

EU SME Instrument: first 155 winners of grants announced

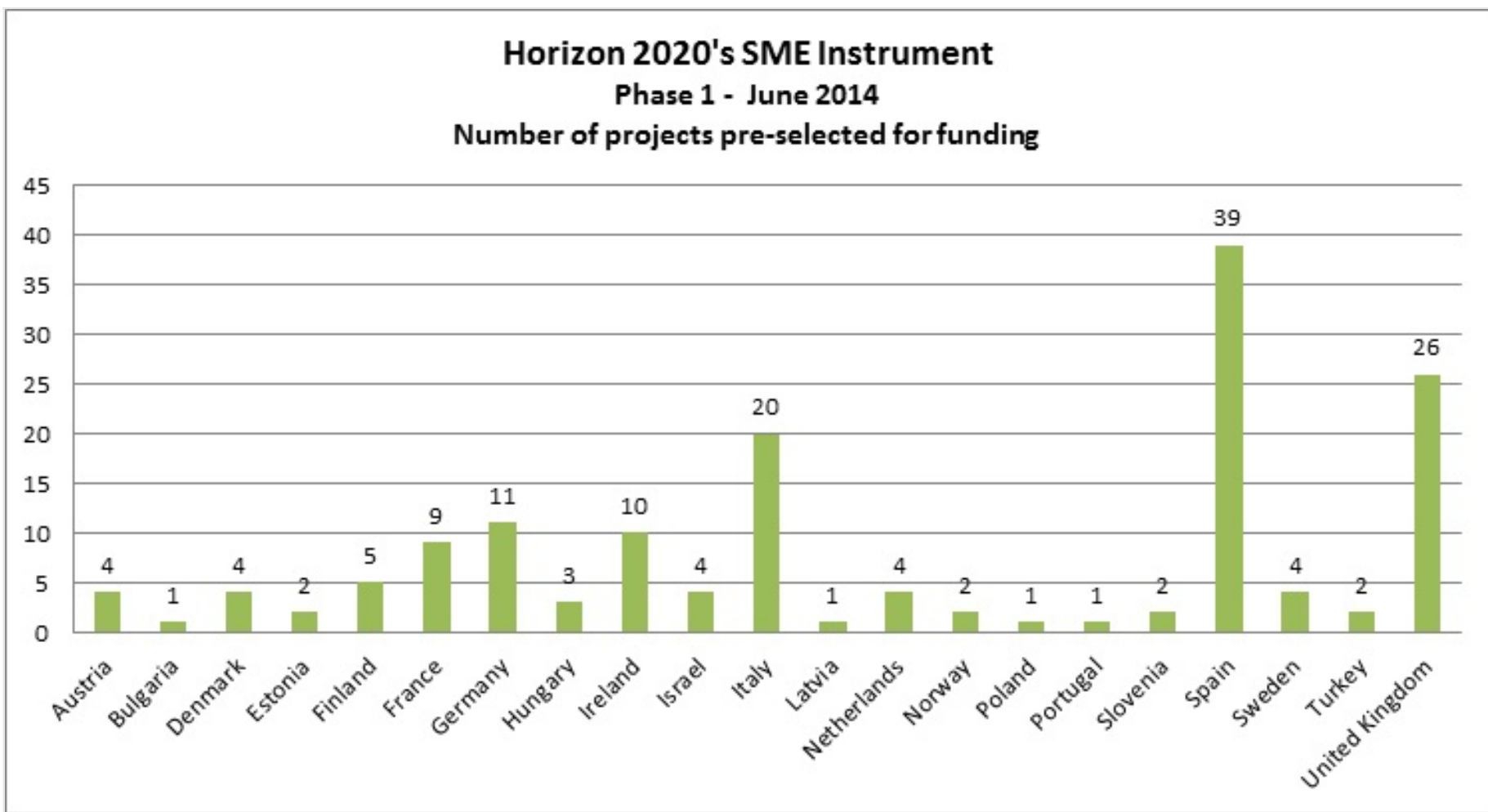
European Commission

Press release

Brussels, 18 September 2014

EU SME Instrument: first 155 winners of grants announced

The European Commission has today published a [list](#) of the 155 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that will be first to benefit from its new €3 billion SME Instrument. 155 SMEs from 21 countries will each receive €50,000 to finance feasibility studies for their projects, and they can also benefit from up to three days of business coaching. After that, their projects may be considered for further financial support from the Commission worth up to €2.5 million.



Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, said:
"Innovative SMEs will help get the European economy back on track, creating lasting employment and great products and services. This new instrument is aimed at projects that are truly innovative, with a strong business opportunity and a solid concept to bring them to the market."

The SME instrument was launched under Horizon 2020, the EU's new €80 billion research funding programme, to help innovative small firms get innovative projects from the lab to the market. SMEs from EU Member States or countries associated to Horizon 2020 can apply.

The response to the first round of selection was remarkable, with 2662 proposals from the countries

participating in Horizon 2020 ([IP/14/876](#)). Evaluation by independent experts showed that 317 of the proposals met the evaluation standard. Of those, 155, or 49%, have been selected for funding.

The selected SMEs are in a good position to succeed in the second phase of the programme, in which applicants can receive between €0.5 and 2.5 million to finance innovation activities such as demonstration, testing, piloting, scaling up, and miniaturisation. The beneficiaries will also develop their business plan.

Around 645 projects in total should be funded in 2014. This number will rise to 670 in 2015. The call for proposals is constantly open and the next deadlines for evaluation are 24 September and 17 December 2014 for Phase 1, and 9 October and 17 December 2014 for Phase 2.

Background

With a budget of nearly €80 billion over seven years, Horizon 2020 is the biggest ever EU research and innovation programme and foresees record funding for SMEs. At least 20%, or nearly €9 billion from Horizon 2020's 'leadership in industrial technologies' and 'societal challenge' pillars, is expected to benefit SMEs directly in the form of grants, including via the SME Instrument.

Through the SME Instrument, the European Union wants to finance the most innovative small companies with a high growth potential. The Instrument is worth around €3 billion over seven years and offers fast and simple grants for business innovation feasibility studies (Phase 1) and demonstration projects (Phase 2). Investment-mature concepts can in addition benefit from business development advice and other support services (Phase 3). The application process is easy but only the very best projects can expect to receive funding. Eligible [topics](#) are set out in the Horizon 2020 Work Programme on 'Innovation in SMEs'.

In addition, the European Commission and European Investment Bank Group are joining forces to encourage banks and other financial intermediaries to lend or provide equity to innovation-driven companies through InnovFin – EU Finance for Innovators (see [IP/14/670](#)). Other companies can find access to finance under COSME (see [IP/14/851](#)).

For more information

[List and map of SME Instrument beneficiaries](#)

[SME Instrument](#)

[Apply for SME Instrument funding](#)

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