



Public consultation on a possible successor to the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP)

Introduction

The Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Craft Trade and Agriculture of Milan is an independent public body that supports and promotes the general interests of Milanese companies. Its main aim is to foster and sustain the development of local enterprises, to promote the development of the local economical systems, and to regulate the market. Moreover it focuses on the themes of innovation, technology transfer and R&D funding, dealing with the promotion of innovation and the competitiveness of the entrepreneurial system. The Chamber works to promote the creation of a suitable environment for the development of innovative processes and of an entrepreneurial culture for innovation, to foster the design and implementation of new services in support of enterprises' innovation, also in collaboration with research centres.

Thanks to its activity of information, support, promotion and assistance, the network of the Chambers of Commerce of the Lombardy Region is the main reference point for all the productive infrastructure of the territory. In this framework of activities in SME support, the Chamber is member of several European Network, such as Enterprise Europe Network, International Network for SMEs (INSME), Association for Technology Implementation in Europe (TAFTIE), International Association of Science Park (IASP), European Council of Bioregions (CEBR).

As a public body devoted to local SMEs, the Chamber of Commerce answers to this public consultation on a possible successor to the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, in the perspective of supporting the objectives stated in the Europa 2020¹ strategy for competitive, sustainable and secure growth.

The work in close contact, day by day, with the enterprises of this territory showed the difficulties that enterprises have in the collaboration with research centres and public entities providing services for

¹ COM(2010) 2020 final



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enterprise innovation and competitiveness. A research² carried out in our territory reveals that only 9% of enterprises³ uses innovation as strategic value. According to this, the Chamber of Commerce intends to bring out the SMEs demand of innovation and to help them fulfil their quest.

The small and medium size enterprises in the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme

The SMEs – the 99% of all European enterprises – are the backbone of the European industrial system, and they need to have all the possible support and attention through a coherent public industrial policy at EU, national and regional level. Under this framework, it is necessary to consider the weaknesses and barriers hampering enterprises from acceding to European funding. Main points to strengthen are:

- * coordination between European, national and local actors and lack of clear role division;
- * coordination between DGs dealing with research, innovation, and SMEs;
- * simplification of funding programmes;
- * attention for non technological innovation;
- * attention for new business models;
- * European Investment Bank tools to finance innovation;
- * European Patents;
- * overcoming barriers obstructing cooperation in the European space.

As Enterprise Europe Network partner, the Chamber of Commerce focuses on the conditions allowing the enterprises to operate in an open and competitive environment, with a particular attention to the support and the opportunities for innovation. Considering this background, and considering the sectors in which the CIP can actively act with its policies and tools, here below a series of suggestions that could be beneficial for the business and innovation of all European enterprises.

² Verganti R., 2010, Il trasferimento tecnologico nella prospettiva delle imprese, URL: <http://www.mi.camcom.it/upload/file/1293/646845/FILENAME/Verganti.pdf>

³ 6000 enterprises contacted and 409 feedback received



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Simplification

The SMEs participation to the research programmes has to be simplified in all possible ways: it is necessary to ease and reduce the administrative burden, as well as to facilitate their access to this programmes, fostering the collaboration between enterprises and research centres. Moreover it would be positive to have a unique administrative scheme for all the different programmes, for access, reporting and so on.

Coordination between CIP and 7thFP

The Competitiveness and Innovation Programme and the 7th Framework Programme could be more user friendly if they worked more closely. In particular they could use the partnership concept as facilitating tool in the project management.

Non technological innovation

It is important to sustain all the forms of innovation, above all the less taken into account such as the non technological approach (referred to marketing, organisation, design, communication, arts, fashion). Many recent studies have shown that the cultural and creative industries represent highly innovative companies with a great economic potential and are one of Europe's most dynamic sectors, contributing around 2.6 % to the EU GDP, with a high growth potential, and providing quality jobs to around 5 million people across EU-27. Furthermore, cultural contents play a crucial role in the deployment of the information society, fuelling investments in broadband infrastructures and services, in digital technologies, as well as in new consumer electronics and telecommunication devices⁴.

For these creative industries it is necessary not only to stimulate an innovation demand, but then they should be accompanied in their innovation path through an intermediary service in order to allow the matching between demand and offer of innovation services. This activity could be implemented by the Enterprise Europe Network thanks to its proximity to the local SMEs.

Collaborative Business Models and Open Innovation

A collaborative business model is built on the concepts of inviting its customers, its staff and its stakeholders to contribute to information, to share knowledge and participate in the creation of its products. This collaborative business model is possible in the present circumstances given the great

⁴ European Commission (2010), GREEN BOOK "Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries", Bruxelles.



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circulation of ideas and information made possible thanks to the information and communication technologies available by the majority of business people in the world. In this framework it is also possible to talk about open innovation, happening when the boundaries between a firm and its environment have become more permeable so that innovations can easily be transferred inward and outward. The central idea behind open innovation is that in a world of widely distributed knowledge, companies cannot afford to rely entirely on their own research, but should instead buy or license processes or inventions from other companies. These new forms of business models are the natural consequence of the technologies used daily by the people, so the only possible thing to do is to accompany this “natural” change in the business sector.

The non technological innovation of the creative enterprises could be fostered through the use of collaborative models as the ones identified in a study⁵ commissioned by the Chamber of Commerce. These models are:

- * *Broker*: the creative enterprises knowledge and expertise results from the immersion in a network of high intensity of knowledge;
- * *Mediator*: possibility for the creative industries to help their clients in identifying the more appropriate contact point to deal with a specific innovation project;
- * *Innovation team*: creation of a group of enterprises to collaborate and share information in order to create knowledge for the client;
- * *Platform of Development*: knowledge is produced by the user itself that is both developer and consumer of that knowledge.

Virtual exhibitions and B2B

Trade fairs are very important in Italy⁶, considering the lack of a country organisation and the resulting difficulties in enter foreign markets. Applying the information and communication technologies to the ways to do business – as B2B and trade fairs – implies the loosening of the concept of territory and geographical affiliation of enterprises.

The virtual B2B can link trade fairs from different sector in different places of Europe, allowing the enterprises to broaden the choice of clients/suppliers/partners to meet. For example it would be possible to link a matchmaking event in the food sector held in Milan, with a matchmaking event in the ICT sector held in Berlin, so that two enterprises can make a deal on the food traceability.

⁵ Verganti R., 2010, Il trasferimento tecnologico nella prospettiva delle imprese, URL: <http://www.mi.camcom.it/upload/file/1293/646845/FILENAME/Verganti.pdf>

⁶ 50% of Italian export comes from trade fairs.



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Through the tools of virtual B2B, 3D trade fairs and marketplaces is it possible to foster the business in less attractive sectors, as the cutting-edge research, thanks to the widening of the reachable audience.

Venture Contest

The Venture Contest is one of the innovative tools used to provide enterprises with new business models. It aims to foster and sustain the development of the more innovative enterprises, moreover it gives to the participants the opportunity to have international visibility towards potential investors and business partners. In this way is also possible to find a synergic strength between innovators, financial backers and political actors, creating competitive advantages for the system.

CONCLUSION

Why to ask to make new business model and their respective tools as key elements in the successor to the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme.

Politics and measures supporting SMEs should be adequate and in tune with the new enterprises business models. But in the last years these models changed, as well as the pushes and the procedures behind them.

The fundamental concept is the partnership realization between two entrepreneurs that decide to share a business and to develop a common project. If the importance of this moment will be recognised, it will be possible the development of other joint projects as the Precommercial Procurement.

As a member of the EEN, it will be extremely important to have the possibility to accompany enterprises during their growth path in the post 2013 period, having recognised these new forms of support within the successor of the CIP.

Innovation has not to be only seen under the traditional point of view, coming from the research and than applied to the SMEs: innovation comes from the enterprises and from the interaction between several actors. The Competitiveness and Innovation Programme should focus on the enterprises and on their innovation processes.