

# INSME

## INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR SMEs

SMEs 2004



Local strength. Global reach





## WHAT IS INSME?

The **International Network for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises - INSME** is a **non profit Association**, open to international membership, aimed at fostering transnational cooperation and public and private partnership in the field of **innovation** and **technology transfer (TT)** to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

Since adequate access to innovation is a key factor for enterprises to be competitive, INSME stimulates SME's innovation processes and competitiveness by promoting and strengthening innovation services and transnational technology transfer provided by intermediaries and their networks.

INSME's main goals are:

- to create a **permanent forum** for promoting an open, strengthened multilateral dialogue between diverse stakeholders involved in the area of innovation and technology transfer to SMEs; particular importance is given to the development of "North - South" interactions and cooperation.
- to become a **new partner and an effective means for launching operational activities**, on a bilateral or multilateral basis, including the instigation of joint pilot projects between Members of the Network so as to exchange know how and the enforcing of synergies and economies of scale, to indirectly support the competitiveness of SMEs at local, national or international level.

The formal creation of the INSME Association as a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) took place in February, 2004 under Italian law. It was initially founded by organisations from Italy, Romania, Spain and Switzerland. Its headquarters are located at the Italian Institute for Industrial Promotion (IPI), in Rome, Italy. The Italian Government through IPI is the main promoter and financial sponsor of INSME. The Association aims to become financially self-sustainable in the mid-term through membership fees, sponsorships and the provision of services for a fee on demand.

Through its dedicated information platform ([www.insme.org](http://www.insme.org)), INSME contributes to collecting and rationalising existing national, regional and international information sources with a view to linking, extending and maximising the impact of the several initiatives and service networks operating on a geographical and thematic basis.

Its online and off-line activities support the specialisation, integration and internationalisation of the innovation services offered by intermediaries. Moreover, the INSME portal facilitates the benchmarking of policy strategies, the exchange of methodologies and the diffusion of success cases.

## WHAT IS THE VALUE ADDED OF INSME?

Through a wide range of initiatives and services, INSME acts as a **facilitator** and **catalyst** for co-operation between its Members, promoting linkages and partnerships on a sectoral and thematic basis at an international and regional level.

As an **information hub** and a **multiplier** of cross-border contacts and opportunities, it provides added value to its Members in the following fields:

- **Promotion:** INSME is a unique opportunity for its Members to increase the visibility and access to their services and skills, by offering tools and occasions to showcase activities, projects and programmes;
- **Partnerships:** launching joint projects on a voluntary basis, creating new partnerships for business opportunities, also participating directly in calls for tenders as a leader or partner organisation as well as involving its Members on a case by case basis;
- **Transnational Technology Transfer:** through its information hub (the INSME portal), with on-line standard and customised services;
- **Lobbying activities and advocacy:** supporting the reputation and the role played by intermediaries in SME creation and economic development, and their recognition by governments and international financing institutions;
- **Know-how and staff exchange:** facilitating the exchange of expertise, professionals and good practices within the Network; a number of online Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) are already active;

- **Studying SME innovation trends:** represents an observatory for mapping and monitoring SME innovation policies and financial instruments at national and international level, as well as good practices in this area, in order to inspire the definition of new political guidelines.

The issues addressed by INSME are **multi-sectoral** and include themes related to both technological and non-technological innovation (innovation of process, of product and managerial innovation in both hi and low tech sectors).

## WHO CAN APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP?

**INSME membership** is open to public and private bodies, from any geographical area worldwide, dealing with SME innovation and technology transfer issues. The Association welcomes applications from:

- Governmental Bodies at national or sub-national level;
- International Organisations;
- International Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs);
- Networks and associations of Intermediaries/business support organisations;
- Individual Intermediaries /business support organisations, both profit and non profit.

Three typologies of membership are offered:

- Full Members (Standard, Honorary and Operative Associate);
- Associate Members;
- Observers.

Membership fees are annual and vary according to the kind of membership and the nature of the applying body. They range from a maximum of 5,000 Euro to a minimum of 100 Euro.

The Network does not directly address SMEs or large companies, who are not entitled to join the Association but may benefit indirectly from its information and services available through the web portal.

Companies can be financial sponsors of the Association. Individuals are not eligible for joining the Association but may be involved in their personal capacity in some of INSME's activities (e.g. Think Tank, INSME AWARD Jury, Thematic Working Groups, etc.).





## INSME WITHIN THE OECD BOLOGNA PROCESS

INSME is founded on the ideas and principles discussed at the **first OECD Ministerial Conference on SMEs and Globalisation** "Enhancing the Competitiveness of SMEs in the Global Economy" (Bologna, 13 - 15 June 2000).

These principles were laid down in the "**Bologna Charter on SME Policies**", which recognises that:

- SMEs play a key role in world economies;
- globalisation offers opportunities as well as threats to SME competitiveness, in particular it widens the innovation and technology gap between countries and regions;
- in order to bridge this gap SMEs need better access to financing, information and services that facilitate the innovation process;
- value added for enhancing SME competitiveness can be created by fostering the upgrading, networking, integration and internationalisation of intermediaries, as well as by extending their networks at international and regional level also through targeted public policies and measures.

The 50 Ministers and Government representatives who adopted the Charter also embraced the Italian Government proposal to finance and carry out the Feasibility Study for the creation of INSME. Therefore, INSME is part of the "**Bologna Process**" within the OECD framework.

On 3 - 5 June, 2004 the second OECD Ministerial Conference on SMEs, "**Promoting Entrepreneurship and Innovative SMEs in a Global Economy. Towards a more Responsible and Inclusive Globalisation**" took place in Istanbul. This event marked a further important step in the development of the INSME Association, acknowledging and taking stock of the results achieved so far and officially granting INSME the OECD's moral sponsorship in 2004.

INSME is also very proud to have been granted consultative status by UNIDO's Industrial Development Board in late May 2004.

## WHO IS INVOLVED?

As of June 2004 the Association has the following **25 Members**:

**Governmental bodies and Intermediaries:** Austrian Institute for SME Research; Enterprise Performance Improvement Centre - GOLEM IMS GES.M.B.H (Austria); Network of Flemish Innovation Actors; Walloon Business House for Europe (Belgium); Cyprus Institute of Technology (Cyprus); CzechInvest (Czech Republic); GTS - Advanced Technology Group (Denmark); General Organisation for Industrialisation - GOFI (Egypt); Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship - IIE (India); Centro Sviluppo Vallée D'Aoste; Centuria-Rit; Informest - Service and Documentation Center for International Economic Co-operation; Institute for Industrial Promotion - IPI (Italy); Ministry of Economy - Secretariat of Economy (Mexico); Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (Poland); National Agency for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and Co-operatives (Romania); National Technology Transfer Center - NTTCC (South Africa); Spanish Federation of Innovation and Technology Organisations - FEDIT (Spain); State Secretariat for Economic Affairs - SECO (Switzerland); Small and Medium Industry Development Organisation - KOSGEB (Turkey);

**International Organisations and NGOs:** International Organisation for Knowledge Economy and Enterprise Development (IKED); International Society for Professional Innovation Management (ISPIM); Latin American Technological Information Network (RITLA); Norwegian Institute for Studies in Research and Higher Education, Centre for Innovation Research (NIFU STEP) and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

In order to facilitate the start-up process of the INSME and consolidate its reputation worldwide the Association interacts regularly with its **Advisory Group** (named Steering Group prior to the formal establishment of the Association) which is established on a voluntary and informal basis.

This international Advisory Group plays a role in the strategic orientation of the Annual Work Plan of the Network, with a view to creating synergies and partnerships with other players so as to avoid any overlapping with already ongoing initiatives and so as to maximise benefits for its Members. The INSME Advisory Group comprises all organisations that since mid 2000 have been collaborating (through the INSME Steering Group) in the feasibility study for the definition of the focus, mission and business model for the creation of the INSME Association.

At present the following bodies are represented in the INSME Advisory Group:

**49 countries/regions:** Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Chinese Taipei, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom, USA, Uruguay and Vietnam.

**International Organisations and NGOs:** European Commission-DG Enterprise, Development Gateway Foundation, Inter-American Development Bank, OECD, UNCTAD, UNIDO, WIPO, World Bank Group, Association DIRIGEANTES, DEVNET, EURADA, Eurochambres, Foundation for Enterprise Development, ICS UNIDO, IKED, ISPIM, NIFU STEP, PECC, RITLA, SELA, UEAPME, UNICE, WAITRO and WASME.

**Individual intermediaries and networks of intermediaries:**

Advanced Technology Group - GTS (Denmark), Austrian Institute for SME Research (Austria), Bangladesh Enterprise Institute - BEI (Bangladesh), Centro de Gestión Tecnológica - CEGETEC (Uruguay), Centro Sviluppo Vallée d'Aoste (Italy), Centuria - Rit (Italy), Cyprus Institute of Technology (Cyprus), Federación Española de Entidades de Innovación y Tecnología - FEDIT (Spain), Federation of Indian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises - FISME (India), Galicia e-Commerce Leveraging Centre (Spain), Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship - IIE (India), Informest - Service and Documentation Center for International Economic Co-operation (Italy), Integrated Microelectronics Solutions GmbH - GOLEM (Austria), Italian Chamber of Commerce for Lithuania, Maison de l'Entreprise Wallonne auprès de l'Europe (Belgium), Mouvement des Entreprises de France - MEDEF (France), National Association of Nigerian Traders - NANTS (Nigeria), Network of Flemish Innovation Actors (Belgium), Northern Ireland Business and Innovation Centre - NORIBIC (UK), Polo Tecnologico di Pordenone (Italy), R2ITH - Réseau Industriel d'Innovation du Textile et de l'Habillement (France), Red de Institutos Tecnológicos de la Comunidad Valenciana - REDIT (Spain), SARETEK (Spain), Science and Technology Park of Crete (Greece), Small and Medium Entrepreneurs' Association - UMIS-SMEA (Croatia), Small Business Corporation - SBC (Republic of Korea) and Tecnopolis CSATA (Italy).



## INSME Secretariat

### Headquarters

c/o IPI - Institute for Industrial  
Promotion

Viale M. Pilsudski, 124  
00197 Rome

Italy

Tel. +39-06-80972472

Fax +39-06-80972443

Email: [secretariat@insme.it](mailto:secretariat@insme.it)

[http:// www.insme.org](http://www.insme.org)

## INSME Portal

### Local office

c/o IPI Milan

Via B. Zenale, 11  
20147 Milan

Italy

Tel. +39-02-43440201

Fax +39-02-43440222

Email: [secretariat@insme.it](mailto:secretariat@insme.it)