



The INSME Award

First edition

A unique prize conceived for intermediaries and their networks dealing with innovation and technology transfer (TT) to SMEs

What is the INSME Award?

The “INSME Award” is conceived as a prize that the INSME Association, following a selection procedure, intends to assign biannually in order to acknowledge the success or the importance of activities and initiatives at international, regional, national or sub-national level undertaken by **intermediaries or their networks** (not individuals) which are Members or non Members of the INSME Association.

The INSME Award addresses a wide range of intermediaries and thus must be considered as a unique initiative. Several awards targeting entrepreneurs, including SMEs, already exist at European and international level. Awards targeting intermediaries and networks are less diffused and normally are limited to a single intermediary typology.

The Award aims at motivating intermediary organisations and their networks to achieve a higher level of performance in the provision of services to SMEs and intends to promote the visibility and diffusion of success stories.

The Award will be given to **intermediaries and their networks** and to **those initiatives, projects or programmes that represent an outstanding contribution in the field of innovation and technology transfer (TT) to SMEs within the socio-economic environment they are referring to.**

Since a globally accepted definition of a SME cannot be provided, each applicant will have to refer to the one applied in the context where it operates.

The INSME Award, in accordance with the scope of the Association, considers as its target any intermediary organisation or network of intermediaries regardless of whether they address their services to low tech or high tech industrial sectors. Hence, applications might be submitted by organisations operating in either scopes.

The main theme for this first edition of the INSME Award is summed up by the slogan “**Innovation for success: Locally adopted, Globally replicable**”. That means that common feature of all applications must be that of presenting business models, initiatives, programmes or projects which,

although implemented on a reduced scale, have the possibility to be scaled up and/or reapplied in other geographical contexts or different industrial sectors.

Who may participate?

Eligible to apply for the INSME Award are **any public or private intermediary organisations or networks/associations** (not individuals) which provides services aimed at fostering innovation and technology transfer to SMEs, irrespective of them being INSME Association/Advisory Group Members or non Members.

Each organisation or network/association may apply for itself, but can also **propose**, to the INSME Secretariat, another organisation or network/association which they deem worthy of this prize. Should this be the case, the signalling organisation is kindly invited to fill the Form **Nominate a candidate** and send it to INSME Secretariat.

What are the Award categories ?

The Award is divided into the following two categories and will be assigned every 2 years to the “best-in-class” within each of them:

- **Category 1**
Intermediaries and their **networks** (legally constituted) at international, regional, national and sub-national level promoting and/or supplying innovation and TT services to SMEs
- **Category 2**
Initiatives, programmes and projects carried out by intermediaries or their networks in the field of innovation and TT to SMEs

Each applicant can apply for both categories, although only one application can be rewarded.

What are the evaluation criteria?

The main evaluation criteria to assign the Award will be as follows.

- **Category 1**

Intermediaries and their networks at international, regional, national and sub-national level promoting and/or supplying innovation and TT services to SMEs.
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The prize can be awarded to intermediaries and their networks as organisations, as a **recognition of their remarkable efficacy in the socio-economic background they are**

operating in, based on the compliance with the following requirements which are listed according to their decreasing weight in the overall evaluation.

1. Extent of innovation of rendered services

[It considers whether the services are innovative with respect to those already offered by other intermediaries in the same background];

2. Quantity and relevance of their projects and/or activities in order to support innovation and TT in the business sector (meaning the business enterprise sector, that includes all firms, organisations and institutions whose primary activity is the production of goods and services for the sale to the general public. This definition comprises, therefore, agriculture, manufacturing, construction and service sector).

[It considers as a whole the projects and activities portfolio of the applicant organisation both in terms of number and extent to which they have contributed to promote innovation and TT. As an example, due attention will be paid to the impacts of the mentioned projects and activities in terms of: improved performances of the supported SMEs and industries (increased market share of existing SMEs, improvement of product quality and added value to final customers, operative costs reduction etc), increased vitality of the involved economic sectors (setting up of new SMEs, increased presence on foreign markets, etc.)];

3. Efficacy to integrate industry, governmental institutions and R&D organisations in the targeted entrepreneurial and institutional context

[It assess the ability of the applicant organisation to mediate among academic, industrial and governmental spheres feeding knowledge flows which facilitate innovation processes in the concerned entrepreneurial context];

4. Quality of the organisation and structure and level of clients' satisfaction

[It considers whether the applicant organisation is managed accordingly with international quality management standards (ISO 9000 standards) and the level of the applicant organisation's clients satisfaction properly documented.];

5. Span of the services offered or activities undertaken

[It takes into consideration the width of services offered in terms typology (information, promotion, technology services, R&D, studies, networking and commercial, client skill development, financial support, policy making, etc.), function (activation of linkages, technical support, transfer of knowledge) and content (organisation, technology and market)];

6. Level of internationalisation

[It considers as a whole whether the applicant organisation takes part in networks comprising similar entities and/or renders its services to foreign clients and to what extent and, finally, if it has branches abroad];

7. Number of SMEs supported yearly

[It refers to the number of SMEs that receive the services of the applicant organisation over a year. It must be properly documented];

8. Strategic relevance of industrial sectors covered and strategic position in terms of level of sectoral and/or technological specialisation

[It considers whether the applicant organisation addresses its services to economic sectors strategically relevant in the socio-economic background and what its sectoral/technological focus is (e.g. Low Tech, High Tech, etc..)];

9. Participation in regional, national and international networks

[It takes into consideration if the applicant organisation is member of existing networks];

10. Geographical area covered by the network/s and number of members

[It considers the geographical extent of the network/s the applicant organisation is a member of and how many members such it/they consists/consist of];

- **Category 2**

Initiatives, programmes and projects carried out by intermediaries or their networks in support of SMEs, in the field of innovation and TT, undertaken over the last 3 years.

The prize can be awarded to those initiatives, programmes and projects carried out by intermediaries or their networks which, even if not terminated on the date of submission of the application, can prove to have produced one or more of the following results:

1. innovative and technological products, processes and applications

[It takes into consideration those initiatives, programmes and projects undertaken by the applicant organisation which helped client SMEs in developing new products, processes or applications];

2. innovative organisation and/or market approach

[It considers whether initiatives, programmes and projects undertaken by the applicant organisation helped client SMEs in improving their organisation and/or market approach];

3. innovative services to SMEs

[It considers whether the mentioned activities led to the setting up of previously inexistent services for SMEs or to the improvement of existing ones];

4. new common units, TT services and methodologies which ensure economies of scale and mutual benefits (only for the networks)

[It considers those activities resulting in the setting up of common services (information, training, technical assistance, etc.) among members of a network of intermediaries so as to produce economies of scale and other mutual benefits (i.e. enhanced flow of knowledge, information, etc)];

5. innovative networks in terms of geographical areas or industrial sectors covered, type of partnership, etc.

[It considers whether the applicant organisation has undertaken initiatives, projects or programmes leading to the creation of networks benefiting geographical areas previously not covered by other networks, or to the involvement of marginalised industrial sectors, etc];

How applications will be evaluated?

Applications will be evaluated in a two-phase process.

First the **INSME Secretariat**, supported by experts, screens all applications so as to decide those who are admissible for evaluation (those which do not meet formal and content requirements will be rejected). Then it will proceed with technical evaluation.

This will consist first of the evaluation of individual applications, then of the selection of a restricted number of them so as to make up a short-list including those which better met the evaluation requirements.

Secondly, short-listed applications will be submitted to the **Jury** for final evaluation and selection of the winners.

The Jury is composed of 8 highly qualified experts in the field of innovation and technology transfer representing both the public and private sector and different geographical areas worldwide. Their organisations of origin shall not be allowed to take part in the competition so as to avoid any conflict of interest. Following a proposal from the INSME Secretariat, the Jury will also decide on the evaluation criteria to be set for each Award edition.

What are the prizes?

The prize for each category will consist of a **medal**. The Jury might however decide to assign more than one prize per category in case more than one application is deemed deserving recognition within each of them.

Apart from the prizes, winners will also gain additional benefits.

In case they are not INSME Members, they will also be rewarded with free **12 month INSME membership** starting from the month after the assignment of the Award..

Besides, both winners will be entitled to use the **INSME Award logo** on their documents and website for two years.

Finally, any winner will benefit from the **high visibility** the INSME Association will give them. Not only will the awardees be invited to introduce their case to the Association Members at the prize-giving event, but will also be presented on the INSME web portal, in the Association monthly newsletter and on means of information (web sites, bulletins, newsletter, etc.) made available by the numerous organisations the Association has relations with.

What is the deadline for application?

The Award is given biannually. For the first edition the deadline for entry is **15th November, 2004**. All applications must reach the INSME Secretariat by e-mail (secretariat@insme.it).

On which occasion will the Award be delivered?

Winners will receive their prize on the occasion of a dedicated ceremony to be held approximately by February 2005. This will coincide with the annual INSME Association meeting, which brings together all the Members. The exact date and location will be announced in good time later in the year.

How can I apply for the Award ?

To apply for the INSME Award, just follow the next steps:

1. **Download** the [application form referring to the Category you want to apply for.](#) It is allowed to submit application also for both Categories at the same time.

2. **Fill in the form accurately and completely.** Incomplete and inaccurate forms will be automatically rejected. Applications must be submitted in English. Please, do not attach additional files unless clearly requested in the Application form. They will be requested later if deemed necessary.
3. **Send the form by 15th November, 2004 both to:**
 - E-mail address: secretariat@insme.it.
 - Fax: Mrs Francesca Giannotti, +39.06.80972443
4. Should you need further assistance, please write to: secretariat@insme.it or contact Mrs Francesca Giannotti
Ph. +39.06.80972519
Fax. +39.06.80972443
E-mail: giannotti@ipi.it

FAQs

I am not an INSME Member. Can I apply for the Award?

Yes, any intermediary organisation or network/association of intermediaries at international, regional or local level is eligible.

I am an individual. Can I apply for the Award?

No, only legal entities and organisations (private, public, profit or non for profit) can apply.

I am an SME or a network of SMEs. Can I apply for the Award?

Yes, but only if your organisation (private, public, profit or non for profit) can be regarded as an intermediary providing services to other SMEs.

What is the subject of the application?

You can apply for the Award in two cases, depending on the different categories:

- **Category 1**

You represent an intermediary organisation and would like to be rewarded for matching the requirements listed above among the “Evaluation criteria”.

As an example, your organisation has recently put in place an innovative service addressed to its customers which is proving to be very effective in terms of promotion of innovation and TT.

- **Category 2**

You represent an organisation which over the last 3 years has undertaken, in partnership with other concerned organisations, *a project aimed at setting up a tool for financing innovative enterprises. Or, your organisation has undertaken a project aimed at training mentors/advisors able to accompany enterprises in the process of identifying their innovation needs and formulating specific proposals/solutions for their modernisation.* Both initiatives match at least one requirement set for the category “Initiatives, programmes and projects”, consequently they are eligible for application.

Should initiatives, programmes and projects be concluded by the time of the application?

If not ended, it must at least be possible to assess the outcomes of the initiatives.

May I submit more than one application?

Yes, each applicant can apply for both categories, even if only one application may be rewarded.

By which date applications must be entered?

The next deadline for sending applications is 15th November, 2004.