Invitation for expression of interest (EOI) for taking part in a pilot action to test a new innovation audit tool dedicated to SMEs

Terms of Reference

July 30, Udine

Terms of Reference (TOR) - Invitation for expression of interest (EOI) for taking part in a pilot action to test a new innovation audit tool dedicated to SMEs

<u>Introduction</u>

<u>DepoSIt</u> is a project funded by the European Horizon 2020 program, devoted to research and innovation extensive empowerment in Europe.

DepoSIt brings together six innovation organizations of six EU countries with the aim to develop, test and validate a newly developed Innovation audit tool targeting SMEs for the purpose of stimulating their understanding of innovation opportunities, including those related to current societal challenges, and their management capabilities.

Moreover, DepoSIt will carry out an extensive Randomized Control Trial Study (RCT) to validate the audit tool. The idea is to demonstrate the effectiveness of the RCT approach, coming from scientific disciplines like medicine, to inform results-based policy decisions in the domain of innovation support.

In concrete terms a bench of around 100 companies will be asked to adhere to the DeposSIt pilot action and their innovation performance will be analysed in accordance with an RTC protocol developed for this purpose. The objective is to measure if the audit tool was beneficial to the companies' innovative performance and under which conditions its adoption should be recommended to other innovation agencies in the future.

<u>Brief note on the pilot action</u>

Duration of pilot action

The pilot action will start in October 2020. It is planned to complete it within 12 months.

Pilot action goal, outcomes and output

The DepoSIt pilot action goal is to test and validate the Innovation Audit tool developed by the project consortium on the basis of existing similar tools and adapted to the needs of SMEs. A specific feature of the audit tool is to include a very recent trend which is to measure also the social innovation dimension related to the capability to understand business opportunities deriving from current societal challenges.

For the pilot action purpose, a number of innovative small and medium companies – likely around 100 – will be asked to use and comment on the tool. For the applicability of the RCT methodology, the pilot action's participants will be asked to answer three questionnaires over the course of 12 months. Some occasional further inquiry made by project partners might occur.

The data is collected in anonymous form and will be analysed to check:

a) if the DepoSit audit tool has some positive effect on the companies' innovation performance

and

b) whether an upscaling of the RCT approach and the developed innovation tool will be suggested to a further audience.

Requirements to take part in the EOI

Any company located in the following six EU countries - Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Romania, Croatia and Italy - can submit an EOI if it fulfils the following criteria:

- it is an SME according to the EU definition link;

- it is confident working in English, for the purpose of understanding the contents of the innovation audit tool which has been developed in English only at this stage;

- it is an innovative company, meaning that in the last 3 years it undertook at least one research and development initiative – either in-house or outsourced – to innovate its products, services or internal organization and processes;

- it can demonstrate to work in one or more of the following specialization sectors: smart health, smart living, smart mobility (see annex 1 for an extensive explanation).

Applicants obligations

Participating companies are asked to appoint a respondent to be contacted by the DepoSIt partners during the pilot action.

The main expectation is that enrolled SMEs will answer three times over 12 months to an e-survey and potentially accept a company visit to be interviewed about the audit tool. This second obligation will apply only to a small sub-group of companies, randomly selected.

EOI evaluation and selection process

DepoSIt project partners will perform an eligibility check on the requirements listed under point 3. The eligibility check will be done on national basis by the local organization. All those enterprises that will meet the selection criteria will be informed and included in the pilot action in case they will sign and send back the consent & commitment letter on time, i.e. by October 15, 2020 at the latest.

Rules for Submission of Expression of Interest (EOI)

Please check below the country national rules:

Germany -> submit your application via email to deposit@steinbeis-europa.de. The template can be downloaded here https://www.steinbeis-europa.de/fwd/deposit-sme.html

Italy -> submit your application using the e-form at this link www.bit.ly/Deposit-PilotAction

Romania -> submit your application using the e-form at this link https://docs.google.com/Application Form DepoSIt

Spain - > submit your application visiting Fomento San Sebastian website www.fomentosansebastian.es

Croatia -> submit your application using the e-form at https://www.hgk.hr

The Netherlands -> submit your application using the e-form at https://www.bdfriesland.nl/

Deadline for the submission of EOI

30 September 2020

ANNEX I – SPECIALIZATION DOMAINS DESCRIPTION

Smart mobility

Smart mobility is the integration of different modes of transportation and infrastructure to make traveling safer, cleaner, and more efficient. It can also reduce the use of gasoline-powered vehicles. Smart mobility uses the Internet of Things (IoT) to facilitate communication between modes of transportation and user interfaces, via a wireless network.

Smart mobility encompasses many elements, including traffic-reducing measures like ride sharing and bike sharing; wireless communications, real-time data analytics and machine learning used in autonomous vehicles; and physical infrastructure like parking spaces and traffic signals. Cities use sensors, data platforms, and software to manage their transport infrastructure and services as a single, coordinated system

Smart mobility involves transport methods that can help reduce the number of cars on the road, as:

- Ride sharing: Can help reduce congestion by limiting the addition of new vehicles on the road.

- Bicycle commuting: Increasingly popular in cities with flat terrain and an extensive network of bike lanes, especially in Europe. Cycling can be the fastest way to travel short distances.

- Car sharing: Individuals or businesses rent cars by the minute or hour. The car sharing company owns and insures the cars and provides parking spaces at convenient locations around town.

- On-demand transportation: Services that allow ordinary drivers to use their own cars to offer transportation services, employing mobile apps and GPS technologies to optimize rides and make services more accessible.

Which SMEs can be included in this specialization?

- Vehicle manufacturers/ automotive industry enterprises,
- ICT companies that develop IoT software solutions,
- ICT companies that develop cybersecurity solutions,
- ICT companies that develop human machine interface software,
- Sensor manufacturers,
- Companies active in infrastructure works (es.: roads, parking),
- Renewable energy solution manufacturers (es.: solar panels)

Smart health

Smart Health, covering intelligent, networked technologies for improved health provision, is recognized as one of the most promising remedies to the rising per capita healthcare expenditure associated with ageing. Smart Health innovations allow healthcare providers to cure afflictions more effectively, to care for patients more efficiently, and to prevent illnesses more frequently. Smart health is the use of information and communication technology (ICT) for health. Examples include treating patients, conducting research, educating the health workforce, tracking diseases and monitoring public health.

Smart Health solutions combine technological developments in mobile and portable devices, mobile data connectivity, application development, sensor technology, and big data analytics and cloud computing, with novel ideas on patient co-management, health monitoring of remote communities, and prevention of unhealthy lifestyles, to name a few. Smart Health solution providers are entrepreneurs that combine a strong understanding of the technologies underlying Smart Health solutions with specialized knowledge of specific healthcare challenges, illnesses and afflictions, and with in-depth analysis of specific segments of the healthcare market. This allows them to spot radically new possibilities for care, cure, and prevention. The drivers that spur Smart Health innovation include continuous developments in ICT, e-location technology, and broadband data connectivity.

Which SMEs can be included in this specialization?

- Medical device manufacturers,
- Pharmaceutical companies,
- Biotech companies,
- ICT companies that develop hardware and software solutions dedicated to health industry,
- Electronics companies that produce devices used in the medical industry,
- Chemical companies,
- Sensor manufacturers,
- ICT companies that develop IoT software solutions,
- Robot manufacturers

Smart living

Smart Living is a trend encompassing advancements that give people the opportunity to benefit from new ways of living. It involves original and innovative solutions aimed at making life more efficient, more controllable, economical, productive, integrated and sustainable. This is a trend that covers all the aspects of day to day life, from domiciles and workplaces to the manner in which people are transported within cities. In short, Smart Living involves improved standards in several aspects of life, whilst striving for efficiency, economy and reduction of the carbon footprint.

This sector has a significant impact on the quality of life such as tourism, culture and leisure, security, ITC, wellbeing and social inclusion, management of green areas. Thus, people want to live in smart, secure, clean, healthy, inclusive and resilient cities in order to have a high quality of life.

Practical examples of this strategy are the following, implemented by FVG region in its S3 Strategy:

1. "Home system" materials technologies and innovative design: this area includes all the research, development and innovation activities of new materials and the design of new products, as well as the technologies and methodologies adopted to improve the application or use of the materials used in the production cycle.

2. Technologies for the efficiency of buildings and production processes: this area includes methodologies and technologies for efficiency in the environmental, seismic, energetic, functional and ergonomic fields.

3. "Home system" digitization: this area includes all the systems capable of enabling the digitization of company functions and technological integration into the Home System products.

4. Ambient Assisted Living (AAL): this area includes the set of technological solutions both indoor and outdoor intended to make people living environment active, intelligent and cooperative both in the community and in individuality, effective in supporting independent life, capable of providing greater security, simplicity , well-being and satisfaction in carrying out the activities of daily life.

The areas of application are products and services that can be integrated with IoT technologies such as: remote medicine, remote assistance, home automation (e.g. prototype housing units with minimum accessibility and security requirements, sensors, etc.), automated aids and systems (e.g. for physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities), wearable technologies, decision support systems, as well as other products and services for the prevention and well-being of citizens. The variations of AAL area concern the technologies for the improvement of: people's health, in terms of supervision and care and prevention, assistance, wellness and comfort, management and optimization of security in indoor and outdoor spaces.

5. Creation of value through the constant integration of information along the entire agricultural and food chain: this area includes introduction of innovative systems for collecting, sharing and distributing products and related information (direct and reverse logistics of products and data) in order to:

- facilitate the development and distribution of value along the production chains, also through the organization of usable platforms for accessing Cluster data (Big Data);
- improve consumer information for aspects related to: traceability, origin, nutritional values and also for the aspect of environmental sustainability;
- facilitate and ease control, certification and accreditation of local productions and transformations also for the purpose of their internationalization.

Which SMEs can be included in this specialization?

Home system

- Furniture manufacturers,
- Construction companies,
- Manufacturers of technologies for home automation,
- Sensor manufacturers,
- Renewable energy solution manufacturers (es.: solar panels, geothermal heating system, etc.),
- ICT companies that develop BIM and CAD solutions.

Ambient Assisted Living

- Sensor manufacturers,
- Medical device manufacturers,
- Mobility aids manufacturers,
- Architects,
- Companies that develops wearable devices,
- A and B type cooperatives,
- ICT companies that develop apps and online platforms capable of connecting people,
- ICT companies that develop software for brain-training activities.

Agriculture/food industry

- Farmers,
- ICT companies that develop software solution for the traceability of agricultural products,
- Food processing companies,
- Manufacturers of machines for smart and high precision farming.