTD activities, because of the regular and direct contact with clients at regional / local level and relay the information to the relevant NCPs.

4.2. NCPs and Enterprise Europe Network can share contacts (where possible) about SMEs that have asked information on specific calls / programmes.

5. Mutual Signposting

5.1. Support for proposal preparation, early project review and joint assistance (NCPs assist Enterprise Europe Network to support SMEs, NCPs training for Enterprise Europe Network to assist SMEs, use of Enterprise Europe Network in the exploitation and dissemination parts of FP7 proposals).

5.2. Support during project execution (signpost to the NCP network, perhaps assistance on some IPR issues)

5.3. Dissemination and exploitation (NCPs signpost to Enterprise Europe Network their clients for assistance in both final RTD project results and proposal preparation (for dissemination, exploitation activities in the project as well as the protection of IPR rights).

5.4. NCPs to signpost SMEs to the Enterprise Europe Network for assistance in alternative funding e.g. National and Regional Programmes, grants (CIP, South-East Europe Cooperation Programme, Interreg, Structural Funds, etc), bank loans, Venture capital funds, seed funds, bridge funding etc. but also for business opportunities within the Single Market and beyond.

5.5. NCPs to signpost SMEs to the Enterprise Europe Network when they are keen to participate but have no project.

Recommendations:
Signposting and cooperation relies on mutual trust. The different persons involved in both networks have first to get to know each other and to establish cooperation step by step. This process can be initiated at two levels:

- At European level (to be initiated by DG Research, DG INFSO, DG Enterprise, EACI):

  Joint workshops between thematic NCPs and the related Enterprise Europe Network sector group could be organised a day before/after an NCP meeting. This would enable a) to present mutually the networks and the actions / workflow of both networks and b) to enable the persons involved in both networks to meet (not only chairpersons of sector groups!)
At national level: The Enterprise Europe Network should take the initiative to invite the NCPs to a joint meeting as trust will be built when people know each other. All host organisations (NCP and Enterprise Europe Network) could present themselves and the processes they have. Mutual needs and possible synergies could be identified. The two networks could then agree how to reply to each others clients Expressions of Interest (EOI) within a reasonable timeframe, generating added value for their customers and empowering both networks.

**Successful collaboration example:**

The purpose of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is fundamentally to provide a framework of procedures and processes towards implementing collaboration between the NCP network and Enterprise Europe Network. As such, it is important to firstly define the functions of this co-operation prior to setting agreed targets:

1. Call information dissemination
2. Signposting for the purpose of priority areas identification, assessment on state of the art, partner search (if applicable), consortium agreement(s), etc.
3. Event co-organising
4. Joint marketing and information content

All of these functions are actually supposed to be performed by both entities at a certain extent, depending on the contractual obligations with the contracting authorities. For NCPs this would be a national authority and for Enterprise Europe Network it would be EACI. It is important to reach a compromise and agreement on the depth of service provision for each segment, as this will define the MoU. For the UK –at least for London- the emphasis is placed on signposting. In certain sectors, London Innovation Network (Enterprise Europe Network for London) does not possess the necessary scientific expertise to provide sub-functions under signposting and therefore refers applicants to the NCPs. Equally, it is the case that especially for commercial dissemination, or even for other funding programmes the NCPs signpost to the Enterprise Europe Network. The MoU states the metrics of a service delivery (could also be called therefore as a framework of Service Level Agreement – SLAs).

More specifically:

1. All signposting is to be conducted through email and not telephone. So that written communication can be recorded and audited if necessary
2. All parties (NCPs and Enterprise Europe Network alike) should confirm receipt of the email immediately upon electronic delivery
3. All parties ought to respond to the enquiry within 72 hours of receipt
4. All parties perform quarterly assessment of the performance of this joint activity and assess success and failure rates for the purpose of improving efficiency
5. A formal letter of the co-operation is being published and issued upon request between relevant stakeholders; for the UK case this includes the Technology Strategy Board (contracting authority for NCPs and for most of domestic R&D funding schemes), the London Development Agency (co-finance authority of the London partner of Enterprise Europe Network), DG RTD, various support groups (i.e. “SMEs go Health”)

6. All FP7 events scheduled by either party are to be communicated to the other at least 10 working days in advance

7. All FP7 events organised by either party are obliged to allocate a presentation slot for the other party

8. All initial contact information for FP7 enquiries provided mainly through web pages indicate the regional EEN as a first point of contact

9. Any Enterprise Europe Network – DG RTD formal communication (i.e. redress) is to be made available to the NCP network

10. A performance briefing report is to be issued annually from both sides to the correspondent contracting authority for monitoring and quality purposes

The objective of this set of service level indication is not to be enforced or to provide a penalty-oriented system. Instead it is aiming at setting tangible targets for service provision to the aid recipients and supports a high level of service. Based on the London experience in this matter, there have been deviations from both sides but this has been limited and in all cases not formally indicated or reported. Ultimately the MoU is a guidance framework to ensure a high level of service delivery.

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6. Partner Search

6.1. Utilise each other's databases (for contact information, R&D profiles), interconnect partner search databases/enable easy cross dissemination. The following field names have been identified as mandatory or useful for a transfer of partner search profiles:

Table 1: Recommended minimum requirements for easy database terconnection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field name</th>
<th>Mandatory</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source database/network</td>
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<td></td>
<td>From a list (e.g., Ideal Ist, TransCoSME etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>If a description is available, summary is not mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise &amp; partners sought / work to perform</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for enquiries</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call / Programme details</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>May also be a link to the call page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keywords</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Source database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Originating country</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Most probably you should only bother about partner searches from other countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target countries</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Either 'all', or a subset of all, i.e., some particular countries where partners are sought from</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contacts section

Option 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Name</th>
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<th>If not transferred, contacts should be made available to the Enterprise Europe Network at least within the emitting database: see option 2</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Contact organisation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact Tel</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact e-mail</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

Option 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>URL to full description</th>
<th>X</th>
<th></th>
<th>If all contact data is provided (see option 1), URL would not be necessary - this could be tuned in each case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
6.2. Regional coverage provided by Enterprise Europe Network to the NCP network

The aim is to exchange partner search portfolios to ensure best visibility of all. The interfaces between Enterprise Europe Network and the NCPs are manifold:

- Generally, NCPs have more academic clients interested for FP7 and are not rooted in regional economies to identify SMEs suitable for FP7;
- Generally, NCPs have a high workload and not enough time to follow/coach SMEs individually, in particular if they have no potential to participate;
- Generally, SMEs show more interest to participate in FP7 projects as to initiate and coordinate FP7 projects (especially in cooperation);
- Generally, Enterprise Europe Network have closer contacts with SMEs interested in participating in FP7 projects but normally no access to first hand information on calls and in particular to projects in preparation;
- Generally, Enterprise Europe Network and NCPs don’t need supplementary work but processes allowing increase efficiency and success rate.

**But:** an interface Enterprise Europe Network-NCP with defined processes can solve some issues. Processes are divided in:

1. signposting “high potential SMEs” for FP7;
2. signposting FP7 partner searches to SMEs.
The following graphs show both processes with the related sequences:

**Graph I: "signposting FP7 partner searches (PS) between NCP and Enterprise Europe Network**

1. The NCPs of a certain FP7 domain exchange information and partner searches among them. Related processes and tools exist or are elaborated within the FP7 NCP projects; the state of the art differs widely depending on which FP7 domain. The basic idea is always the following: A consortium looking for further partners contacts his/her NCP to ask for assistance. The NCP disseminates a summary of the project and the requested competences / tasks to be performed in Europe via the NCP network. Some NCP networks have standardised templates, quality control and tools, others don’t.

2. The NCPs disseminate the partner search requests in their respective countries via their own channels. Some have web and keyword based matching systems, others don’t.

3. Interested potential partners contact the project consortia (coordinator) in most times directly, in most of the cases via email. There is no record of Expression of Interest (EOI) in such cases. When an online tool exists (e.g. Idealist), EOI is made online and there is a record enabling in principle to follow it. In most of the cases NCP don’t follow / support the EOI systematically.
4. When SMEs are sought, the partner search can be forwarded to the Enterprise Europe Network. This can be done centrally and automatically by creating interfaces between databases when such exist (e.g. between the Idealist database and the Enterprise Europe Network database). This can also be done at National / regional level. The Enterprise Europe Network partners can spread partner searches very targeted to SMEs among other means by uploading them in the Enterprise Europe Network partner search system on their behalf (but this is subject to bilateral agreement between the involved NCP and the Enterprise Europe Network partner).

5. (+ 6) Interested SMEs express their interest to their regional Enterprise Europe Network partner who can check with the SME the quality of the EoI and offer support to contact the consortium and to prepare their application.

7. The contact is established with the consortium, directly or via the NCP. The Enterprise Europe Network partner follows the case and offers support if necessary.

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**Graph II: "Signposting high potential SMEs for FP7" between NCP and Enterprise Europe Network.**

**Process "Signposting high potential SMEs for FP7" between EEN and NCP**

1. The Enterprise Europe Network partners dealing with technology and innovation are in regular contact with SMEs and check with them their innovation needs and
possibilities. If the Enterprise Europe Network partners know the next FP7 open topics as well as the minimal requirements to participate in a FP7 project, they can evaluate if an SME has the potential and can commit for an FP7 project.

2. The Enterprise Europe Network partners can collect such “high potential SMEs”.

3. A format/template/process has to be defined at European level to a) guarantee the quality of the high potential SMEs coming from Enterprise Europe Network (with the Network quality label) and b) to transmit this information to the NCP networks without redundancies (interfaces between databases).

4. The profiles of these “Enterprise Europe Network high potential SMEs” are spread via the NCP networks to consortia preparing projects.

5. Interested consortia contact the SME directly or via the Enterprise Europe Network partner (to be decided for each case by the Enterprise Europe Network with the SME).

6. The Enterprise Europe Network partner supports the SME for the negotiation with the consortium and the preparation of the application.

For both processes, there can be a win-win situation and an added value for Enterprise Europe Network and National Contact Point Network:

\textbf{a) Win-Win:}

1. Generally, Enterprise Europe Network partners are in closer contact with SMEs as NCPs. Hence, they can identify SMEs having the potential to participate in FP7 and support them for applications.

2. Generally, NCPs have better first hand information on calls and projects in preparation. So they can more easily find project partners for SMEs having the participation potential.

\textbf{b) Added value:}

1. “FP7 potential” of SME checked by Enterprise Europe Network \(\Rightarrow\) Increase quality of EoI coming from SMEs.

2. “High potential SMEs” matched with consortia via NCP \(\Rightarrow\) Increase probability to find suitable consortia.

3. Support, follow-up and trouble shooting provided by Enterprise Europe Network \(\Rightarrow\) Smoother project preparation and execution.

The tasks to realize these processes for Enterprise Europe Network and NCPs are as follows:

- Enterprise Europe Network: Define a “FP7 potential check” & train Enterprise Europe Network staff;
Enterprise Europe Network & NCP: Define processes for dissemination of EoI/FP7 partner searches (interfaces Enterprise Europe Network-NCP).

Joint partnership building (brokerage) events at large European venues such as exhibitions, conferences etc. The Enterprise Europe Network utilises this as one of the main tools to achieve partnership agreements and has long experience and IT tools to support it. The NCPs can enrich the event participant catalogue with their clients and can also utilise their good relationship with the EC in order to organise events in venues such as large European Technology Platform conferences and EC supported conferences.

**Recommendations:**

Enterprise Europe Network can offer the IT tools (such as BEMT) for the preparation of the brokerage to be used jointly with the NCPs.

**Successful collaboration example:**

Initiated by GREECE: Joint brokerage event between the Enterprise Europe Network (SG Micro & Nano Technologies) and the NMP NCP network in the framework of the EuroNanoForum 2009 in Prague.

The idea came in April 2008 when the proposal for a NMP Network as a Coordination and Support Action (CSA) was being prepared by the NCP network and at the same time a proposal of the Technology Centre AS CR (Enterprise Europe Network, Czech Republic) has been prepared for funding of organisation of the EuroNanoForum during the Czech Republic presidency. The planning was easy as the co-ordinator of the NMP CSA proposal, the NMP NCP of Greece was also a partner of the Enterprise Europe Network and chair of SG MNT. The organisation of the brokerage event was mainly the role of the BIC Plzen aided by Technology Centre AS CR, coordinator of Enterprise Europe Network in Czech Republic. The event took place on the 4th of June 2009 with the contribution of both Networks and in parallel NMP NCP colleagues were “trained” in brokerage events. An informal evening out was organised between the two Networks, the NMP NCP network and SG MNT which is hoped to open a communication channel for the closer collaboration.

Combining the strength of both Networks, one covers all types of clients needs, combining both technological and business collaboration needs with research collaboration needs, specifically since the 2010 NMP call is in due course. The NCP network utilised the Enterprise Europe Network tools (BEMT) and shared the experience of Enterprise Europe Network in organising brokerage events. It also allowed for more personal contact between the members of both Networks with a specific interest in NMP and contributed to a closer collaboration between all. The optimisation of the resources of the event organisers by combining funding and personnel from both Networks was also important.

**Contact:** Anastasia Constantinou, nats@help-forward.gr
7. National Working Groups to promote collaboration and joint actions

Permanent National working groups comprising members of both NCP and Enterprise Europe Network could be set up to define problems, needs, research priorities identified by SMEs / RTD performers.

8. Cooperation in the open consultation of call topics in Work Programmes

8.1. Enterprise Europe Network can offer to the NCP network support in reaching the SMEs when an open consultation is launched on a certain thematic priority as it is dealing with SMEs as its main target. NCP network is supporting the Programme Committee in each priority. The NCPs should be aware of the possibilities available to the Enterprise Europe Network when asked to comment on drafts of the work programmes in their respective areas of the FP.

8.2. Enterprise Europe Network can address industrial federations, chambers of commerce and industry, SME associations as multipliers in order to reach as many SMEs as possible.

9. Cooperation in recruiting new evaluation experts from SMEs

9.1. Enterprise Europe Network can assist in making SMEs aware of the fact that the European Commission is always looking for evaluators for FP7 proposals specifically from SMEs.

9.2. Enterprise Europe Network can identify (during SME visits, technology audits or RTD evaluations) managers / experts from SMEs capable of being evaluators and assist them in their application to be an evaluation expert.

Envisaged degree of difficulty implementing the proposed collaboration activities between the Enterprise Europe Network and the NCP networks:

As a conclusion to this work the WG tried to make a realistic assessment of a possible timescale needed in order to implement the recommended joint collaboration activities as given in the table below.
## 10. Implementing the proposed collaboration activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Easy/ short term</th>
<th>Possible /mid term</th>
<th>Negotiation, developments &amp; additional actions needed/long term</th>
<th>Comments/remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Information sharing</strong></td>
<td>linking between the websites</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>exchange of newsletters</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>exchange of calendars of events</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td></td>
<td>automatic needs time- centalised database or RSS, personal contacts - easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sharing of call information</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Support for awareness raising</strong></td>
<td>joint information days</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>joint stands</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>joint specialised events</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>joint promotional materials</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Capacity building of SMEs</strong></td>
<td>Assessment of the RTD capacity</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td></td>
<td>depending on the level of trust or cooperation willingness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training to SMEs (jointly)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training to Enterprise Europe Network staff by NCPs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pre-screaning of project ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Support in engaging of new SMEs</strong></td>
<td>Enterprise Europe Network identifies interested SMEs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mutual signposting</td>
<td>Sharing of contacts already shown interest(2 networks)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>depending on the level of trust or cooperation willingness</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>joint support for SMEs for proposal preparation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>depends on individual contacts with NCPs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>support during project execution (Enterprise Europe Network -&gt; NCP)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dissemination and exploitation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alternative funding related signposting (NCP-&gt; Enterprise Europe Network)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SME interested in FP7 without project idea (NCP-&gt; Enterprise Europe Network)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Partner search</td>
<td>utilise and access each others databases</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>manual use short term, automatic long term, medium: RSS or merging the data from the minimum data fields spread-sheet (possibilities for tools sharing table) as a way to import external PS in the BBS; long: one database for partner search in FP7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>joint brokerage events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. National working groups</td>
<td>National working groups</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Support to open consultation on FP7 WP</td>
<td>Support to open consultation on FP7 WP</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Support in recruiting new evaluation experts from SMEs</td>
<td>Support in recruiting new evaluation experts from SMEs</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Glossary

The Enterprise Europe Network in a little more detail:

Launched in 2008 by the European Commission, the Enterprise Europe Network combines and builds on the former Innovation Relay Centres (IRC) and Euro Info Centers (EIC) (established in 1995 and 1987 respectively). The new integrated Network offers a “one-stop shop” to meet all the information needs of SMEs and companies in Europe.

Instruments include business partner search within technology and business cooperation databases and fast access to information on funding opportunities, as well as individual on-site visits to companies to assess their needs and a broad range of promotion and information material. Representatives of the Network can also help businesses understand EU law, how it applies to their business and how to make the most the internal market and EU programmes. They can also assist in technological and business collaborations through the organisation of brokerage events in the framework of exhibitions, conferences and other large venues and through company missions.

The Enterprise Europe Network fully exploits the synergies between all support services and helpdesks aimed at European businesses. The “one-stop shop” service is accompanied by a “no wrong door” policy: an entrepreneur or business actor can access Enterprise Europe Network through any contact point, and will then be assisted and personally directed to the relevant service or organisation.

The main services of the Enterprise Europe Network are:

- Information, feedback, business co-operation and internationalisation services (Module a);
- Services for innovation and for the transfer of both technology and knowledge (Module b);
- Services encouraging the participation of SMEs in the Community framework programme for RTD (Module c).

The collaboration between the Enterprise Europe Network and the NCP network are mostly in the framework of the module c activities but since the exploitation of the research results is of major importance to Commission, signposting the assistance to researchers to exploit their research results falls under module B activities.
12. What are the Sector groups of Enterprise Europe Network?

Definition, mission and added value

Definition

A Sector Group (SG) is a group of Network partners who commit to work together in order to meet the specific needs of their clients operating in a particular sector. In other words, Sector Groups - chaired by a Network partner - represent a framework to discuss, plan and implement collaborative activities in order to provide client companies with services with a European added value.

Mission

The mission of the Sector Groups established within the Enterprise Europe Network is to enhance cooperation on specific subject matters / service areas of the Network. Sector Groups aim at coordinating the means available through the Network to provide services to a segment of clients. Furthermore, Sector Groups contribute to raise the knowledge and the professionalism of the Network staff by organising common events, by exchanging good practices and by supporting SMEs to reach partnership agreements and to bring new products on the markets.

Added value

Sector Groups aim at adding European value to their clients' activities by building on other existing initiatives but avoiding duplicating what is already financed by other programme. They are intended to be the ‘breeding ground’ for new initiatives led by the experts working for the Network. New activities may be directly reflected in the Enterprise Europe Network activities (e.g. joint sectoral events) or result in collaboration with the specialised services of the European Commission or strengthen co-operation with other sectoral initiatives and actors such as the European Technology Platforms, Europe INNOVA projects, the Business and Innovation Centres (BICs), European Research Clusters framed within the KNOW-REG programme, etc.

Willing to share knowledge and experience with all Network partners, Sector Groups' activities are characterised by a high level of transparency. All Sector Groups follow common guidelines, publish their rolling plan and their list of members on the Enterprise Europe Network intranet and report on their activities. Therefore, membership is open to all Network Partners which have interest in participating to common activities and share their experience. To know more, please consult the reference document ‘SG Guide’ on this page.
List of sector Groups

- Agrofood
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Services and Retail
- Automotive, Transport and Logistics
- Intelligent Energy
- Space and Aerospace
- Biotech, Pharma and Cosmetics
- Maritime Industries and Services
- Sustainable construction
- Chemicals
- Materials
- Textile
- Environment
- Nano- and micro technologies
- Tourism and Cultural Heritage
- Healthcare
- Creative industry