

PROGRAMME: COOPERATION – CLUSTERS – CALL II

The Cooperation programme is aimed at supporting the development of innovation networks – clusters, technology platforms and other types of cooperation networks. The general objective of the programme is to increase the intensity of joint research, development and innovation activities between business entities and the research sector. Within Call II, aid will only be provided for implementing projects that participate in international cooperation through the Cornet international network.

SCHEDULE

Receipt of aid applications:

- 11 March 2016 – 30 April 2016

AIDED ACTIVITIES

- Collective research – projects must meet the conditions specified in the definition of collective and pre-competitive research. For each project proposal, the aid applicant must demonstrate at least three potential users of the project results (SMEs) that will form a user committee, which oversees the progress of the project's implementation and can correct the research direction taking into account the usability of the results. Projects must be implemented in cooperation with research and development institutions in the form of awarding contract research. Within this call, aid will only be provided for implementing collective-research projects through the CORNET international network, i.e. the applicant must submit an application for a joint R&D project with a foreign partner to a current CORNET call.

APPLICANT

- The aid applicant/applicants; beneficiary/beneficiaries (hereinafter “applicant” and “beneficiary”) may be a legal entity within the meaning of Section 118 et seq. of Act No 89/2012 Sb., the Civil Code, as amended, if it is an association of entrepreneurs along with research and knowledge dissemination organisations or other institutions and organisations that has been established for a special purpose and is oriented towards implementing the objectives set out in parts 2 and 12 of the call. The applicant/beneficiary's articles of association must state that the beneficiary's main activities include promoting innovation and improving competitiveness, and the scope of the beneficiary's activities as specified in its memorandum or articles of association must include the establishment and operation of a cluster.
- The applicant/beneficiary must meet the definition of a small and medium sized enterprise (SME) which – for the purposes of this call – means an entrepreneur that meets the conditions laid down by Annex 1 to Commission Regulation (EC) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the common market in accordance with Articles 87 and 108 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community.

- The applicant/beneficiary must be composed of at least 15 mutually independent members. For the purposes of this call, in the case of business entities an independent member is considered to be an enterprise that meets the conditions of independence within the meaning of the SME definition (regardless of size). For these purposes, linked or partner enterprises within a cluster together form a single independent member.
- The majority of the cluster members (at least 60% of all members) must be composed of small and medium sized enterprises meeting the SME definition.
- Cluster members must include at least one research and knowledge-dissemination organisation, i.e. entities that meet the definition of a research and knowledge-dissemination organisation pursuant to Article 2(83) of Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014).
- The cluster must be open to new members, the rules under which members can join and leave will be included directly in the memorandum or articles of association, and the cluster must be managed in a transparent manner. The cluster's projects must be approved by an absolute majority of all members. When voting, each member has one vote.
- According to the applicant's sworn statement, the applicant has been registered with the tax office as an income-tax payer pursuant to section 125 of Act No 280/2009 Sb., the Tax Code, as amended, without interruption for a period of no less than two closed tax periods preceding the date of the submission of the preliminary application.
- According to the applicant's sworn statement, the applicant does not have any outstanding arrears towards selected institutions⁷ or towards the providers of aid within projects that are co-financed by the European Union budget. Deferment of payment of arrears or agreement on payment of arrears are deemed settled arrears.
- According to the applicant's sworn statement, the applicant does not have any arrears in terms of salary claims by its employees.
- The applicant does not have any outstanding liability arising under a recovery order that has been issued – following a previous decision – by the Commission declaring the aid illegal and incompatible with the common market.

SECTORAL CLASSIFICATION

- Aid is provided to projects whose outputs will have an effect in the sectors defined in sections CZ-NACE CZ C10, 11, 13 – 33; E 38.32; J 58, 59, 60, 62, 63, M 71.2, 72, 73.2, 74.1 S 95.1.
- Aid is not provided to projects whose outputs will have an effect in any of the following sectors:
 - The production, processing and marketing of products which are specified in Annex 1 to the Treaty Establishing the European Community.
 - The agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture sectors pursuant to Council Regulation (EC) No 104/2000.

MAIN CONDITIONS OF THE CALL

- The project must be implemented in the Czech Republic except for the capital city of Prague. The applicant must clearly prove ownership or other rights to the real estate and land where the project will be implemented.
- The project must include all mandatory components specified in the Call for its submission.

- The project does not envisage aid to activities that are linked to the quantity exported (export subsidies), to the establishment and operation of a distribution network abroad, or to other current costs linked to export activity (customs duties, insurance); and aid contingent upon the use of domestic over imported goods.
- The project had not been launched prior to the date of submitting the aid application.
- The project must not violate the EU horizontal policies and their basic principles.
- The project's objectives must be in compliance with the objectives of the aid programme.
- A subsidy will be granted to the beneficiary based on a Decision to grant a subsidy issued by the programme administrator (hereinafter the "Decision"), which also contains the conditions under which the subsidy is granted.
- The beneficiary also complies with the Eligibility and Publicity Rules.
- The beneficiary must keep separate records and documents for eligible project expenditure and the use of the subsidy intended for financing eligible expenditure, pursuant to the conditions set out in the Decision to grant a subsidy, and to retain the documents for 10 years from the date of project completion but no less than 3 years from the closure of the OP Enterprise and Innovations for Competitiveness in accordance with Article 140 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013.
- The project's compliance with the National RIS3 strategy will be verified as part of project assessment, i.e. in terms of meeting the assessment criteria defined in this Call.
- Within this Call, a beneficiary may submit up to 3 projects per 1 ID number. Each project must be registered for implementation in the CORNET international network for collective research.
- Collective-research projects assume that at least one of the results will be achieved: working prototype, pilot plant, verified technology, software, utility model or industrial design.
- The beneficiary must clearly prove ownership or other rights to the real estate where the project will be implemented.
- Any research and development institution as the project investigator or co-investigator must not be economically or personally linked with the beneficiary.
- Pursuant to the conditions specified in the Decision to grant a subsidy, the beneficiary is obliged to maintain the project outputs under this call for a period of 5 years from the last aid payment received at the beneficiary's account.
- Throughout the project implementation period and for a period of 5 years from the last aid payment received at the beneficiary's account, the assets that were acquired with the participation of the subsidy and that are owned by the beneficiary must be used by the beneficiary for the supported economic activities.
- Additional obligations of the beneficiary are specified in the Decision to grant a subsidy, which also contains the conditions under which the subsidy is granted.

ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

- Personnel costs, outsourced services in research and development (contract research, consultancy), additional overheads and operating costs.
- Contracts for outsourced services in research and development cannot be awarded to a personally or economically linked person.

- Expenditures for this activity are only eligible under the condition that the project or its aided part falls entirely into the category of industrial research or experimental development.

FORM AND AMOUNT OF AID

- Aid intensity:
 - The subsidy will be provided up to a maximum amount of 60% of eligible expenditure for small enterprises, 50% for medium-sized enterprises. The aid intensity for experimental development includes a bonus for effective cooperation.
- Maximum and minimum subsidy amount:
 - Minimum total subsidy for one project: CZK 500 000
 - Maximum total subsidy for one project: CZK 15 million for excellent clusters, CZK 12 million for developed clusters, CZK 8 million for developing clusters.