

The Eurostars Programme: Answering to the research ambitions of innovative small businesses

Over 300 applications representing more than 1000 applicants were received by 25 February 2010—the latest application deadline for the Eurostars SME joint research funding programme. More than 70% of applicants are small or medium enterprises (SMEs), the main target for Eurostars funding, proving that this SME-focussed programme indeed responds to this important sector's needs and expectations.

'Once again, the encouraging number of applications received for this February's deadline shows the real value of Eurostars as a means of raising research ambitions in research-intensive SMEs,' said Luuk Borg, the director of the EUREKA Secretariat in Brussels, where the Eurostars Programme is managed. 'The number of applications has further increased since last September's cut-off, which is really promising.'

The Eurostars Independent Evaluation Panel (IEP) announced early this year that 112 of the 279 applications of the September 2009 application deadline had surpassed the quality threshold. The National Funding Bodies funded 85 of these following a ranking list established by the IEP. National funding bodies from Eurostars-participating countries have provided 45 million euro in funding, with the European Community adding a further 15 million. National public funds allocated to projects have substantially increased in some participating countries, in order to better support the research excellence being carried out by SME-led project consortia under the auspices of Eurostars.

More than 70% of Eurostars participants are SMEs and more than 70% of public funding goes directly to these SMEs.

EUREKA is a pan-European network for market-oriented, industrial R&D

Created as an intergovernmental initiative in 1985, EUREKA aims to enhance European competitiveness through its support to businesses, research centres and universities who carry out pan-European projects to develop innovative products, processes and services.

Eurostars is a joint initiative between the EU and 32 participating countries¹, managed by EUREKA, and is open to applications in all technological areas. While assessment and evaluation are conducted centrally in Brussels by an independent panel of technical and business experts, project applicants benefit from the bespoke business advice and expertise offered by EUREKA's network of national project coordinators (NPCs) in each member country.

The strength of Eurostars lies in the commitment to funding from participating countries and the European Commission through its Seventh Framework Programme (FP7).

The next Eurostars application deadline is 30 September 2010.

More information: www.eurostars-eureka.eu

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