



Central Innovation Programme for SMEs (ZIM) – funding for innovation

Pilot project on international networks until end of 2019:

“ZIM-Kooperationsnetzwerke International – International ZIM Cooperation Networks”

Additional information for international partners (coordinator, companies and others)

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) are facing a number of challenges such as globalization, digitalization and demographic change. In order to offer competitive products and services under these circumstances, they need a high level of innovation capability as well as willingness to work with international leaders. More than ever outstanding research and innovation performance takes place in transnational networks. Competitiveness therefore increasingly depends on international cooperation.

To encourage partnerships between German and international companies as well as optionally research and technology organisations (RTOs), the BMWi has launched a pilot project on international networks within the funding scheme Central Innovation Programme for SMEs (ZIM).

ZIM is a nation-wide funding programme for cooperating SMEs and RTOs. It is open to all technologies and sectors. Applicants benefit from fairly straightforward application, organisation and invoicing procedures. Administrative effort is kept to a minimum.

ZIM provides funding for innovative company networks consisting of at least six companies as well as for R&D projects and measures for a successful market entry.

The network partners are supposed to work together to develop new and innovative technological products, technology-based services and industrial processes with strong market potential.

Funding is provided for both, managing the network (management and organisation services) and R&D projects initiated by the network (both individual and cooperation projects). Management services are intended to aid the conceptual preparation and implementation of R&D projects within the network, the coordination of R&D activities and the consolidation of the network. In international networks the services are intended to help support international activities as well.

Eligible international ZIM cooperation networks must involve at least four German SMEs mandating a German organisation to manage the network and at least three partners from other countries (two SMEs and an organisation serving as coordinator providing network management services abroad).

In order to provide benefits to all participants, the cooperation should be balanced and present a clear advantage for all partners as well as unique opportunities to add value to the project. This can be an increased knowledge base, an improved ability to meet commercial needs or new application fields for existing technologies or capabilities.

The German network management entity has to submit a ZIM application to VDI/VDE-IT using the application form including all annexes. The number of international SMEs participating in the network should not exceed 50 %. Every international partner has to fill in annex 8c (agreement on collaboration) to declare their SME status and the willingness to participate in the cooperation network as well as to agree to the joint summary of the project outline. The application also has to meet the demands set by the ZIM programme.

However, the ZIM programme provides financial support only for the German partners involved. International organizations (coordinators, companies, RTOs and others) are responsible for their own funding.

www.zim.de

<https://www.zim.de/ZIM/Navigation/DE/Foerderangebote/International/international.html>