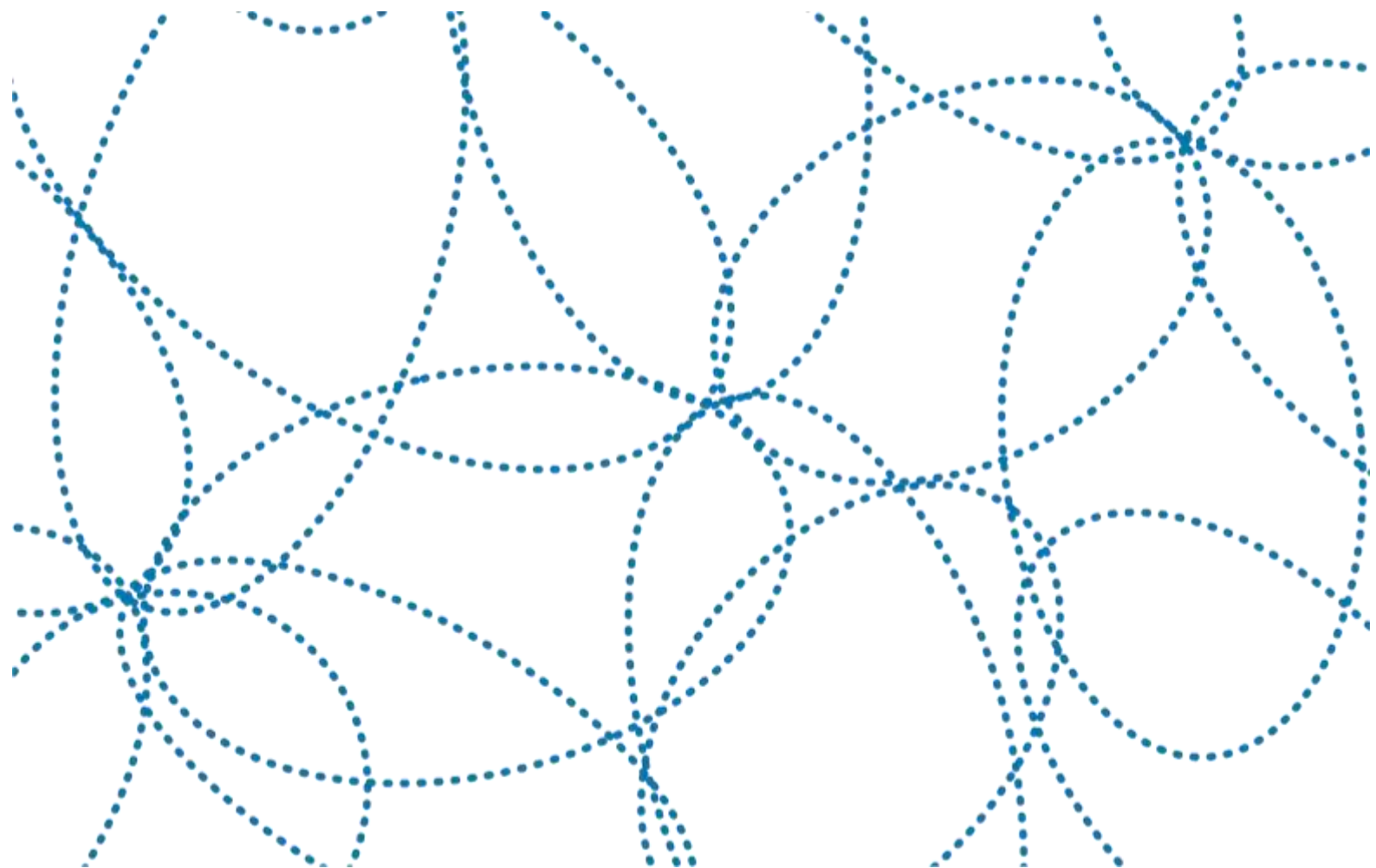


# Gearing up for innovation and growth 2015-16 Final Activity Report



August 2017

[een.ec.europa.eu](http://een.ec.europa.eu)

**Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME)**

Department A – COSME, H2020 and EMFF

Unit A.1 – COSME

Enterprise Europe Network

Sector A.1.1. Evaluation and Monitoring

Sector A.1.2. Business Services

Sector A.1.3. Communication, Governance and Training

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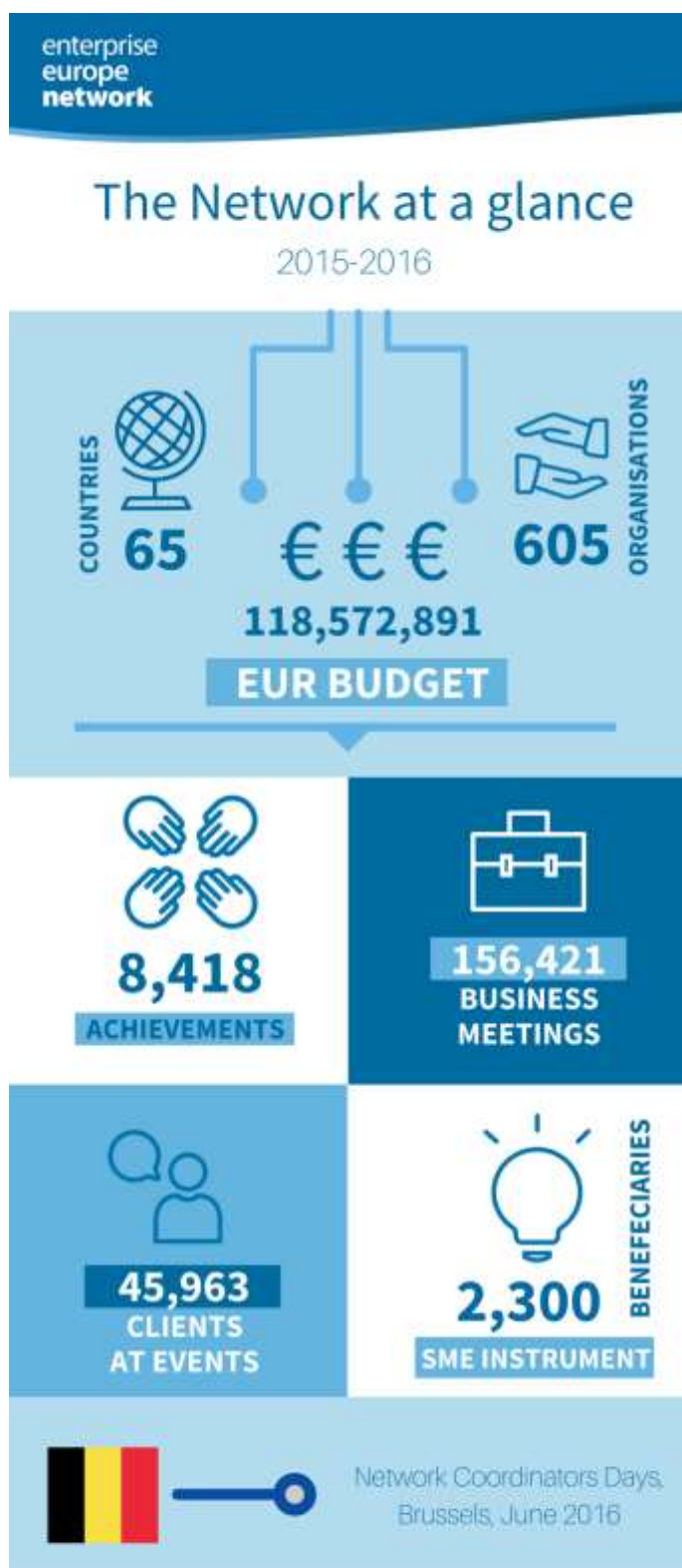
## MAIN ABBREVIATIONS

BCC:	Business Cooperation Centres: Enterprise Europe Network members located in third countries.
PA:	Partnership Agreement. Outcome of a partnering service: the start of a durable partnership between a Network client and a foreign partner.
ASO:	Advisory Service Outcome. Outcome of an advisory service: implemented advisory plan with a durable positive impact on a clients' business.
KAM:	Key Account Manager. Network staff member who ensures that SME Instrument beneficiaries receive the most appropriate services and support to optimise the exploitation of their innovation project <sup>1</sup> .
EIMC:	Enhancing Innovation Management Capacity. Service provided by Network partners to help client SMEs improve their innovation process to more successfully innovate and bring innovations to the market.
SME Instrument beneficiary:	SME which successfully applied to the SME Instrument. Financed under the H2020 funding programme, the SME Instrument helps high-potential SMEs to develop ground-breaking innovative ideas for products, services or processes that are ready to face global market competition.
AM:	Associate Members of the Enterprise Europe Network: organisations that provide added value to the Network and increase the efficiency of its operations by making available their expertise in a certain field.
KPRs:	Key Performance Ratios. Efficiency and performance ratios based on the 16 numerical indicators defined for the Network's activities.
POD:	Partnering Opportunities Database. Database used by Network members to find partners abroad for their clients.
BE/CM:	Brokerage Events and Company Missions. Matchmaking events organised by the Network to help its clients identify suitable partners abroad.
FTE:	Full-Time-Equivalent. Refers to the number of hours a Network staff members work per year on average (About 1,720 hours but can vary).
PES Data Items:	Numerical targets each consortium has to set for a two-year activity period for each activity (an activity can have one or several PES Data Items). PES stands for 'Performance Enhancement System', as these numerical indicators are used not only to measure progress but also to help enhance the Network's efficiency and performance.
COSME:	The European Union programme for the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises.
SMEs:	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

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<sup>1</sup> DETAILS ON: [HTTPS://EC.EUROPA.EU/EASME/EN/NEWS/ROLE-ENTERPRISE-EUROPE-NETWORK-SME-INSTRUMENT-S-COACHING-PROCESS](https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/news/role-enterprise-europe-network-sme-instrument-s-coaching-process)

# The Network at a glance



# Executive Summary

In the first two years of activity within the new COSME programme (2015-2016), the Enterprise Europe Network delivered significant value to its main target group: European SMEs. During this period, the Network worked in the context of a new monitoring and reporting strategy based on result-oriented activities focusing on quality, efficiency and impact.

The results demonstrate that the Network managed to deliver on its aim to be an efficient and effective instrument to support the internationalisation and innovation of European SMEs. In some cases, the Network even **exceeded key COSME indicators**, such as the number of partnership agreements signed by clients per year: in just two years, the Network reached an average of **2,550 agreements per year**.<sup>2</sup>

A new focus for the Network in this period was the implementation of the SME Instrument with Key Account Management (KAM) services, financed under the H2020 programme. In parallel, Network partners also delivered Enhancing Innovation Management Capacity services (EIMC) to SME clients. In total, **Network partners provided these new innovation-focused services to 3,152 SMEs per year, 79% of the target** set in the 2014-2015 H2020 Work Programme. In doing so they demonstrated high levels of flexibility, resource efficiency and the capacity to create synergies with other COSME-funded services.

In the period 2015-2016, **clients reached 5,486 agreements with foreign companies** thanks to Network partnering services<sup>3</sup>, while **Network advisory support services gave 3,317 clients a significant impetus to improve their competitiveness and innovation at European level**<sup>4</sup>. The Network's added-value was validated by the results of impact questionnaires, completed by all clients who achieved Partnership Agreements (PAs) or Advisory Service Outcomes (ASOs).

The quality and efficiency of Network services was also reflected in the results of the COSME client satisfaction survey where **86%** of respondents declared being **satisfied or very satisfied with Network services**.

These positive results were underpinned by **improvements in the Network's governance**: the Steering and Advisory Group's effectiveness was enhanced with the creation of a smaller group, the SAG Bureau. Recognising their importance in structuring Network activities, Sector Groups were reinforced, with their chairs' management tasks covered by specific expert contracts.

A **dedicated support system for consortium coordinators** was also set up. This system aimed at improving their skills and efficiency when addressing the specific challenges they face in coordinating Network consortia. Additional **support and training was also provided to KAM and EIMC experts**, to help set up and structure these new services.

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2 NOT INCLUDING BCC RESULTS AS BCCS ARE NOT FINANCED FROM THE COSME BUDGET

3 INCLUDING BCC COUNTRIES

4 NOT INCLUDING BCC COUNTRIES WHO ARE NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THIS ACTIVITY

Led by EASME, **Network communication efforts were stepped up in 2015-2016** to boost the Network's visibility towards clients and stakeholders. A new visual identity and messaging, targeted promotion actions and a stronger emphasis on communication aspects in all Network activities, have already started to show results.

**Improved learning and development activities** supported the arrival of new staff, the introduction of new services (e.g. trainings for the IMP3rove methodology and tools) and a stronger focus on quality, efficiency and impact.

Recognising the importance of key strategic markets for European SMEs, **the Network developed its presence in global target markets through its Business Cooperation Centres (BCCs)**. In 2015-16, BCCs contributed to 7% of the Partnership Agreements signed by Network clients.

Building on the positive results of its first two years of activity under the COSME programme, the Enterprise Europe Network is well placed to **continue to improve the quality, the efficiency and the relevance of its services for European SMEs** to further increase the concrete positive impact on its clients' businesses.



# 1. Key results

The Network's objective is to help European SMEs innovate and grow internationally. The following success stories provide a snapshot of the many different ways in which the Network fulfilled its mandate in 2015-16.

## 1.1. Success Stories

### Partnering services for innovations



**AQUABION GmbH (Germany) & Rabmer GreenTech GmbH (Austria):** *Establishing a successful partnership and improving business results*

AQUABION GmbH developed an eco-friendly self-cleaning water treatment system in Germany. AQUABION® requires no energy or chemicals, and can help customers make energy and water savings of up to 25%.

The SME wanted to **find partners abroad** to distribute its innovative product. Enterprise Europe Network members ZENIT GmbH and Business Upper Austria helped the company partner up with Austrian retailer of water technology Rabmer GreenTech GmbH.

As a result, new staff were hired in both SMEs and both companies benefitted financially: AQUABION's turnover increased by 10 to 15%, and Rabmer GreenTech GmbH is the exclusive sales partner for AQUABION® in Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Poland and Spain.

### Advisory services

**Novihum Technologies (Germany):** *A sustainable soil solution to feed the future.*

Novihum is a carbon-rich soil conditioning technology developed at the Technical University of Dresden. Novihum Improves soil fertility for 10 years, significantly increases crop yields and reduces water use and pollution. Novihum Technologies GmbH wanted to scale up from a laboratory into a larger, more industrial-sized business.



Enterprise Europe Network member ZENIT GmbH provided **advisory services** and helped Novihum Technologies apply for EU funding through the SME Instrument.

Increased business results: 20 new jobs were already created in the pilot plant and 150 jobs will be created during the commercial scale up. The successful SME Instrument application provided the SME with a €2 million grant, which was used to develop a pilot production plant in Dortmund that can produce 1,000 tonnes of Novihum per year.

### Support for SME-instrument beneficiaries



#### *Smartive (Spain): Improving a business model and expanding to new markets*

Smartive developed a range of digital platforms to monitor the performance of wind turbines. The technology helps wind farms avoid failures and improve maintenance. Smartive wanted to scale up and expand its market share. Enterprise Europe Network member ACCIÓ helped Smartive improve their business model and apply for EU funding through the SME Instrument.

A successful SME Instrument application brought an €878,000 grant. This support allowed the three-staff SME to now employ 14 and its annual turnover increased by €200,000.

Smartive landed major clients in Spain, Endesa and Gas Natural, and its technology is further used by wind farms in Italy, Bulgaria, Denmark and Uruguay. Its annual turnover is expected to reach €5 million by 2019.

### Partnering services

#### *Veziris Healthcare (Greece): expanding to new markets with the Network's business database.*

A Greek SME, Veziris Healthcare, gained a Czech distributor for its innovative mobility aid thanks to the Enterprise Europe Network.

In 1998, the SME pioneered a mobility aid called BodyUpEvolution, a lightweight, easy-to-assemble patient lift that works as an indoor wheelchair with interchangeable seats for the shower and toilet. The company began exporting to a few countries in 2011 but lacked reliable distribution partners in Europe.

Thanks to the help of Cristina Pascual at the National Documentation Centre – Enterprise Europe Network Hellas in Greece and, in the Czech Republic of Enterprise Europe Network adviser Lucie Pučeliková – based in BIC Plzen, the two companies got in touch and since their first contact have established a long-term cooperation.



More success stories are available in Annex 1 and on the Enterprise Europe Network website at [een.ec.europa.eu](http://een.ec.europa.eu)

## 1.2. Good progress towards COSME and H2020 targets

In 2015-16, the Network progressed well towards – and sometimes exceeded – its main COSME Indicators. It supported over 254,057 SMEs (E.4.) with intensive services and reached 15.8 million SMEs through its digital service offer. It achieved a high proportion of its H2020 targets<sup>5</sup>, managing these new innovation-focused services efficiently and in increasing synergy with its COSME-funded services.

### a) COSME results

Table 1: Enterprise Europe Network - COSME indicators

Specific objective	Long term target (2020)	Achieved
E.1. Number of partnership agreements signed per year	2,500	2,550 <sup>6</sup>
E.2. Recognition of the Network amongst SME population	Increase	8% <sup>7</sup>
E.3. Client satisfaction rate (% SMEs stating satisfaction, added-value of specific service provided by the Network)	82%	86% <sup>8</sup>
E.4. Number of SMEs receiving support services (per year)	500,000	254,057
E.5. Number of SMEs using digital services (including electronic information services) provided by the Network (in million)	2.3	15.8

**E.1. Number of partnership agreements signed per year:** with an average of 2,550 signed agreements per year for the 2015-16 periods, the Network reached 101% of its objective for 2020: an average of 2,500 agreements per year.

**E.2. Recognition of the Network amongst SME population:** in 2015, 8% of all EU SMEs polled indicated they had heard or read about the Network. Note that 51% of those polled were not engaged in any international business activity, and thus not part of the Network's core target group.

**E.3. Client satisfaction rate:** Network services provided in 2015-16 were very appreciated by clients: 86% of clients who answered the 2017 Client Satisfaction Survey were overall very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with Network services (4% above the 2020 target).

**E.4. Number of SMEs receiving support services:** On average, 254,057 clients per year received support during 2015 and 2016. The results for this indicator are lower than targeted due to a new method of calculation of the indicator, and not because of a lower service level from the Network. To help Network partners focus on intensive, high-value-added services while reducing the administrative burden, a sub-indicator used in the calculation of the target (the number of clients receiving information services) was

5 90 CONSORTIA HAD TO SUBMIT FINAL REPORTS FOR 2015-2016 FOR THE COSME PART OF NETWORK ACTIVITIES, 82 FOR THE H2020 PART. THIS REPORT IS BASED ON 97% OF REPORTS RECEIVED AND COMPLETED AT THE TIME OF WRITING.

6 REFERS TO COSME COUNTRIES ONLY

7 EUROBAROMETER SURVEY N° 421 (OCTOBER 2015) OF 13,000 SMEs AS PRESENTED IN THE FINAL EVALUATION OF THE ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK 2008-2014, CARRIED OUT BY TECHNOLIS GROUP FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION.

8 DATA FROM THE ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY 2017.

dropped. Network partners keep providing information services to large numbers of SME clients, but no longer need to record them.

For 2015-2016, COSME indicator E.4 is thus based on the following indicators from Network reports: DI02 # Participants in regional/local events + DI03 # SMEs/clients receiving advisory support + DI05 # SMEs/clients in brokerage events/company missions + DI07 # Partnership profiles produced + DI09 # Expression of interests made. In 2017-2018, DI05 will be replaced by # SMEs/clients receiving partnering support, to cover all brokerage services' clients.

In this context, **Network results can be considered very good**: while still providing services to a wide client base (see results for COSME indicator E.5. below) the Network managed to improve its efficiency and positively impact an increasing number of clients, as demonstrated by COSME indicator E.1 results.

**E.5. SMEs using digital services:** Network partners reported higher results than foreseen in the number of SMEs using digital services. Network partners are particularly active in providing information, tender alerts or partnering opportunities to SME clients via newsletters, social media and automatic matching tools.

## b) H2020 results

Following a pilot phase in 2014, the Network successfully ramped up the provision of new services to enhance the innovation management capacity of SMEs with two types of services:

- Support to SME Instrument beneficiaries through the work of appointed Key Account Managers (KAM) who initiated, brokered and monitored coach-SME relationships.
- Provision of Enhancing Innovation Management Capacity (EIMC) services on a large scale while training staff involved when needed.

While overcoming difficulties inherent to the launch of new, high-quality services, **the Network managed to provide service packages to 3,152 SMEs per year, 79% of the 2015-2016 target** set in the 2014-2015 H2020 Work Programme (WP).

Table 2: Enterprise Europe Network - H2020 indicators

Specific objective	H2020 Target <sup>9</sup>	Achieved
Initiate, broker and monitor the coach-SME relationship	--	YES
Provide companies participating to the SME-instrument with access to the wider Network service offering	--	YES
SMEs receiving <b>service packages enhancing their innovation management capacity</b> (per year)	4,000	3,152 <sup>10</sup>

A key challenge for Network partners lay in the flexibility required in implementing their activities: Several consortia had to provide significantly more KAM services than planned in their work programmes due to a much higher success rate of SME Instrument applicants in the region they covered. As they were working to

<sup>9</sup> SOURCE: HORIZON 2020 WORK PROGRAMME 2014 – 2015

<sup>10</sup> SUM OF COMPLETED KAM AND EIMC SERVICES PACKAGES AND OPEN KAM AND EIMC SERVICE PACKAGES TO BE COMPLETED IN THE PERIOD 2017-2018.

a fixed budget, this meant that they were forced to limit the number of Enhancing Innovation Management Capacity (EIMC) services they could provide under this contract.

Each of the 2,300 successful SME Instrument applicants was referred to a Network Key Account Manager (KAM) in charge of selecting the most appropriate coach who would support them in their SME Instrument project. Most of them were successfully assigned a coach, while some clients declined (see detailed explanation below).

**As regards EIMC services**, the Network invested time in 2015 establishing the service on a sound, quality footing and training staff to use dedicated IT tools (such as IMP3rove). This meant that activity picked up in 2016 and the number of EIMC service packages provided to clients more than doubled.

Consortia mostly adopted a **flexible, client-centric approach when providing EIMC services**, e.g. using the IT tool which best suited the clients' needs and preferences. Besides IMP3rove, consortia turned to other IT solutions when assessing innovation management capacities, such as the Innovation Health Check, Check Innov', smE-MPOWER or the NBank Innovation Management Tool. While IMP3rove is comprehensive and has a good benchmarking database, SMEs often found it complex and preferred other tools that also met the CEN/TS 16555 standard but were easier to work with.

EIMC service provision was sometimes delayed as staff needed training to use the IT tools and associated methodologies, particularly IMP3rove which could not be used without training and certification. This impacted the number of services that could be provided during the contractual period. Finally, convincing client companies of the benefits of EIMC services often proved to be more difficult than expected.

Focused on meeting clients' needs, **Network partners provided access to wider Network services to all SMEs receiving KAM and EIMC services.**

A number of consortia highlighted that they had provided further support to KAM or EIMC clients in the framework of COSME-funded Network services. However; a lack of synergies was sometimes observed, resulting in part from the contractual and staff split between H2020 and COSME activities. An ad-hoc action was planned for 2017-2018 to address this issue and maximise synergies between COSME services and KAM / EIMC services to the benefit of clients.

Overall, even if there were difficulties in the implementation of EIMC services, the results are positive: the Network provided service packages enhancing their innovation management capacities to nearly 80% of the H2020 work programme target. It achieved these results using only 59% of the resources planned, in part because SMEs often required less than the average 7-day service packages, in part because a slower start of EIMC services did not allow the completion of all initiated service packages by the end of the period.

Overall, Network partners provided clients with KAM and EIMC services efficiently, and the preliminary performance results data looks promising (see detailed assessment of the Network's performance for H2020 activities below).

## 2. A renewed Network

### 2.1. Composition

At the end of 2016, the Enterprise Europe Network covered **65 countries** with **605 partner organisations**, of which **20% had joined for the first time in 2015**.

A total of 525 partner organisations grouped in 90 consortia covered 36 countries from EU Member States and countries associated to the COSME programme<sup>11</sup> ("COSME associated countries"). These "core Network partners" worked with 80 Business Cooperation Centres grouped in 30 consortia covering 29 third countries.

These 605 organisations provide "standard" information, advisory services and partnering services, as well as SME-feedback activities financed under the COSME programme.

The two most represented types of organisations in the Network are Chambers of Commerce and Chambers of Craft (170) and National and Regional Development Agencies (166)<sup>12</sup>.

From these 605 organisations, **486 partners provide services to "enhance the innovation management capacity of SMEs" in 35 countries (EU Member States and countries associated to H2020)**. In many cases, only some of the organisations providing services under COSME also deliver innovation support services (KAM and EIMC) under the H2020 specific grant agreement due to the service's specificity and staff competencies' requirements.

The Network-building process was gradual: three consultations were launched for the consortia's 2015-2016 work programmes, leading to shifting project starting dates. Delays in contract signatures and pre-financing payments affecting staff and activities prevented some consortia from reaching their full potential. In the Inception Survey<sup>13</sup>, 76% reported negative consequences from contractual difficulties and delays.

The Network's renewal through the arrival of new organisations and its extension to new countries brought in a wealth of new expertise and was mostly smooth<sup>14</sup>, but also led to integration challenges which, in some cases, impacted results.

### 2.2. Evolution in COSME countries

In COSME countries, 11 organisations joined after 1 January, 2015 and 17 left before the end of 2016. In 2016 the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Armenia were granted COSME associated country status leading to two new consortia joining the Network: *EEN Serbia* and *EEN Armenia*, a total of 9 organisations covering 2 countries.

Certain consortia faced major changes during this period, notably in France where a reorganisation of chambers of commerce (CCI) and a territorial reform reducing the number of administrative regions led to CCI mergers and changes in some consortia's territorial coverage: some organisations had to switch consortia. In Italy, Network partners also had to cope with a reorganisation and restructuring of CCIs.

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11 ALBANIA, ARMENIA, FYROM, ICELAND, MOLDOVA, MONTENEGRO, SERBIA AND TURKEY

12 SEE ANNEX 5 FOR DETAILS

13 REFERS TO A SHORT SURVEY LAUNCHED BY EASME IN 2015 WITH THE AIM TO ESTABLISH TO WHICH EXTENT CONSORTIA HAD BEGUN TO IMPLEMENT THEIR ACTIVITIES AND ENSURE THAT CONDITIONS WERE IN PLACE TO PROVIDE THE REQUIRED SERVICES

14 2015 INCEPTION SURVEY

### 2.3. Countries with Business Cooperation Centres

The Network's Business Cooperation Centres (BCCs) are based in countries that are not associated to the COSME programme. They do not receive EU funding and they finance Network activities with national and/or host structure funds.

Between 2015 and 2017, the number of BCC countries grew from 26 to 29. Each BCC is covered by one consortium, China being the only exception with three consortia in Western, Central and Eastern China.

To exploit synergies, BCC consortia integrated EU business support structures in Asia such as the EU SME Centre in Beijing or the EU-Vietnamese Business Network.

Figure 1: Countries covered by Business Cooperation Centres (BCCs)



### 2.4. Associate Members

Associate Members (AM) provide added value to the Network and increase the efficiency of its operations by making their expertise available in a certain field. All European Network partners are able to call on their services, which include: promoting the Network, signposting, interacting and networking, sharing expertise and good practice, answering queries, acting as speakers, contributing to Sector Groups and liaising with Thematic Contact Points. According to a recent survey of AMs:

- 75% regularly signpost their clients/members to Network partners (when they have identified a need for a service offered by the Network)
- Most AMs promote the Network via their websites, newsletters and social media
- 75% plan to attend the Annual Conference in Estonia in 2017 and most are keen to contribute to workshops or meet Network partners in face-to-face meetings
- 80% have supported/co-organised at least one event with Network partners such as b2b meetings, trainings or info-sessions
- Nearly 60% are contacted less than five times per month by our Network partners. Only two AMs indicated receiving more than five questions per month.



## 2.5. Network budget: COSME and H2020

For 2015-2016, the Network's total committed budget was **€202,367,986** with **€118,572,891** of EU contribution.

**This budget** is split between a COSME budget of **€184,512,130**, with **€100,717,036** of EU contribution corresponding to a **55% co-financing rate**; and an H2020 budget covering KAM and EIMC services with a **€17,855,856** budget and a **100%** co-financing rate.

**Budget consumption** on reports which had been assessed at the time of writing was **96%** for COSME Specific Grant Agreements (SGA) and **59%** for H2020 SGAs.



## 3. Progress

In the first two years under the COSME programme, the Enterprise Europe Network focused on creating a positive impact for clients.

In terms of COSME activities, the progress of Network partners is reflected in the results reported for the 16 PES Data Items (see details in Annex 7). These interrelated activity indicators, for which each consortium sets target values for a two-year period, give a good reflection of the Network's overall progress: 13 out of 16 Data Items were achieved at over 93%, of which 11 at over 100%<sup>15</sup>. This progress coincides with an improved efficiency and performance of the services provided.

In terms of H2020 innovation support services, Network partners answered all requests to support SME-instrument beneficiaries with KAM services while at the same time launching Enhancing Innovation Management Capacity (EIMC) services. The promising results detailed below were achieved despite the need, especially in 2015, to adapt to changes and deal with issues linked to the start of a new phase of Network activities (new services, revised guidelines, stronger focus on impact, new partners...)

Contributing to these results were a number of governance, communication and learning and development initiatives and changes (detailed in sections 5 to 8 below) which reinforced the relevance and quality of Network services and their impact on SME clients' businesses.

### 3.1. COSME activities

#### 3.1.1. KPRs and a clearer ASO definition help focus on efficiency and impact

##### Key Performance Ratios (KPRs)

To contribute to a stronger focus on efficiency and impact as opposed to just meeting quantitative targets of clients served and services provided, eight **efficiency and performance ratios** (together Key Performance Ratios - KPRs) based on PES Data Items were introduced.

(1) Two **Performance ratios** help focus on the Network's key objective to achieve a high positive impact per resource invested: KPR2 - number of Partnership Agreements per full-time equivalent (PA/FTE) and KPR3 – number of Advisory Services Outcomes per FTE (ASO/FTE).

(2) Six **Efficiency ratios** focus the Network on improving the quality and efficiency of services, as better client support is more likely to result in a positive impact on clients' businesses. KPR1, number of ASOs per client receiving advisory services, highlights the aim of advisory services: to have a strong impact on clients, and should drive partners towards services with a higher added-value for clients. KPR6, number of expressions of interests (Eoi) per profile published in the POD database, points to the need for quality profiles which help identify the number of potential matches needed to reach eventual partnership agreements with foreign clients<sup>16</sup>.

KPRs are used as tools in the monitoring and reporting of Network activities. Context is essential when using them to assess the results of Network partners' activities. For example, having more Eois per profile is only good if there is a strong follow-up of these "leads": turning leads into partnership agreements with a lasting

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<sup>15</sup> SEE ANNEX 7 FOR THE LIST OF DATA ITEMS BY ACTIVITY, WITH THE TARGETS AND ACHIEVED FIGURES FOR 2015-2016

impact on clients (as opposed to simply the volume of Eols) is the objective. Details on all KPRs, including definitions, use and figures achieved for 2015-2016 can be found in Annex 8.

### Clearer Advisory Service Outcome (ASO) definition

For advisory services, the process and quality requirements to reach and report Advisory Services Outcomes were clarified in the ASO guidelines. Specifically, (1) not all advisory services lead to a measurable outcome for the clients; (2) an implemented advisory plan is a requirement to register an ASO in the Network's Achievements database. Both points stress that quality, intensive advisory services should result in an action plans that clients should implement, and result in a measurable outcome<sup>17</sup>.

## 3.2. Promising results

Overall, this new approach has demonstrated solid results. In two years, Network partners – from EU 28, COSME associated countries and Business Cooperation Centres – helped **8,418 clients reach Achievements**<sup>18</sup>, which represents a good step towards their principal targets<sup>19</sup> for COSME activities.

Achievements are the end-product of a dynamic set of activities:

- 1) In **Information and Advisory services**, 302,900 clients attended information and training events at local and regional level (133% of target planned in the Network consortia's work programmes) and 102,866 received advisory services (96% of target).

The number of advisory services was influenced by the stronger focus on achievements and impact: Network partners often offered clients fewer, more intensive services.

- 2) **Partnering services**: 45,963 clients attended Network brokerage events and company missions (151% of target) where they had 156,421 meetings (178% of target).

**BCC partners' contribution** was significant as they helped organise 17,512 meetings between EU and overseas companies. This figure also shows the dynamism of Network client SMEs who search for partners beyond the Single Market in growing numbers.

- 3) In **SME feedback activities**, Network staff members actively engaged **18,462 SMEs to take part in SME feedback actions and panels**, such as the request for feedback on the *Review of the special schemes for small enterprises under the VAT Directive 2006/112/EC* (105% of target).

Despite achieving better results than initially planned, convincing SMEs to take part in panels remained difficult for several reasons: (1) clients often perceive no tangible benefits in participating; (2) the absence of official feedback to clients to inform them on how feedback will be used after closure of the panel, makes it difficult to engage them in further panels; (3) the lack of evidence of the effect of their participation puts some clients off; (4) timing issues can complicate the implementation of the activities by Network partner, e.g. in 2016 when several panels were published in close succession; (5) several EU open consultations published were not directly relevant to Network client companies.

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17 SEE MORE DETAILS IN THE ACHIEVEMENTS GUIDELINES - SECTION 2 – ADVISORY SERVICES OUTCOMES (ASOs), AVAILABLE ON THE ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK INTRANET (LOGIN REQUIRED)

18 ACHIEVEMENTS ARE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS OR ADVISORY SERVICES OUTCOMES AND ARE THE FINAL RESULTS RESPECTIVELY OF PARTNERING SERVICES AND ADVISORY SERVICES

19 COSME COUNTRY PARTNERS HAVE WORK PROGRAMMES ANNEXED TO THEIR CONTRACTS, BCC PARTNERS HAVE ANNUAL BINDING TARGETS ANNEXED TO THEIR COOPERATION AGREEMENTS BUT RECEIVE NO FUNDING

### 3.3. Quality and efficiency gains drove results

**In partnering activities**, the improvement in the quality of activities and their follow-up is clear: the sum of the number of partnering profiles published and disseminated via the Partnering Opportunities Database (POD), and of the number of clients attending brokerage events or company missions (BE/CM) increased by around 12% from 2015 to 2016. The number of PAs achieved increased by 18% in the same time period.

Table 3: Partnering services – 2016-2016 Efficiency ratios

	2015 average	2016 average	2-year average
KPR4 - # of meetings/client at BE/CM	3.8	3.2	3.4
KPR6 - # of received Eol per POD profile	2.7	3.0	2.8

Actions taken in 2015-2016 to improve the quality of POD profiles and modify the way this partnering tool is used started to show results: fewer, higher quality profiles were published while quality control processes were reinforced with improvements in the number and training of quality reviewers.

The success of this new approach for the POD is confirmed by the analysis of KPR6, the number of Expression of Interest (Eol) per profile, which increased while the number of POD profiles published did not reach the targets set in the consortia's work programmes. This means consortia helped more clients achieve their goals with less profiles, as the number of Achievements resulting from POD profiles increased from 2015 to 2016. Better client-focused quality and efficiency resulted in more results for clients. For brokerage events and company missions, KPR4 - number of meetings per client at BE/CM shows a good efficiency of Network brokerage events and company missions overall. The decrease observed in 2016 in average number of meetings per client will have to be followed, and looked at in light of the number of PAs derived from these events to see if the decrease is an issue or if fewer, higher quality meetings led to more agreements and more impact.

The figures for 2016 for the other efficiency ratios relevant for partnering activities are in Annex 9; however a full analysis will only be possible following the next reporting milestone which will provide a relevant point of comparison.

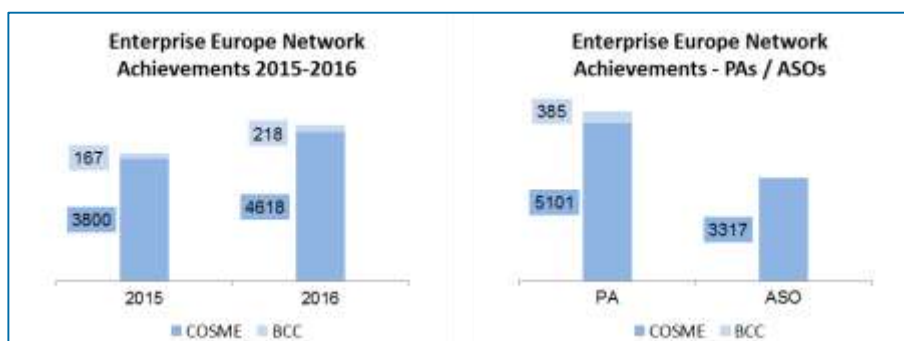
**For advisory services**, efficiency gains are not yet clearly translated in the reported results: on the one hand stricter ASO standards led to fewer ASO than planned, and on the other ASO targets had sometimes been overestimated (see details below). As a consequence, the two year results for KPR1 (# of ASO per advisory service client) indicate a lower efficiency: 3.2% of advisory services clients achieved ASOs while 4.0% were planned. Note, however, that this apparent lower efficiency does not factor-in the overestimation of targets and the fact that the ASOs delivered were, in many cases, of a higher quality and delivering more impact than initially forecast.

### 3.4. Performance

Network performance is based on the Achievements it helps clients reach: overall, the Network's performance in 2015-2016 was very good, as Network partners reached 90% of the planned two-year Achievement targets.

Network partnering services helped 5,486 clients reach partnership agreements with foreign companies, and its advisory support services gave a significant impetus to the competitiveness of 3,317 clients at European level. Both services helped clients improve or maintain their economic situation.

Figure 2: 2015-2016 Achievements



As regards progress towards their contractual targets, COSME Network partners fared better in partnering activities than ASOs, reaching an excellent 101% of the two-year PA targets, and 78% of the two-year ASO objectives.

Lower progress towards ASO targets is explained by the fact that what an ASO was and the process to reach it was not as clearly defined as for PAs<sup>20</sup>. The need for clarification in 2015 resulted in a slower start in reaching ASOs, and also meant that ASO targets had, in a number of cases, been over-estimated: the final ASO definition set more stringent conditions to ensure quality and impactful outcomes. The strong progression in the number of ASOs from 2015 to 2016, from 1323 to 1994<sup>21</sup>, confirms that the Network took action in 2016 to make up for lost time and suggests that it has yet to reach its full potential in advisory services outcomes.

BCC partners have no ASO targets but increasingly contribute as third parties: they supported COSME Network partners in achieving ASO with information related to market access 13 times in 2015 and 23 times in 2016.

Network performance benefited from improvements in its governance detailed below: in 2016, the 596 Sector Group (SG) members helped clients reach 588 Partnership Agreements, up from 399 Partnership Agreements in 2015. This strong progression in results stems from the 530 brokerage events SGs helped organise in two year, which attracted 27,681 SMEs and facilitated 80,547 meetings. Additionally, although partnering is their primary activity, SG members' expertise was instrumental in achieving 142 Advisory Services Outcomes in 2016.

Expressed in Achievements by Full-Time-Equivalent (FTE), Network performance varies significantly between COSME countries from 17 at the top of the scale to under 0.5 at the bottom<sup>22</sup>. Overall, progress in performance during the period is clear with Achievements / FTE ratios more than doubling between end of 2015 and end 2016.

It should be taken into account that country averages can hide differences between regions (when several consortia cover each part of the country), and by type of Achievement.

20 ASOs WERE INTRODUCED AS NETWORK TARGETS ONLY SHORTLY BEFORE THE RELAUNCH OF THE NETWORK IN 2015. THEIR FIRST DEFINITION AND THE DETAILS OF THE PROCESS NEEDED TO REACH THEM HAD TO BE CLARIFIED IN 2015

21 FOR CLIENTS IN COSME COUNTRIES ONLY

22 SEE DETAILS PER COUNTRY AND TYPE OF ACHIEVEMENT IN ANNEX 10

In some cases, lower performance is not linked to inefficient activities but to the fact that the consortia were completely new to the Network and that initial integration proved more difficult. In 2015-2016, Turkey's performance was also affected due to the difficult situation in the country which did not allow its consortia to carry out their activities as planned.

As foreseen in the contracts, underperforming consortia for which no extenuating circumstances apply can see their EU grant reduced. At the time of this report's writing, only one consortium was concerned.

Overall, performance differentials suggest that exchange of efficient working practices could help less successful partners and consortia improve their performance in reaching Achievements. To ensure that appropriate actions are undertaken to address the issues at the root of the underperformance, all consortia with difficulties in meeting performance targets in 2015-2016 will receive special support from their EASME Project Advisers.

### 3.5. Expected impact of Achievements from COSME activities

In April 2016, EASME launched the systematic recording of the impact that Network clients<sup>23</sup> expect Achievements to have on their businesses. This was done with a 15-question questionnaire in five areas: market improvement, positive impact on jobs, improvement in competitiveness through innovation, cost savings and quality improvements. Clients were asked to fill in a questionnaire every time they reach an Achievement<sup>24</sup>. Clients' answers were recorded by Network partners when registering the Achievements in the Network's database.

One year after the Achievements' registration, clients are asked to answer the same questions to check if the expected impact has materialised – the second questionnaire records actual impact.

The first completed year (1st April 2016 and 31st March 2017) of expected impact information for both PAs and ASOs yielded results in three key areas<sup>25</sup> which are primary Network objectives:

- **Market improvement** - improvement in market position / market share / turnover
- **Positive impact on jobs** - expect to preserve / create jobs
- **Expected improved competitiveness through innovation**

Results showed that nearly **70% of clients** expect their **market situation to improve** thanks to Network support. Close to **one in two clients** feels its **competitiveness will improve** thanks to improvements in innovation achieved with Network help and more than **4 out of 10 clients** who reached an Achievement **estimate Network services will help them preserve or create jobs**.

A conclusive analysis of expected impact results will only be possible once the actual impact results of the 4,064 Achievements are collected and consolidated in 2018.

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23 FOR CLIENTS IN COSME COUNTRIES ONLY

24 SEE QUESTIONNAIRE ANNEX 6

25 GRAPHS GIVE THE PERCENTAGE OF POSITIVE ANSWERS (CLIENTS CAN ANSWER POSITIVELY TO SEVERAL QUESTIONS). SEE THE LIST OF EXPECTED IMPACT QUESTIONS PUT TO CLIENTS WHO REACHED AN ACHIEVEMENT IN ANNEX 6

Figure 3: Achievements – Expected Impact EU 28

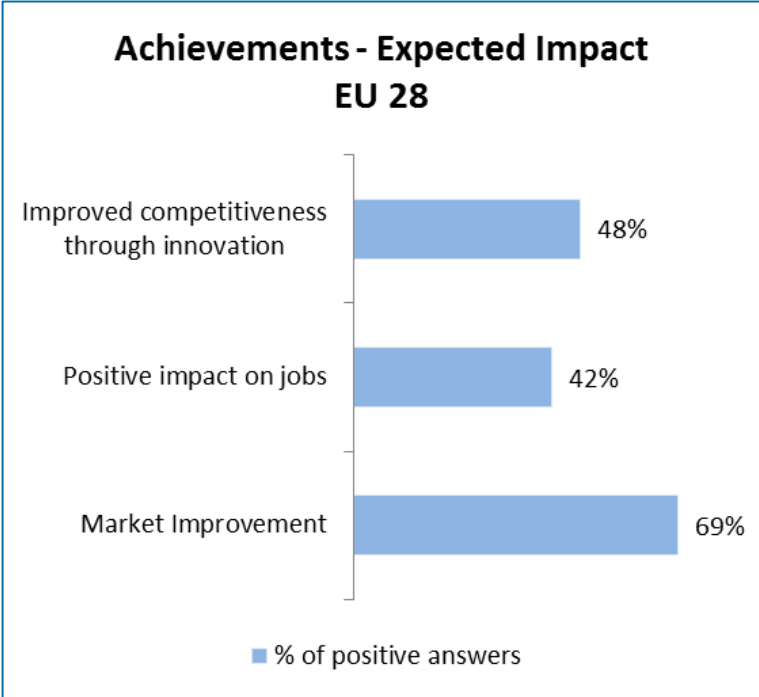


Figure 4: Partnership Agreements - Expected Impact EU 28

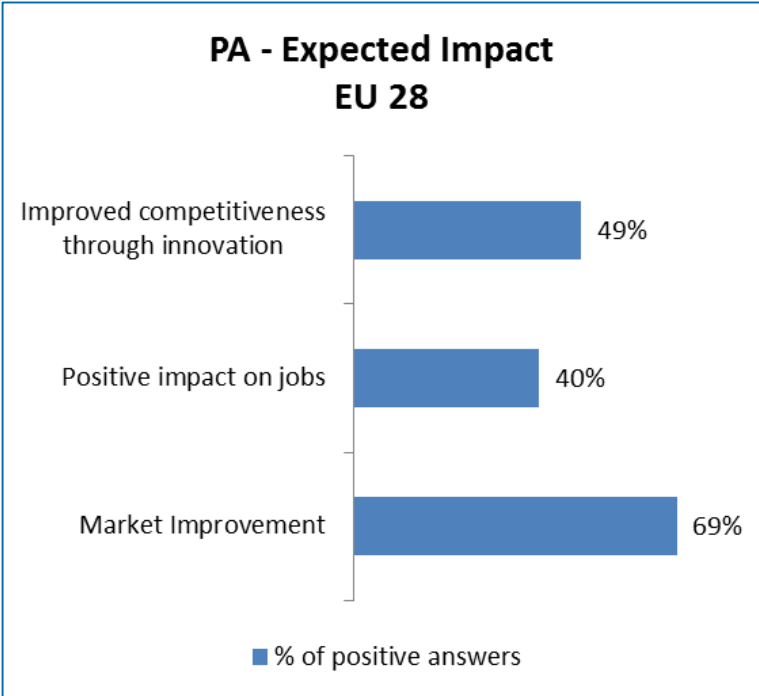
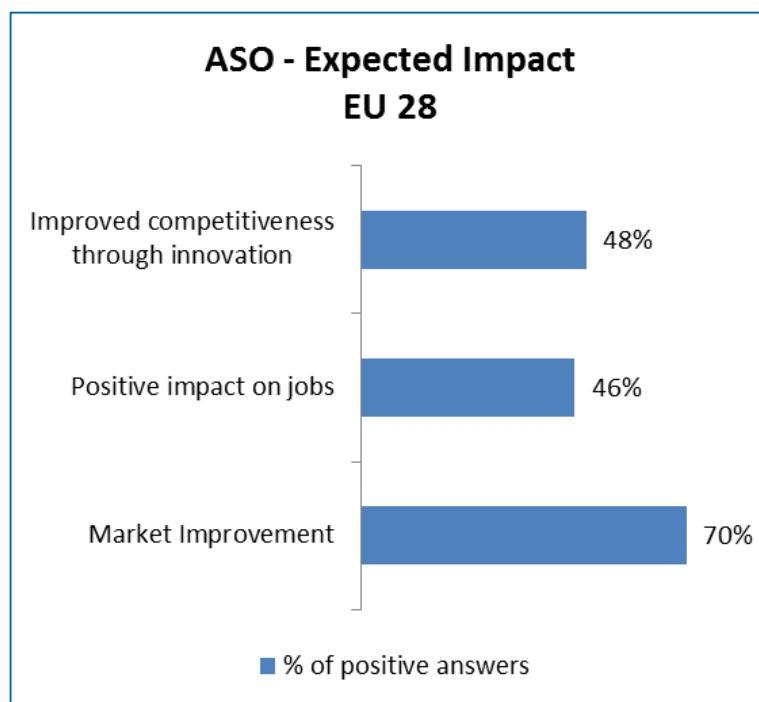


Figure 5: Advisory Services Outcomes - Expected Impact EU 28



### 3.6. Scope of Network innovation support under H2020

Lack of innovation management capacity can be a significant barrier to creating economic impact (competitiveness, growth and jobs) from innovation activities among SMEs. Consulting services in enhancing innovation management capacity are not available to SMEs in many European regions due to the absence of these services on the local market, unaffordable market prices or poor quality. Helping to address this need are Horizon 2020's SME-instrument mentoring and coaching services and the Network's "Enhancing the innovation management capacity of SMEs" (EIMC) services.

**An EIMC service package** is expected to have an average duration of 7 to 10 days. It includes an innovation management capacity assessment, a gap analysis and the provision of at least five days of targeted services to address recognised gaps. The assessment could be based on the IMP<sup>3</sup>rove methodology or methodologies that comply with the definition of innovation management and the elements of an innovation management system as in CEN technical specification CEN/TS 16555-1.

Beneficiaries of the Horizon 2020 SME Instrument receive a service offered by Key Account Managers – '**KAM service package**' – with an average duration of seven days, covering phase 1 or phase 2 of the SME Instrument. This service package is used to identify gaps, find suitable coaches and support their work. It addresses recognised barriers to growth on the basis of a jointly agreed 'coaching plan'. Within the seven-day service package, SMEs benefitting from Horizon 2020 project should, where appropriate, be assisted in managing their EU project with the EU.

Beneficiaries who complete Phase 1 of the SME Instrument but unsuccessfully apply for Phase 2 and receive a 'Seal of Excellence' are supported in finding alternative source of funding. The alternative funding will serve to implement the proposed project and to further develop its innovation strategy and innovation management. These services are then provided in synergy with the Network's existing services under COSME.

### 3.6.1. H2020 activities

Following a pilot phase in the second half of 2014, Network partners started offering Key Account Management (KAM) and Enhancing Innovation Management Capacities (EIMC) services in January 2015. This included the follow-up of services initiated but not completed in 2014, illustrating the "continuous-operation" mode of Enterprise Europe Network partners in innovation-related activities, just as in COSME activities.

In the first two years of implementation of these service packages aiming to enhance the innovation management capacity of SMEs, the Network provided service packages to **3,152 SMEs per year, 79% of its 2015-2016 target** set in the 2014-2015 H2020 Work Programme (WP).

In 2015-16, the Network's innovation experts acting as Key Account Managers (KAM) carried out the needs assessment<sup>26</sup> for **2,300 SME Instrument projects**<sup>27</sup> - 1,827 Phase I and 473 and Phase II projects submitted to cut-off dates from 2014 to 2016.

Additionally, the Network's KAMs continued to support all SME Instrument beneficiaries whose project had been submitted in 2014 and had not yet been concluded.

The increase in the pace of KAM support is best shown by the increased in the number of Coaching Reports submitted (i.e. number of projects concluded) from 392 in 2015 to 970 in 2016.

Network **EIMC experts provided 3,024 service packages** and **started to provide an additional 981** which will be completed in 2017-2018.

Network consortia had to remain quite flexible in the implementation of their activities, as the number of SME Instrument beneficiaries in some regions varied significantly from what had been expected. These variations required reallocations of resources foreseen for KAM services to EIMC services or vice-versa. This proved challenging in some cases as the high level of expertise required for KAM and EIMC experts meant that appropriate staff were not immediately available.

Identifying and recruiting SMEs interested in EIMC services also proved unexpectedly challenging in some regions. In other regions, the high success rate of SME Instrument beneficiaries, led to a more limited budget available for EIMC services, as Network partners gave priority to KAM services. Potential clients could sometimes not be served by the end of the reporting period or were assisted through advisory services provided under the COSME part of Network services.

Overall, these challenges resulted in a lower number of service packages delivered or completed by the end of the period than initially planned. This lower level of activity was matched by a lower use of resources. However, because the overall target set in the consortia's work programmes was higher than H2020 Work Programme 2014-2015 target, the Network still reached 79% of the H2020 target while only consuming 59% of the budget.

In BCC countries, KAMs in Norway started to provide support to SME Instrument beneficiaries in January 2015 under an H2020 grant agreement. In Israel, KAMs also started to support Israeli SME Instrument beneficiaries, albeit without a contract. Finally, in Switzerland and Tunisia, preparations to provide KAM and EIMC services got underway in 2016 as both countries were set to become associated to H2020. They will start to provide services as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017.

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26 FIRST STEP IN THE SUPPORT GIVEN TO AN SME INSTRUMENT BENEFICIARY BEFORE THE ASSIGNMENT OF A COACH WHO WILL HELP HIM/HER IN IMPLEMENTING ITS PROJECTS

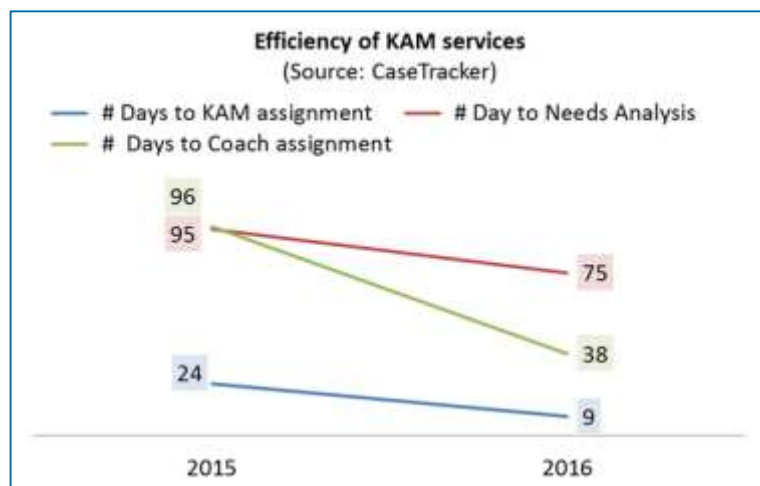
27 DATA FROM COACHCOM2020, REFERRED TO AS 'CASETRACKER'. THE CASETRACKER IS AN ONLINE IT TOOL IN WHICH EACH STEP OF THE SUPPORT PROVIDED TO SME INSTRUMENT BENEFICIARIES IS RECORDED. THIS INCLUDES THE ASSIGNMENT OF THE RIGHT KAM UP TO THE CLOSING OF THE PROJECT AND THE ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF SERVICE RECEIVED FROM THE KAM BY THE COACH, AND FROM THE SME INSTRUMENT BENEFICIARY BY THE COACH AND THE KAM



### 3.6.2. Efficiency of KAM services

According to information provided by KAMs, SMEs and coaches in the Case Tracker, the efficiency of Network support to SME Instrument beneficiaries steadily increased over the period.

Figure 6: Efficiency of Key Account Management services



No similar data is available for EIMC services which are not followed through a central IT tool. However, as Network partners achieved their results using only 53% of their assigned H2020 budget, the resource efficiency of KAM and EIMC services can be considered excellent.

### 3.6.3. Performance

Network staff KAMs performed well over the two years, responding to almost 100% of SME Instrument "cases" or beneficiaries requiring a KAM service.

According to the Case Tracker, 352 SME Instrument beneficiaries declined coaching, especially in the early stages of the SME instrument implementation. A number of factors explain this:

- The gradual development of the Case Tracker: as services started before the tool was fully operational, a number of accepted coach assignments could not be recorded.
- Initial rejections due to a low interest of SME Instrument beneficiaries for coaching stemmed in part from a lack of awareness of its potential benefits. Clearer communication by EASME on those benefits lead to fewer coaching rejections.
- The issue posed by an insufficient number of quality coaches in the coach database was gradually solved through a database quality check by EASME rejecting inadequately qualified coaches and enabling KAMs to identify coaches faster. EASME also published calls for expressions of interest to become a coach and adopted the strategy to sign grant agreements with SME-I beneficiaries only once the coaches had been selected.

In most cases, therefore, rejections reflected a choice made by the beneficiary rather than an underperformance of Network staff members acting as KAMs.

Overall, Network performance in KAM and EIMC service provision was satisfactory: Network experts, while establishing the services, managed to provide service packages to 79% of the target number of 4,000 SMEs while only consuming 59% of the planned budget.

The lower budget consumption is due to a number of factors, chiefly:

- most SME Instrument beneficiaries only implemented Phase I of the SME-Instrument and did not require a seven-day service package (which covers Phase I and Phase II)
- a slower start of EIMC services did not allow the completion of all initiated service packages by the end of the period
- Service packages sometimes did not require a full seven days to complete

There was a notable increase in budget consumption in most cases from 2015 to 2016. In parallel with acceleration in the pace of activities and the Network's overall performance – expressed in the number of clients served overall in KAM and EIMC services. These numbers should be higher in 2017-2018 as innovation support services will be in full swing. The average actual cost per completed service package was on average, in line with expectations.

#### 3.6.4. First Expected Impact results

As the provision of KAM and EIMC services only started recently, measuring their impact is not yet possible across the Network. More information on impact should be available in the next reporting exercise thanks to Network partners' follow-up on clients who received KAM or EIMC services in 2015-2016.

## 4. Client satisfaction

Along with measurable impact on clients, client satisfaction is a constant objective of Network partners, as it also provides crucial feedback on the perceived relevance of services for clients.

### 4.1. COSME client satisfaction survey: a new approach

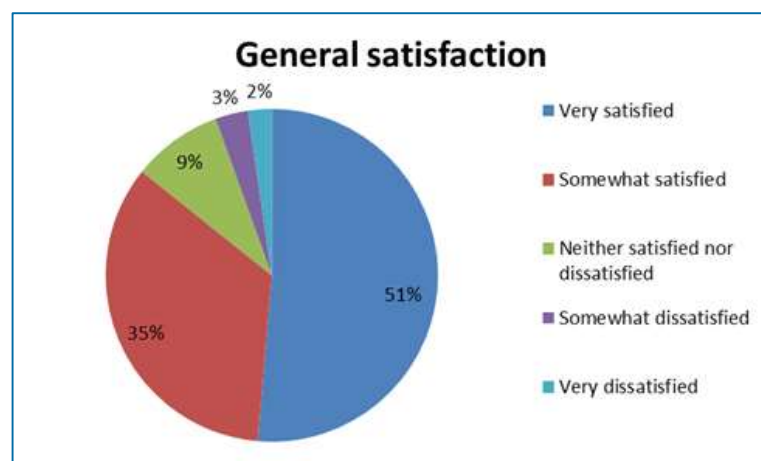
Clients who had received Network services in 2015-2016 were asked to assess their level of satisfaction in six areas:

- 1) Events
- 2) Partnering services
- 3) Specialised advisory services
- 4) General information services
- 5) Services provided with a subscription
- 6) Publications

The survey followed a new approach: clients answered directly after receiving a link to the survey from their local partner: 2,113 clients from 34 out of 36 EU or COSME countries took part in it<sup>28</sup>.

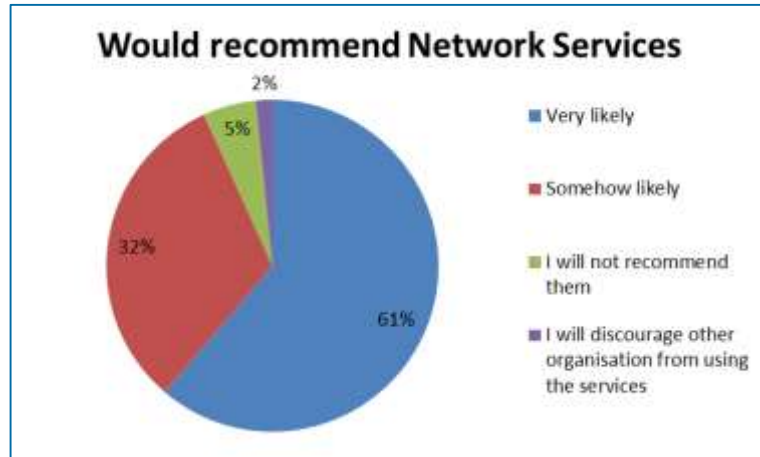
Overall results show that **86% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied** with Network services, while **93% would recommend its services** to others.

Figure 7: Percentages of overall satisfaction



28 SEE MORE DETAILS IN ANNEX 2

Figure 8: Percentage of clients who would recommend Network services

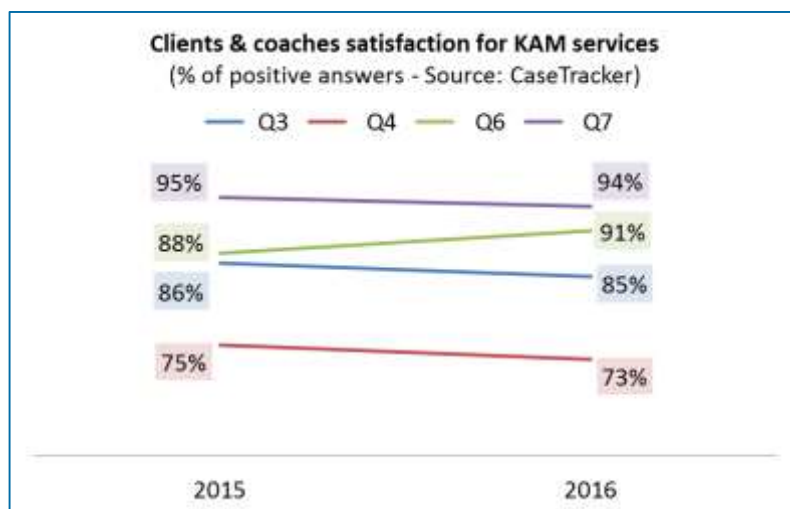


#### 4.2. H2020 client satisfaction

The satisfaction of SME Instrument beneficiaries and coaches who received services from the Network's Key Account Managers (KAM) can be assessed through the answers of both groups to 4 questions (Q3, Q4, Q6 and Q7). These are directly linked to the work of KAMs provided in the Case Tracker after the completion of the KAM service package and of the coaching service. Q3, Q4 and Q6 are answered by SME Instrument beneficiaries, Q7 by coaches.

- (Q3) To SME: The KAM helped us to identify relevant business needs
- (Q4) To SME: The needs analysis performed together with the KAM led our company to take internal actions
- (Q6) To SME: I was well informed about coaches to be able to choose the appropriate one
- (Q7) To Coach: The KAM prepared constructively my interaction with the SME beneficiary

Figure 9: Client and coaches satisfaction for KAM services



Overall satisfaction of clients and coaches with the KAMs' services remained high during the whole period, with over 85% satisfaction rates, except for Question 4. However, although Q4 addresses the work of KAMs, it should be noted that the primary objective of the needs' analysis is not to lead the company to take internal actions but to identify the right coach. Results for 2015 for Q3, Q6 and Q7 might be slightly skewed by the fact that year's data-set is only half that of 2016.

In terms of client satisfaction, examples of what beneficiaries appreciated included:

*"[...] We learned a lot about our approach to potential customers, our business plan and its strengths and weaknesses that we need to address."*

*"[The coach] has helped me to identify not only the current challenges and ways to tackle them, but also the effective method to anticipate, recognise, and avoid the most common obstacles in our business development.[...]"*

EIMC clients also provided positive feedback:

*"Overall very satisfied ... particularly in terms of identifying new ideas to support our innovation process... most appreciated: the audit and the targeted advice provided".*

*"Each collaborator is now more involved in the company's innovation process. This... is a benefit for our management. Projects are now prioritised in terms of objectives as well as in terms of resources which need to be allocated".*

## 5. Network Governance

In 2015, changes were enacted in the Network's governance to improve efficiency and better support Network activities and results. These changes were built on work started in the previous financing period (CIP).

### 5.1. The 'New SAG'

The Network's **Steering and Advisory Group (SAG)** is a forum that ensures dialogue, participation and transparency between the Enterprise Europe Network Partners, the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) and the Executive Agency for SMEs (EASME).

The SAG helps establish a continuous and interactive process between these three parties, identifying actions to be undertaken before, during and after SAG meetings, as well as during the Annual Conference. It is chaired by DG GROW, with the support of EASME.

The SAG offers the opportunity for the European Commission to provide guidance and listen to Network representatives, and for Network representatives to raise issues of interest to Network partners.

In 2015-2016, the SAG evolved to increase the efficiency and impact of its contribution to the Network, both as regards its current activities and, in a more strategic way, as regards to its future.

#### 5.1.1. SAG meetings

Exceptionally, instead of three SAG meetings per year, two meetings took place in 2015 (April, September), and four in 2016 (January, April, June, October). The November 2015 meeting had to be postponed to January 2016 due to a raised security alert level in Belgium.





#### 5.1.2. SAG bureau

A **SAG Bureau (the Bureau)** was officially created in April 2015. Its role is to:

- Set the agenda for future SAG meetings together with other SAG representatives,
- Ensure the follow-up of the tasks decided at the SAG,
- Alert the EC / EASME to important Network-related issues between SAG meetings.

Seven members were appointed in April 2015 via online vote. At the last SAG meeting of 2016, an online vote took place again to elect seven new Bureau members as the mandate of the first elected SAG Bureau members came to an end. The SAG bureau was renewed with the election of 40% new members for an 18-month period starting from November 2016.

Table 4: SAG Bureau membership in 2015-16

2015	 Belgium	 Lithuania	 Denmark	 France	 Greece	 Netherlands	 UK
2016	 Bulgaria	 Germany	 Denmark	 France	 Greece	 Italy	 UK

The Bureau met twice in between SAG meetings to clarify its responsibilities and discuss the role of the SAG in the strategic governance of the Network. The first outcome of these discussions was presented at the September 2015 SAG meeting<sup>29</sup>.

Each Bureau member is responsible for several SAG representatives other than the one from his/her own country. The Bureau decides on the distribution of countries among its members.

Progress was also made in defining future SAG governance. The SAG endorsed a document explaining the governance process, outlining the process for preparing meetings, interacting with working groups and the mandate and election of SAG Bureau members.

## 5.2. Network strategic vision paper

A participatory process was initiated at the SAG meetings in June and October 2016 to reflect on the mid-term future of the Network. The sessions aimed to foster an exchange on the vision of the Network: what the future holds and what the Network needs to do differently in order to stay current and relevant.

The outcome of the participatory sessions fed into a position paper from the SAG Bureau “Network Strategic Vision paper” on the future of the Network. This paper was further discussed with all members of the Network in a brainstorming session during the 2016 Annual Conference in Bratislava.

DG GROW took account of the vision document and the outcome of the different participatory sessions when drafting its own document on this matter (presented at the June 2017 SAG).

During the October 2016 SAG meeting, DG RTD (Research and Innovation) provided a short introduction to the European Innovation Council, which also listed some possible areas where the Network could contribute.

The UK representative provided a brief presentation on Brexit, focusing on some of the organisational measures taken by the UK government to prepare for Brexit and the most likely scenario for the Network.

<sup>29</sup> PRESENTATION *FUTURE OF SAG - THE ROLE OF THE BUREAU (SEPTEMBER 2015)*, AVAILABLE IN THE [ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK INTRANET](#) (LOGIN REQUIRED)

### 5.3. 'Sector Groups 2.0'

The Network under COSME has 17 Sector Groups (SG), which unite Network experts in strategically and economically important sectors to enhance efficiency and collaboration between Network partners and client SMEs. The aim is to foster transnational business cooperation, technology transfer, innovation partnerships and research activities of SMEs both within and across their respective sectors of economic activity.

Throughout 2015, a thorough review of the working methods and composition of Sector Groups took place. SG membership was completely reset in 2015, with renewed membership only available upon (re)application. The process removed (formerly) inactive members from the groups, creating a more efficient and responsive membership.

A new structure was also put in place to improve the management of Sector Groups. SG chairs, who previously acted on a voluntary and unpaid basis, are now subject to a clear contractual relationship with EASME, with a clear job description and a financial incentive to deliver results. EASME in turn has greater leverage to monitoring the performance of Sector Groups which has had a direct impact on their efficiency and the results.<sup>30</sup>

### 5.4. Working Groups

The good relations between EC/EASME highlighted by Network partners in the Inception Survey was put to good use in 2015 and 2016: the Network's input was taken on board, for example, to clarify Achievement Guidelines and processes (particularly ASOs), or to improve reporting templates and make them more user-friendly. The Network's feedback was also taken into account where relevant in drafting the consultations for the Network's 2017-2018 work programmes. The group of Communication Champions was also particularly active.

Additionally to this good collaboration, **three Working Groups (WGs)** were set up in 2015-2016.

WGs allow a limited number of highly qualified experts to work together on urgent issues of common concern to the whole Network identified as such by the SAG. These experts are to come up with solutions and/or tools for the benefit of the entire Network. They are:

- **Advanced Access to Finance services WG:** in order to improve Network services in the area of access to finance, a WG on Advanced Access to Finance services was agreed to by the SAG in September 2015. It concluded its work in 2016. Its goal was to create common concepts, methodologies and tools to support the daily activities of Network partners working on access to finance. In particular, it focused on advanced services (e.g. SME readiness activities, matchmaking SMEs-investors) and developed a strategy for efficient and mutually beneficial relations with private investors (e.g. business angels, venture capitalists, etc.), by producing a methodology to organise events to connect SMEs with funding stakeholders.
- **Network services for scale-up companies WG:** Europe has many bright and promising SMEs in the scale-up stage who need to understand and embrace the Single Market from the earliest stages of their business plan. The Network lacks structural relationships with service providers of scale-up support, such as incubators, business plan competitions, regional scale-up schemes, and regional support for scale-ups often struggles with the international dimension.

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<sup>30</sup> A DETAILED REPORT ON SG ACTIVITIES WAS DONE: ONLY THE MAIN FINDINGS ARE SUMMED UP IN THIS REPORT



A WG was thus set up to identify how the Network could best work with regional support systems for scale-ups and provide the most adequate services to these ambitious and opportunity-driven entrepreneurs.

The WG met twice in 2016 and produced a detailed guide on Network services for scale-up companies. Its input was also used in the preparation of the terms of reference for the pilot action set to start in mid-2017 in which Network partners will map the regional scale-up support system and pilot services for scale-ups.

- **POD quality and review process improvement WG:** The Partnership Opportunity Database (POD) is a crucial Network partnering tool. In January 2016, the SAG decided to create a WG for "POD quality and review process improvement" to tackle delays in quality checks and publication of partnering profiles and to improve the experience of POD users, partners and clients.

The following results had an **immediate, concrete impact**:

- Simplification of the Profile drafting guidelines
- Creation of a Thematic group on Partnering process and POD
- Simplification of requirements to become external reviewer
- Obligation for all consortia to appoint active external reviewers
- Creation of an online quiz to let Network partners to test their POD knowledge
- Recommendation accepted by EASME, to abandon the number of partnering profiles published as contractual target.

## 5.5. Thematic Groups (TGs) and Thematic Contact Points (TCPs)

Thematic Groups (TGs), introduced in 2014, help to:

- Better organise and structure existing expertise in the Network
- Trigger information exchange on specific topics
- Contribute to the improvement of Network processes

There are currently **14 TGs**<sup>31</sup> composed of Thematic Contact Points (TCPs), Network staff members nominated to be the contact person for the topic in each consortium. TGs focus on topics such as access to finance, single market, clusters, public procurement or taxation. The Single market and Taxation TGs will probably merge in the near future, the latter becoming a subgroup of the former.

The TGs' were set up progressively throughout 2015-2016. **Their activities include:**

- Sharing information and good practices
- Training
- Reflecting on Network working standards
- Giving input to working groups and implementation their recommendations
- Providing feedback on policy initiatives
- Giving feedback or input to running EU projects
- Coordinating support to clients applying for EU calls for proposals

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<sup>31</sup> SEE COMPLETE LIST OF THEMATIC GROUPS IN ANNEX 3

Most TGs are first and foremost internally-oriented structures aiming to improve Network processes in various horizontal areas. Some TGs, however, have activities closer to the client as they coordinate "back-office" processes linked to client support services (e.g. coordinating support to clients applying for EU calls for proposals). Finally, more externally-oriented TGs are also involved in the planning and organisation of direct client-support activities and even help initiate Partnership Agreements: the TG *Participation of SMEs in EU research programmes* has been a front runner in this regard, contributing to PAs by organising a virtual match making event.

In 2015-16, TGs carried out or launched a number of concrete initiatives, such as the organisation of training sessions (see Annex 3).

In order to provide guidance on the evolution of the TG concept, an executive group of TG representatives ("Execs") has been set up, moderated by EASME. It is composed of the chairs and executive members of all TGs. Discussions are held in the Network forum and as a side event at the Annual Conference (the first meeting took place in Bratislava in 2016).

## 5.6. Annual Conference 2016

The Enterprise Europe Network Annual Conference 2016 (EENAC2016) was held on 14-16 November in Bratislava as part of the Slovak EU Presidency programme. The event, organised by the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic jointly with EASME and DG GROW, brought together delegates from 60 countries.

### Conference outcomes included:

- 797 registered participants;
- 251 replies from Network partners to the online survey, with a response rate of 36%;
- 75% of the survey respondents considered the Annual Conference "worth their time";
- Almost two thirds of the respondents declared having made more than 10 new contacts during the event;
- More than 400 delegates participated in the 970 formal business meetings organised at the matchmaking activity;
- The event registered more than 11,000 networking connections among participants.

### In terms of press and media impact:

- Media outreach activities were organised for the promotion of the Enterprise Europe Network Awards nominees using nine success stories.
- The estimated total audience reach is **448, 297 770 visitors** for online publications (including online media, online versions of the print media, radio or TV reports published online). The reach of print publications sums up to **558,215 readers** while radio broadcast reached **450,000 listeners**. The stories were covered by national media (57% of reports collected) followed by pan-European media (26% of reports) and regional media (17% of reports).

### In terms of social media:

- #EEN16 was used 249 times. This is an increase of 25% from 2015.
- The top Tweet around the conference generated 8,346 impressions and a total of 323 engagements.

- The storify compiled after the event was viewed 636 times:  
[https://storify.com/EEN\\_EU/enterprise-europe-network](https://storify.com/EEN_EU/enterprise-europe-network)

### 5.7. Specific support for KAM and EIMC experts

A specific support infrastructure was put in place in 2015-2016 for Network staff members approved to work on advanced innovation support services as KAM or EIMC experts.<sup>32</sup>

A number of actions were taken to ensure that KAM and EIMC experts receive up-to-date information crucial to their work, are trained in using the IT tools necessary to complete their tasks and can improve their skills to enhance the level of service they provide to clients:

- **Q&A service** in a dedicated KAM forum in the Network Intranet with nearly 300 topics
- **Continuous e-mail support** from the EASME team in charge of organising and managing SME Instrument coaching, Project Advisors,
- **Learning and training events** addressed to KAM/EIMC staff such as:
  - **Seminar for senior innovation advisers (March 2015)**: Two-day seminar to present the Case Tracker and methodology, understand EASME's aims and clarify the roles of all parties involved. First big event for the Network's KAMs: 105 KAMs took part.
  - **'Pump up the KAM' (June 2016)**: Two-day info day and working session for 85+ KAMs and prospective KAMs, to exchange experiences, working methods and approaches, help KAMs and coaches understand each other's roles.
  - **Centralised EIMC & KAM trainings**: 4 trainings in 2015, each for 25 to 35 staff members, focusing on how to carry out the 7-day service packages, use of tools, understanding of innovation (management) support activities of the Network, etc.

In addition, the IMP3rove Academy, under contract with EASME, trained 580 Network staff members<sup>33</sup> in innovation management issues. IMP3rove trainings are small, focused, and in-depth often with fewer than 10 participants resulting in a strong learning effect.

### 5.8. Network coordinators

Coordinators have a hands-on role in the Network, acting as efficient links with the EASME and EC. To assist them in their role, enhance their effectiveness and help them overcome some the specific challenges they face - such as rotation of staff, staff motivation or integrating new recruits - a series of initiatives were proposed by Network coordinators and EASME.

- A dedicated **buddy system for coordinators**, proposed by coordinators meets the need for peer-to-peer support among coordinators, especially for advice on strategic issues.

It is **open to all coordinators**, driven by a core group of enthusiastic 'inspirers' and **participation is voluntary**. It is based on listening, support and sharing of good practices, not ready-made solutions. A first "buddy system workshop" for coordinators "Inspirers Training" took place on 23-24 February 2016 at Zeche Zollverein, Essen, Germany; a second planned in January 2017.

<sup>32</sup> THE CRITERIA FOR STAFF WORKING AS KAM / EIMC EXPERTS ARE DETAILED IN THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CONSULTATION TO WHICH NETWORK CONSORTIA TOOK PART

<sup>33</sup> TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS AT IMP3ROVE ACADEMY TRAININGS. STAFF MEMBERS COULD ATTEND SEVERAL TRAININGS

- **Specific training sessions for coordinators** were also organised by EASME, such as the Coordinators' Days in June 2016, to which 63 participants from 63 Consortia in 32 countries took part. Topics covered included: role of the coordinator; focus on the client; focus on quality; new in reporting 2015-2016; how to be a better coordinator.
- An ad-hoc **Training on Financial & Technical Reporting** was added in January 2017 at the coordinators' request. It gathered 69 coordinators, financial officers and other Network staff from 23 countries.
- A **Management Summer School for coordinators** on 29-31 August 2017, coordinated by EASME, will cover topics such as advanced leadership skills, leading people and organisations and boosting collaboration.

## 6. Network communication

In 2015-2016, important steps were taken to boost the Network's visibility towards clients and stakeholders, through a comprehensive communication strategy, the rolling out of a revised visual identity and targeted communication actions and a stronger emphasis on communication aspects in all Network activities, which have already started to show results.

### 6.1. Communication strategy

The Network began its new programming period with a new communication strategy that laid out the overall communication objectives for the Network with a medium-term outlook and time-specific goals. A major achievement of the strategy was the agreement of core messages for the Network – providing a basis for coherent and consistent communication across the Network. Developed by the Communication Champions, they have been translated into all EU languages. A key element of the strategy was encouraging SMEs who have benefitted from the Network to tell their stories, as the most powerful way of communicating its value. This concept underpinned the Network's presence at events, including a high impact on site and on social media at the Web Summit 2016 in Lisbon.

### 6.2. A new visual identity

The new brand identity was launched in May 2016, providing a clearer and more coherent Network brand. Network partners were given a deadline of 31 March 2017 to implement the brand digitally and end of 2017 to fully phase out all materials using the old Network branding. The re-branding exercise was also an opportunity for Network partners to ensure that the Network messaging is fully present across all of the Network's communication materials.

### 6.3. Digital outreach

The uptake of digital services provided by the Network exceeded COSME targets<sup>34</sup> proving the appetite and need for a stronger Network digital presence. The same trend is clearly visible for the central digital presence of the Network managed by EASME.

A focus on meeting user needs with quality content, improved web architecture and design has led to an increasingly strong and influential Network presence on web and social media.

By the end of 2016, the Enterprise Europe EU (@EEN\_EU) Twitter account was reaching out to a community of nearly 20,000 Twitter followers (compared to 7,630 in 2014) and 10,000 Facebook fans (compared to 3,500 in 2014). In 2016, views of social media posts on Twitter and Facebook increased fourfold to 4.5 million (compared to 1,150,000 views in 2015), with a clear increase in engagement.

A social media campaign featuring people in the Network telling stories about their work supporting SMEs took place in the summer of 2016. The campaign marked the beginning of the use of the hashtag #EENCanHelp across the Network.

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<sup>34</sup> SEE 1.2. GOOD PROGRESS TOWARDS COSME AND H2020 TARGETS

Video outreach via the Network's YouTube channel also increased from a yearly total of 18,057 views in 2014 to 22,851 in 2015 and 31,491 in 2016.

In 2016, the Enterprise Europe Network website attracted more than 4,280 visitors per day compared to 2,400 in 2015. For the Network intranet, in 2016 there was also a massive improvement in page views and average session duration which proved that the quality of the content along with the refreshed look and feel largely contributed to a better user experience. Subscriptions to the Network internal newsletter, NetLife, rose from 350 at the end of 2014 to 900 in 2016.

#### 6.4. Communication in Host Organisations

Support from host organisations is a key driver for better positioning and impact. In 2016, the Network launched a Network-wide campaign celebrating the important role they play. Over the course of the year, the campaign saw Network partners reaching out to their hosts, raising their visibility and encouraging good cooperation. With the support of the Network's Communication Champions, EASME produced a series of tools that were released month by month to help partners keep up the momentum. This included a toolkit to produce an endorsement video from the CEO of the Host Organisation. The videos included some memorable testimonials which were packaged into a video ["Europe's Top Business Organisations are Talking about the Network"](#).

Peer support took the shape of a Best Practice guide and a LinkedIn Group with 236 members where people share their experiences, tips and suggestions. The conversation continues in this group and members are regularly sharing their successes and ideas.

#### 6.5. Open For Business Campaign

In 2015-16 the Network played a central role in designing, rolling out and refining the European Commission's "Open For Business" campaign – communicating the opportunities and benefits of the single market for SMEs and directing them towards the Enterprise Europe Network for help and support. The campaign was organised across radio, social media, printed ads in newspapers and magazines and billboard posters.

Communication Champions from Spain, France, Greece, Cyprus and Italy advised on and implemented the campaign in 2015. Feedback on their experiences was integrated into the 2016 campaign that was rolled out in Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Hungary and Denmark. The local advice and particularly the post-campaign feedback sessions provided by the Communication Champions were greatly appreciated by DG GROW (who ran the campaign) and who have promoted this method within the Commission as a best practice in communication.

# 7. Learning & development

To deliver more impact on client businesses through higher quality services and a better structured, more efficient Network, EASME and Network partners teamed up in 2015-2016 to revise and implement a new learning and development framework for Network staff. In areas such as POD database profile quality or IMP3rove, a positive impact on activities is already evident.

## 7.1. A new learning and development strategy

A new learning and development strategy<sup>35</sup> was drafted for the Network. This document took into account the results of a survey on training needs addressed to Network partners. The main principles of the strategy are for:

- Learning activities to be based on identified needs following training needs analysis;
- Learning to be fully integrated in the networking process (learning is everywhere in the Network);
- Learning will take account of the overall Network objectives and activities;
- Learning activities to be delivered on a value-for-money basis;
- The use of shared resources will be maximised – human, financial, software and physical resources;
- Best practice to be applied to evaluation. A selective, focused and practical approach will be taken in assessing the impact of learning;
- Learning to be focused on the development of the necessary competencies to enable individuals to perform to the best of their ability.

## 7.2. Learning and development activities

The Network's diverse training offer in 2015-2016 put the learning and development strategy into practice with flexibility. A number of training sessions were managed by EASME (centralised) and others by Network partners (decentralised) or by third parties such as the IMP3rove Academy.

### 7.2.1. Activities in 2015

- **19 centralised training sessions** were organised, on operational topics: POD (internal/ external reviewers), IT (former 'Merlin Champions'), Innovation support, Communication (via Communication Champions' meetings). The focus was set on "train the trainer" approach to enable more partners to benefit from local training sessions.
- **The capacity of the 'newcomer' sessions was increased to 4 sessions a year**, addressing the Network structure & organisation, the role of the EC, the code of conduct, Network management tools, the partnership process and communication. In total, more than 150 participants benefitted from the newcomers sessions.

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35 SEE ANNEX 11 FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE OF THE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- **15 decentralised training sessions took place in 10 countries:** Newcomers (Timisoara), Internationalisation: Japan (Thessaloniki), China (Athens), Innovation (Copenhagen), IMP3rove (Budapest), KAM (Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Rome, Vienna, Barcelona and Mülheim-an-der-Ruhr), Competitiveness (Szczecin), Public procurement (Munich), IPR (Vienna), etc.
- A few local training sessions took also place targeting national organisations on very specific topics (IMP3rove, POD, etc.).
- The eligibility rules for training activities were clarified and published on the intranet.
- **Staff Exchanges were also boosted:** the dedicated database was refreshed with 575 organisations and 338 active updated profiles.

### 7.2.2. Activities in 2016

- **19 centralised training sessions** (408 people) were organised, on operational topics: POD (internal/ external reviewers), IT (former 'Merlin Champions'), Innovation support, Communication (via comm. champions' meetings). At both beginners and advanced level, in order to meet all the different needs in the Network.
- **The capacity of newcomers' sessions remained at four sessions a year** with a stable programme compared to 2015 due to the high interest from the Network. In total, more than 140 participants benefitted from the newcomers sessions.
- **22 decentralised training sessions took place in 38 countries in addition to 14 training sessions from IMP3rove Academy** including Newcomers (Limoges), Innovation journey for clients (Prague), Creating Impact on clients within the Network (Timisoara), Increasing competitiveness of companies by design (Szczecin), POD: Training session for External Reviewers (Glasgow), Training session for Network change makers (Torino).
- **35 webinars:** organised by Network Partners of which 23 on Japan; seven on Technology Transfer and about five on other topics including: Exporting Organic Food to China: New Food Safety Law and Cross-border E-commerce Policies; General Aviation Sector in China: Status, Challenges, Outlook and Useful Contacts; Exporting Dairy Products to China; H2020 Eurostars: Bringing SMEs to the next level; Using Free Trade Zones to Sell.
- **Staff Exchanges were also boosted:** during the year there were 22 completed staff exchange visits involving 35 countries and around 65 people.



## 8. Business Cooperation Centres

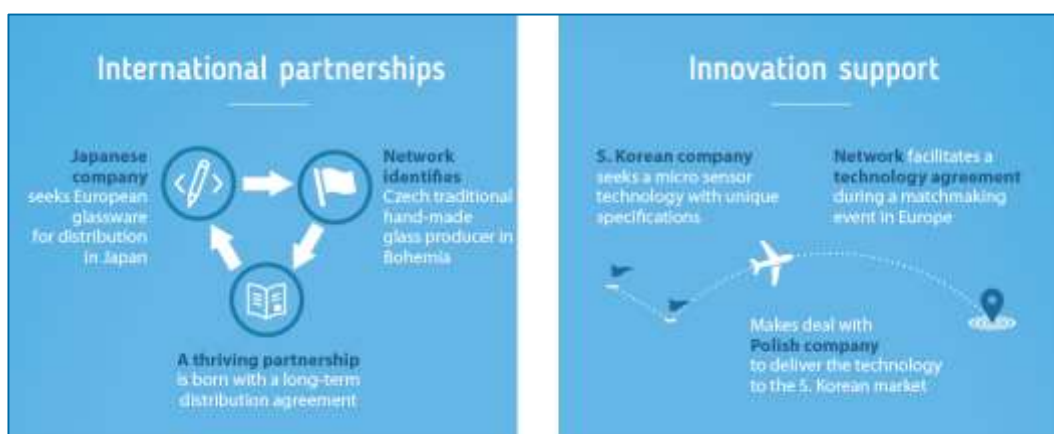
The Network's increasing presence in global target markets through its Business Cooperation Centres (BCCs) facilitates the entry into new markets for European SMEs.

### 8.1. Scope of Business Cooperation Centres' activities

The scope of BCC's participation to the Network is limited. The main focus of BCCs remains on business and technology brokerage activities between European and local SMEs. BCCs also carry out the following activities:

- Organise face-to-face meetings between European SMEs and local businesses, usually during matchmaking events at large national or regional fairs or dedicated company missions.
- Generate and disseminate business cooperation and technology offers or requests via the Partnership Opportunities Database (POD).
- Share information about national regulations, standards, certification requirements and other typical market intelligence with European Network partners and SMEs.

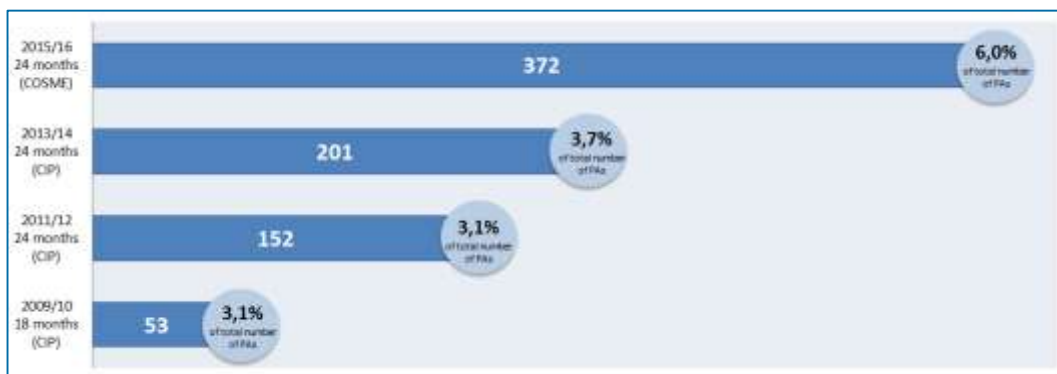
Figure 10: Examples of BCC contributions to deals between European and foreign companies



### 8.2. Performance and specific challenges

In 2015-2016, BCCs helped their clients sign 372 Partnership Agreements (PAs) with European SMEs, which represents 7% of the total number of PAs for the same period. The growing share of PAs (it was 3.7% in 2013-14), reflects both the increasing importance of those markets for European SMEs, as well as the increased integration of BCCs in the Network.

Figure 11: Evolution of the number of PAs between EU and foreign companies



To finance their Network activities, most BCCs receive funding from their own host structure. Some also obtain funding from regional or national institutions: policy makers in South Korea, Switzerland, Singapore, Norway, Israel, Taiwan or Russia, for example, have integrated the Network into their own SME internationalisation and innovation strategies. BCCs receiving regional or national financial support had the highest impact in 2015-16: the top 6 BCC consortia were in that situation.

Figure 12: Main achievements of the 10 best performing Business Cooperation Centres



It should be noted that BCCs submit annual targets for activities, i.e. organisation of business matchmaking events and the use of the Network's Partnership Opportunities Database. BCCs which remain inactive or repeatedly miss yearly targets lose their BCC status.

Following the 2016 performance assessment, 9 BCCs lost their status. Although the total number of countries covered increased, the number of BCCs dropped from 89 in 2015 to 80 by the end of 2016.

# 9. Main operational challenges and objectives

Building on these good results, the Enterprise Europe Network now looks ahead. Its main operational objectives are to continue improving the quality, the efficiency and the relevance of its services for European SMEs.

**A first key objective and challenge for the Network is to keep increasing the efficiency of services and their performance, i.e. their ability to lead to Achievements** which have a concrete, positive impact on client businesses – Advisory Services Outcomes (ASO) and Partnership Agreements (PA).

For **Advisory services**, the challenge is to provide clients with the services they need, simple or complex, while continuing to improve their efficiency (# of ASO per client receiving advisory services) and performance (# of ASOs by FTE). To achieve this, it should focus on: 1) optimising the service offering to ensure that resources are used to support clients with the highest potential to derive concrete benefits from the advice received; 2) continuing to improve the quality of the advice given; and 3) improving the follow-up.

In **Partnering services**, a specific goal is turning the overall efficiency (three meetings per client) of brokerage events (BE) and company missions (CM) into more PAs. The work done to improve the quality and efficiency of profiles in the Partnering Opportunities Database (POD), which is already delivering results (fewer profiles lead to more PAs) shows that the Network and EASME together can reach this goal. In line with what was done for the POD, EASME removed the number of clients brought to BE and CM as specific contractual target. This will allow Network partners to focus more on improving the efficiency of these activities (# of meetings/client) and its impact (# PAs).

For advisory and partnering services, **quality intake assessments** – the evaluation of clients' needs before providing a service – will play a crucial role. Further **deepening synergies with local and regional stakeholders** will also be essential to save resources while ensuring clients get the best answers to their questions. Finally, **expected and actual impact information** provided by clients who reach PAs or ASOs might help identify the services or processes yielding the highest actual impact on clients, thus allowing Network partners to re-allocate resources.

For the **SME feedback activities**, in cooperation with the European Commission, better informing SMEs on the results of their involvement – giving clients more 'feedback on their feedback' – would help Network partners convince more SMEs to provide their input by participating in open consultations and panels, while contributing to make European legislation SME-friendlier.

**A second key objective is to keep improving the Network's service-offering to maintain its relevance** and be able to respond to the evolving needs of SMEs and companies in general. Network partners will need to invest the resources freed through efficiency gains to meet this challenge. Developing its **services to innovative SMEs** will be a first line of action. This will involve further expanding the offer of EIMC services – notably by addressing more 'traditional' companies such as crafts companies – while continuing to

provide efficient KAM services. It will also mean that high-impact "phase 3" services<sup>36</sup> need to be created, in order to support clients in the commercialisation phase of their SME Instrument projects.

Improving existing services and developing new, high-quality and complex services will require **investing in training on new skills**. In that context, a key new element to be developed during 2017 is an Enterprise Europe Network eLearning platform, to deliver certain learning opportunities in a more effective way.

With the input of the Network, upgrading the Network's IT platform will support efforts to increase the efficiency and impact of services, particularly partnering services.

Helping more clients to access **financing adapted to their needs** will also be crucial. Setting up services for scale-up companies in collaboration with local stakeholders will be another key line of action.

Overall, however, the Network will need to **continuously actively promote its diverse service offering to its existing and potential clients**. This includes listening to their needs, analysing its impact and adjusting to ensure that it remains relevant. It also means investing time and effort in communication: ensuring a consistent and coherent narrative across the Network supported by a uniform visual identity and compelling stories of SME success with the Network's added value.

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36 SEE PRESENTATION OF THE SME INSTRUMENT AVAILABLE ONLINE [HERE](#).

# Annexes

## Annex 1: Success Stories published on the Network website in 2015-16

Story	Country(ies) involved	Link to story
<b>2016</b>		
Medins and Seastar Survey: Bridging over new waters to boost business growth	Sweden, UK	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
Providing cutting-edge technology for neuroscience	Poland, UK	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
Life sciences SME wins EU funding for breakthrough medical testing	UK	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
Spanish SME plugs into EU funding for 'smart' electricity grids	Spain	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
Blue Abyss: Diving into the future	UK	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
Emulsar: The 'secret ingredient' to tackle malnutrition	France	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
Intale: A digital assistant for small shop owners	Greece	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
Training future astronauts with Swedish triathlon technology	Italy, Sweden	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
BalBok: Hunting hazardous waste in Bulgaria	Bulgaria	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>2015</b>		
Plunging into new markets	Iceland, Sweden	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
Training tomorrow's top managers	UK Czech Republic	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
Reaching new heights in wireless innovation	France, Italy	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
Silver linings in the business cloud	Germany Greece, Poland	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
Here comes the sun	UK, Netherlands	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
Swimming in new waters	France, Spain	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
A real-life toy story	Germany, Slovenia	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
A clean-energy connection	Spain, UK	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
Changing the climate for business	Greece, Italy	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
Exporting clean technology	Lithuania, Sweden	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
Laying strong foundations for growth	Germany, Poland	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
Building an eco-friendly future	Hungary Romania	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>
Successful expansion for Swedish SME	Bulgaria Sweden	<a href="#">Learn more...</a>

## Annex 2: Network Client satisfaction 2015-2016 – main results per country

Source: Answers from 2,113 clients who received Network services in 2015-2016 to the *Client Satisfaction Survey 2017*<sup>37</sup>. This was the first time clients answer the Network's satisfaction survey directly. Previous surveys had been done by Network partners who sent the answers collected from their clients to EASME.

Country	# Responses	Overall satisfaction	Would recommend Network services
Albania	3	67%	100%
Armenia	3	100%	100%
Austria	2	50%	100%
Belgium	36	76%	86%
Bulgaria	53	93%	94%
Croatia	17	82%	82%
Cyprus	4	100%	75%
Czech Republic	103	97%	97%
Denmark	41	100%	100%
Estonia	5	100%	100%
Finland	110	78%	92%
France	189	93%	98%
Germany	338	83%	94%
Greece <sup>38</sup>	0	n/a	n/a
Hungary	18	100%	100%
Iceland <sup>39</sup>	0	n/a	n/a
Ireland	12	92%	100%
Italy	199	87%	93%
Latvia	9	87%	100%
Lithuania	29	66%	88%
Luxembourg	1	100%	n/a
Macedonia,	23	96%	100%
Malta	46	73%	89%
Moldova	2	100%	100%
Montenegro	18	100%	100%
Netherlands	10	100%	100%
Norway	1	100%	100%
Poland	204	94%	97%
Portugal	257	61%	84%
Romania	145	95%	97%
Serbia	14	100%	100%
Slovakia	49	85%	89%
Slovenia	36	94%	100%
Spain	57	76%	90%
Sweden	9	100%	89%
Turkey	38	94%	97%
UK	22	59%	77%
<b>Network</b>	<b>2113</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>93%</b>

37 SURVEY CARRIED OUT WITH EU SURVEY TOOL

38 NO GREEK CLIENT ANSWERED THE QUESTIONNAIRE

39 DUE TO AN IT ISSUE, ICELAND WAS NOT AVAILABLE IN THE LIST OF COUNTRIES

## Annex 3: Thematic Groups of the Enterprise Europe Network

List of Thematic Groups
Access to finance
Circular economy
Clusters
Innovation
Intellectual Property
Internationalisation of SMEs to third countries outside the EU/EEA
Network IT Platform
Participation of SMEs in EU research programmes, collaboration with NCPs
Partnership process and POD
Public procurement
Scale up companies
Single Market regulation & legislation and standards
SME Feedback coordinator
Taxation
Initiatives undertaken in 2016 within TGs:
TG Access to finance: Mapping of financial intermediaries and search for relevant Business to Investors matchmaking events
TG Clusters: Task force "Best practice"
TG Research: Profile Promotion Week with 170 EOIs so far
TG Innovation: integrated workshop and training offer at 2017 Annual Conference
TG Internationalisation: training on intercultural cooperation and cooperation with BCCs
TG PP/POD: 4 focus groups in order to improve the entire client journey

## Annex 4: Associate Members of the Enterprise Europe Network

Organisation		Countries and regions covered
EUROCHAMBRES	EUROCHAMBRES	EU (Belgium)
Deutscher Sparkassen- und Giroverband	DSGV	Germany
Unioncamere	Unioncamere	Italy
European Exhibition Industry Alliance	EEIA	EU (Belgium)
European IPR Helpdesk	European IPR Helpdesk	Luxembourg
China IPR SME Helpdesk	China HD	Beijing
Latin America IPR SME helpdesk	LA IPR SME HD	EU (Belgium)
South-east Asia IPR SME helpdesk	South-East Asia IPR SME Helpdesk	Vietnam
European Association of Development Agencies	EURADA	EU (Belgium)
EUREKA Secretariat	EUREKA	EU (Belgium)
Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Services and Navigation of Spain	CCE	Spain
CCI France	CCI France	France
IMP <sup>3</sup> rove - European Innovation Management Academy EWIV	IMP <sup>3</sup> rove Academy	Germany
European Agency for Safety and Health at Work	EU-OSHA	EU (Spain)
ANIMA Investment Network	ANIMA	France (EU-Med)
European Chemicals Agency	ECHA	EU (Finland)
European Business and Innovation Centre Network	EBN	EU (Belgium)
European Association for SME Transfer	Transeo	EU (Belgium)



Annex 5: Composition of the Network in 2015

Figure 13: Network partners by type of organisation in December 2015

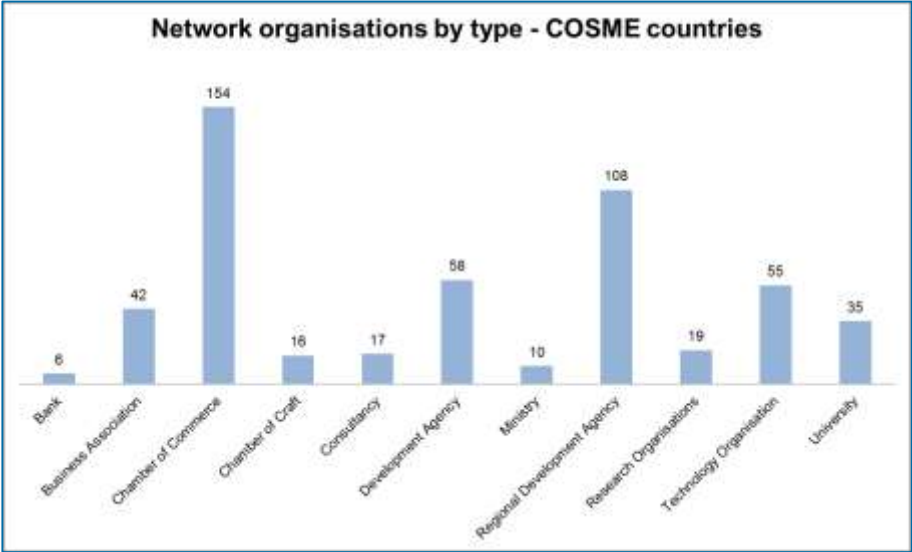
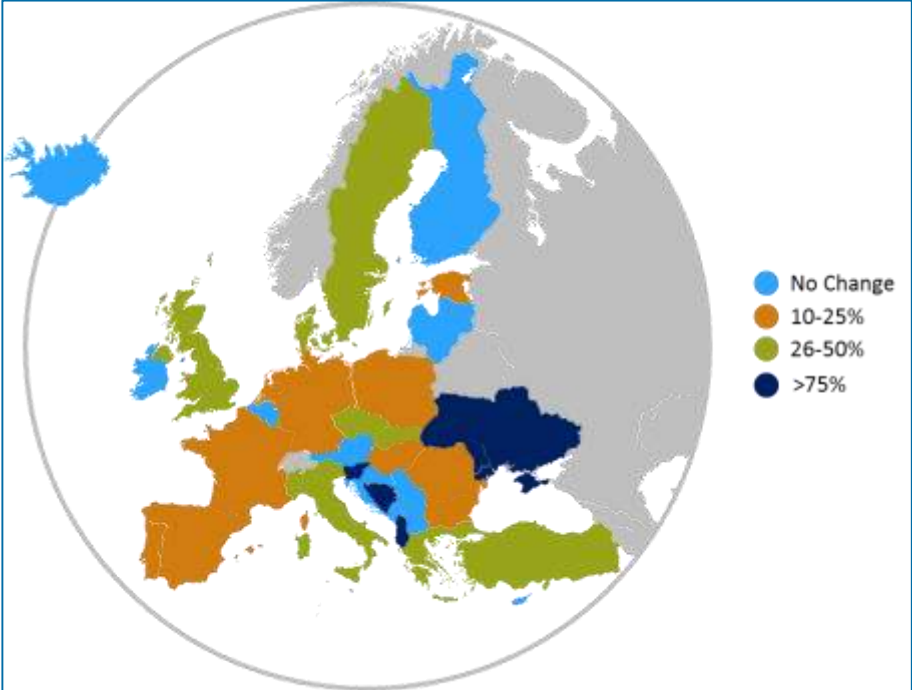


Figure 14: Partners new to the Network in 2015: EU28 and COSME countries



## Annex 6: Achievements – first questionnaire on expected impact

I. Market improvement	
1.	Has the support of the Network contributed to improving the position of your company on the market? <i>Support actions by the Network in this context include:</i> a. <i>Helping clients reach new markets or customers, or</i> b. <i>Helping clients bring new or improved products or services to the market; or</i> c. <i>Helping clients enhance internal business processes (or create new ones).</i>
2.	Has the support of the Network contributed to increasing your company's market share?
3.	Has the support of the Network contributed to increasing your company's turnover?
II. Cost savings	
4.	Did the support of the Network contributed to reducing your production costs (cost of material, energy or labour inputs) linked to a product or service?
5.	Have the cost savings helped your company become more competitive?
6.	Has your company improved its ability to increase the added value associated with its products/services?
7.	Has your company improved its ability to enter into new markets?
8.	Has your company improved its ability to consolidate its position on its current markets?
III. Job creation or maintenance	
9.	Has the support of the Network contributed to create jobs in your company?
10.	Has the support of the Network contributed to maintain/preserve jobs in your company?
IV. Quality improvement	
11.	Has the support of the Network had a positive impact on your company in terms of quality of goods and services?
12.	Has the support of the Network had a positive impact on your company in terms of satisfaction of clients or business partners?
13.	Has the support of the Network had a positive impact on your company in terms of improvement of its environmental record, working conditions, or health and safety standards?
V. Innovation	
14.	Has the support of the Network enabled your company to improve its competitiveness or sustainability by means of embracing an innovation or an innovative technology or process?
15.	Has the support of the Network enabled your company to improve its competitiveness or sustainability by improving its innovation strategy or innovation (management) capacities?

## Annex 7: PES Data Items: 2015-2016 targets and results (COSME countries)

		Actuals	Targets	% achieved
<b>Advice, support and information activities</b>	DI01 # Regional/local events organised	8,527	7,313	<b>117%</b>
	DI02 # Participants in regional/local events	302,900	226,902	<b>133%</b>
	DI03 # SMEs/clients receiving advisory support	102,866	107,164	<b>96%</b>
<b>Cross-border partnering activities for business cooperation, technology transfer, innovation and research</b>	DI04 # Brokerage Events & Company Missions organised	5,984	3,301	<b>181%</b>
	DI05 # SMEs/clients in brokerage events/company missions	45,963	30,524	<b>151%</b>
	DI06 # Meetings at brokerage events/company missions	156,421	87,803	<b>178%</b>
	DI07 # Partnership profiles produced	12,615	23,160	54%
	DI08 # Expression of interests received	40,984	38,069	<b>108%</b>
	DI09 # Expression of interests made	43,770	46,766	<b>94%</b>
<b>SME feedback activities</b>	DI10 # Clients in feed-back related actions	18,462	17,590	<b>105%</b>
<b>Achievements</b>	DI12 # Achievements	<b>8,418</b>	9,352	<b>90%</b>
	nDI12 - PA	<b>5,101</b>	5,075	<b>101%</b>
	nDI12 - ASO	<b>3,317</b>	4,277	<b>78%</b>
<b>Promotion of the Network's services and communication activities</b>	DI13 # SMEs/clients using digital services provided by the Network	31,764,342	8,150,327	<b>390%</b>
<b>Network building and reinforcing the Network</b>	DI14 # Cooperation with local stakeholders	6,020	4,639	<b>130%</b>
	DI15 # Answered enquiries from Network partners	26,220	29,798	88%
	DI16 # Active contributions to Network activities	13,271	9,792	<b>136%</b>

## Annex 8: Network KPRs

**KPRs:** KPRs are ratios based on PES figures. They support the focus on efficiency performance and outcomes by allowing a better appreciation of the efficiency and performance of activities.

There are two types of KPRs: **Performance Ratios** and **Efficiency Ratios** which can be used to analyse respectively the performance and the efficiency of activities.

KPR # & type	KPR name	Definition
<b>1. Advice, support and information activities</b>		
<i>KPR 1</i> Efficiency Ratio	<i>Average outcome (ASOs) per client receiving advisory service</i>	Achievements ASOs (DI12) / SMEs/clients receiving individual advisory support (DI03)
<i>KPR 2</i> Performance ratio	<i>Average outcome (ASOs) per full-time equivalent (FTE)</i>	Achievements ASOs (DI12) / Number of FTE involved in Network activities in reporting period
<b>2. Cross-border partnering activities for business cooperation, technology transfer, innovation and research</b>		
<i>KPR 3</i> Performance ratio	<i>Average outcome (PAs) per full-time equivalent (FTE)</i>	Achievements PAs (DI12) / Number of FTE involved in Network activities in reporting period.
<i>KPR 4</i> Efficiency Ratio	<i>Average number of meetings per BE/CM client</i>	Meetings at BE/CM (DI06)/ SMEs/clients in BE/CM (DI05)
<i>KPR 5</i> Efficiency Ratio	<i>Average outcome (PAs) per BE&amp;CM client</i>	Achievements PAs (DI12) / SMEs/clients in BE/CM (DI05) <b>Only PAs coming from BE&amp;CM</b>
<i>KPR 6</i> Efficiency Ratio	<i>Average number of Expressions of Interest (Eoi) per Profile</i>	Eoi received (DI08)/ Partnership profiles produced (DI07)
<i>KPR 7</i> Efficiency Ratio	<i>Average outcome (PAs) per Expression of interest made</i>	Achievements PAs (DI12) / Eoi made (DI09) <b>Only PAs coming from Eoi made</b>
<i>KPR 8</i> Efficiency Ratio	<i>Average outcome (PAs) per Profile produced</i>	Achievements PAs (DI12)/ Profile produced (DI07) <b>Only PAs coming from POD profiles</b>

## Annex 9: Achieved Network efficiency ratios (KPR 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 8)

Some efficiency ratios have been expressed in percentages for easier reading.

KPRs 1, 5 and 6 are based on PES Data Items figures, and consortia can compare the target KPRs, which they can derive from the PES Data Items figures in their work programmes to the KPRs achieved and to the Network average.

KPR 5, 7 and 8 are calculated using the information on the source of the PAs registered by Network partners in the Achievement's database. Consortia do not set specific targets for the source of their PAs in their work programmes but can compare their achieved figures to the Network average.

The efficiency ratios should be analysed taking into account the outcomes of each activity. "Ideal" KPRs can vary between regions, countries and sectors. The objective is to aim to have the leanest possible processes, avoiding e.g. useless meetings at BE/CM or low-quality POD profiles who consume resources without a good probability of leading to a PA.

For IT-technical reasons, KPR7 results are not available and figures by country/consortium/organisation are not yet available.

KPR #	KPR name	Achieved 2015-2016
<b>1. Advice, support and information activities</b>		
<i>KPR 1</i> <i>Efficiency Ratio</i>	<i>Average outcome (ASOs) per client receiving advisory service</i>	<b>3.2%</b>
<b>2. Cross-border partnering activities for business cooperation, technology transfer, innovation and research</b>		
<i>KPR 4</i> <i>Efficiency Ratio</i>	<i>Average number of meetings per BE/CM client</i>	<b>3.4</b>
<i>KPR 5</i> <i>Efficiency Ratio</i>	<i>Average outcome (PAs) per BE&amp;CM client</i>	<b>4.7%</b>
<i>KPR 6</i> <i>Efficiency Ratio</i>	<i>Average number of Expressions of Interest (Eoi) per Profile</i>	<b>2.8</b>
<i>KPR 7</i> <i>Efficiency Ratio</i>	<i>Average outcome (PAs) per Expression of interest made</i>	N/A
<i>KPR 8</i> <i>Efficiency Ratio</i>	<i>Average outcome (PAs) per Profile produced</i>	<b>13.8%</b>

## Annex 10: Achieved performance indicators by country (KPR 2 and KPR 3)

The actual number of FTE invested in Network activities is calculated using the target number of FTEs planned in the work programme, multiplied by the percentage of budget actually used (most costs are personnel costs).

COUNTRY	PA	ASO	Achievements	KPR 2 PA/FTE	KPR 3 ASO/FTE	Achievements /FTE	Number of actual FTE
Albania	1	0	1	0	0	0	8
Armenia	13	0	13	7	0	7	2
Austria	75	40	115	3	1	5	23
Belgium	117	50	167	6	2	9	19
Bosnia and Herzegovina	7	0	7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bulgaria	166	150	316	5	4	10	31
Croatia	61	20	81	5	2	6	14
Cyprus	15	7	22	3	1	4	6
Czech Republic	159	87	246	5	2	7	34
Denmark	146	12	158	15	1	17	10
Estonia	26	26	52	5	4	9	6
Finland	37	38	75	4	4	8	10
France	323	372	695	3	3	7	95
Germany	528	643	1,171	4	3	8	145
Greece	184	78	262	5	3	8	35
Hungary	113	175	288	3	2	7	42
Iceland	17	4	21	6	3	7	3
Ireland	27	10	37	6	2	8	5
Italy	412	208	620	4	2	5	115
Latvia	61	20	81	5	2	7	12
Lithuania	73	15	88	5	0	6	15
Luxembourg	19	2	21	3	0	3	7
Macedonia, The former Yugoslav Republic of	27	13	40	3	1	4	9
Malta	22	16	38	6	1	10	4
Moldova	8	1	9	5	1	5	2
Montenegro	15	0	15	4	0	4	4
Netherlands	205	9	214	11	1	11	19
Poland	291	167	458	2	1	4	128
Portugal	92	23	115	3	1	4	28
Romania	180	28	208	3	1	4	57
Serbia	63	3	66	7	1	7	9
Slovakia	56	16	72	5	1	7	10
Slovenia	110	27	137	9	2	11	13
Spain	555	316	871	5	3	8	105
Sweden	128	134	262	5	3	10	26
Turkey	174	139	313	2	1	4	72
United Kingdom	595	468	1,063	5	3	9	113
<b>Network</b>	<b>5,101</b>	<b>3,317</b>	<b>8,418</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1,235</b>

## Annex 11: Learning and Development Strategy (2015)

Annual timeline of implementation sequence of activities:

