

# Guidelines for Applicants 27<sup>th</sup> Call for Proposals

*Deadline: 31 March 2021*

[www.ira-sme.net](http://www.ira-sme.net)

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## Guidelines for Applicants – Call for Proposals

<b>1</b>	<b>Background and Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Basic Requirements</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1	Project Requirements	2
2.2	General Project Conditions	3
2.3	Project Duration	4
<b>3</b>	<b>Timeline 27<sup>th</sup> IraSME Call</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Application Procedure</b>	<b>4</b>
4.1	Project Proposal	4
4.1.1	Proposal Submission – Transnational Level	4
4.2.2	Proposal Submission – National/Regional Level	5
4.2	Eligibility Criteria	5
4.3	Evaluation	5
4.4	Agreements and Contracts	5
4.4.1	Consortium Agreement	5
4.4.2	Funding Agreement	6
<b>5</b>	<b>Funding Procedures</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Funding Agencies</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Definitions</b>	<b>6</b>

## 1 Background and Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide interested parties with information on the 27<sup>th</sup> IraSME call for R&D proposals. It is targeted at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and research and technology organisations (RTOs) which jointly conduct international research, technology, development and innovation (RTDI) projects.

The main objective of IraSME is to strengthen the competitive capacity of SMEs by:

- increasing collaboration between SMEs from different countries,
- increasing cooperation between SMEs and RTOs,
- increasing cooperative and competitive capabilities of SMEs to work in international R&D networks,
- supporting them in developing new products, processes or technical services that exceed the existing state of the art and have good market opportunities by lowering the economical risks.

IraSME is a follow-up initiative of a former ERA-NET by ministries and funding agencies and one of the few to continue its work even after EU-funding had expired. The network coordination is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) and carried out by AiF Projekt GmbH, a project management agency of BMWi which is based in Berlin (Germany).

The following regions/countries are participating in the 27<sup>th</sup> IraSME call: Alberta (Canada), Austria, Brazil, Flanders (Belgium), Germany, Luxembourg, Russia, Turkey, and Wallonia (Belgium). For more detailed information on IraSME member countries and regions, please refer to the following website: [www.ira-sme.net/countries-regions](http://www.ira-sme.net/countries-regions).

Applicants from participating countries/regions can be funded according to the rules of the respective regional/national funding programmes. Applicants from other countries/regions are welcome to participate, although they will have to secure the financial means for their part on their own.

## 2 Basic Requirements

### 2.1 Project Requirements

In addition to the basic IraSME requirements national or regional rules may apply.

They are described in the programme portraits on the IraSME website ([www.ira-sme.net](http://www.ira-sme.net)). Please check the programme portraits relevant for your project and contact your local funding agency for further information and consultation.

Projects must be innovative and must aim at either developing new or to significantly improve existing products, processes or technical services that in their parameters exceed the existing state

of the art. All projects must have significant technical risks. The outcome of the project must be clearly defined and demonstrate real market potential. At least one of these three statements must apply: Without public funding, eligible projects can a) not be carried out at all, b) only be carried out in a reduced form, or c) be carried out only with significant delay.

## **2.2 General Project Conditions**

- At least two SMEs from two different countries/regions (at least one SME in each country/region).
- Participation of RTOs is possible but not mandatory.
- Balanced participation of all partners in the project.
- All participating SMEs need to share in the economic results of the project.
- Every participant has a defined role in the project (subproject) that a) contains research and development tasks with significant technical risks, b) is distinguishable from the other subprojects (no redundancy), and c) is necessary for the project success.
- At least 50% of the work packages in the whole project have to be carried out by companies.
- Only use person-months (PM) in order to specify work packages.
- Start date of the project should be approximately 6 months after call deadline.
- Regional / national rules will prevail; see overview of funding schemes for details.

### **! Attention: To exemplify, some regional/national rules are listed here:**

- Alberta can currently only support cooperation with industry partners from EU states, which means that projects between Alberta and Brazil, Russia and/or Turkey are not fundable unless there is at least one additional EU industry partner involved as well.
- Projects that involve partners from Alberta have a maximum project duration of 24 months.
- Projects that involve partners from Austria need at least 3 companies of which at least 2 have to be SMEs in IraSME countries of which at least one has to be from Austria.
- Austrian applicants need to hand in a mandatory abstract by 3 March 2021 at the latest; full proposal submission is possible until 31 March 2021.
- In Russia only small companies with up to 100 employees (no RTOs) are eligible for funding.
- RTOs can participate if at least one SME from their country / region is part of the consortium and may be funded directly or treated as subcontractors depending on the applicable national / regional rules.
- Participation of RTOs is preferred for applications from Turkey.

- Other partners (large companies, other SMEs, RTOs, etc.) from other countries which do not take part in this call or partners from the participating countries/regions that can not be funded in the respective national/regional programmes may be part of the project consortium if their contribution is essential to reach the project goals. However, funding will usually not be available for them.
- A limited amount of work packages may be outsourced to subcontractors in German ZIM projects.
- Cooperation agreements need to have a German working translation for the German ZIM applicants.

### **2.3 Project Duration**

The duration of projects can be between 12 and 36 months according to national rules (please see the overview of funding schemes published on the [IraSME website](#)). A project start date not earlier than six months after the call deadline is highly recommended in order to avoid rescheduling during the evaluation.

## **3 Timeline 27<sup>th</sup> IraSME Call**

- 25 November 2020: Joint call announcement – opening of the call.  
Documents available on the IraSME website: [www.ira-sme.net/current-call](http://www.ira-sme.net/current-call)
- 17 February 2020: Last opportunity to get qualified nonbinding feedback on your project idea (optional and depending on the national/regional agencies).
- 31 March 2021: Deadline for proposals
- 12 May 2021: Communication of the results of the eligibility check by e-mail to project coordinator in case the eligibility check is negative. (Project application does not fulfil the minimum requirements and will not be evaluated)
- 21 July 2021: Communication of funding decisions (by e-mail to project coordinator). Signing of consortium agreement and start/continue funding negotiations, according to the respective regional/national rules.

## **4 Application Procedure**

### **4.1 Project Proposal**

#### **4.1.1 Proposal Submission – Transnational Level**

The project application (Proposal Application Form) must be signed by each partner and submitted via e-mail to [info@ira-sme.net](mailto:info@ira-sme.net) by the project coordinator before the deadline of the 27<sup>th</sup> Call (31 March 2021).

The template “Proposal Application Form” is mandatory and available for download on the [IraSME website](#). All sections have to be filled in including signature(s) on all LOIs. The application language for this form is English.

In addition to the proposal application form the coordinator must submit a draft consortium agreement (unsigned!) in PDF format electronically.

#### **4.2.2 Proposal Submission – National/Regional Level**

At the same time, national/regional applications have to be sent to the national/regional funding agencies. An overview of the funding schemes and contact details of funding agencies is available on the IraSME website: [www.ira-sme.net/countries-regions](http://www.ira-sme.net/countries-regions).

#### **4.2 Eligibility Criteria**

- Proposal must be signed by all partners and submitted electronically.
- Draft consortium agreement (unsigned).
- National/regional requirements for participation fulfilled (please see overview of funding schemes, programme portraits, and please contact your local agency).
- Project duration: 12 - 36 months.

#### **4.3 Evaluation**

Every proposal will be evaluated by the respective funding agencies involved following the respective national/regional evaluation criteria. A project will be funded if all funding agencies involved reach a positive evaluation result. The results of the evaluation will be communicated to the project coordinator.

#### **4.4 Agreements and Contracts**

##### **4.4.1 Consortium Agreement**

A Consortium Agreement between all project partners is mandatory. It regulates:

- identity of the partners,
- contract period,
- IPR ownership, IPR use and exploitation of the project results,
- subcontracting to third parties,
- contributions of each partner to the project,
- confidentiality notes and freedom of publications rights,
- the duty for every partner to contribute to a final report on the overall project (to be submitted to their respective funding agencies according to the applicable rules).

The consortium agreement is to be signed after the funding decision has been communicated and before applicants sign their contracts with the respective funding agencies. An example of a consortium agreement is not provided. Each consortium drafts their own cooperation agreement covering all of the above mentioned issues. Please contact your respective national/regional agency for advice.

#### **4.4.2 Funding Agreement**

Matters related to funding will be handled according to the respective national/regional agencies' rules. The complete set of signatures on the consortium agreement is a prerequisite for funding.

## **5 Funding Procedures**

Funding will be provided to each partner by their corresponding national/regional funding agency according to its respective rules (please see programme portraits for an overview).

Projects will be monitored according to the rules of the respective country/region. Hence, technical as well as financial reporting will be required according to national/regional rules as well.

Arrangements will be made during the funding negotiation process. The project coordinator will be required, in addition, to deliver a final report on the overall project, which will be signed by all members of the consortium.

## **6 Funding Agencies**

For additional information and support it is strongly recommended to contact the respective regional/national agencies before submitting a project proposal. Please refer to the list of regional/national contacts on [www.ira-sme.net](http://www.ira-sme.net).

## **7 Definitions**

- **Consortium Agreement:** A contract between all project partners regulating the terms of their cooperation, including the handling of IPR and the dissemination plan.
- **Funding agencies:** Agencies, ministries or other administrative bodies which manage the relevant funding programme(s) in the respective country/region.
- **Funding agreement:** Agreement between the funding agency and the funded project partner(s) (applicants) in the respective country/region.
- **IPR:** Intellectual property rights.
- **Project coordinator:** One of the project partners. The coordinator submits the proposal, leads the project and reports on progress.
- **Project partners:** All entities involved in a project consortium.

- **Proposal:** A project description plus annexes (letters of intent of all project partners; draft consortium agreement) submitted by the project coordinator.
- **RTDI:** Research, Technology, Development and Innovation.
- **RTO:** Research and Technology Organisation. An organisation which conducts research or development as a main activity (e.g. university, higher education institute, research institute, technology centre, etc.)
- **SME:** Small and medium-sized enterprises. See the [definition](#) of the European Commission and use the regulations of your regional/national funding agency.
- **Transnational project:** A project that includes partners from at least two different countries.