

a) Activities of the Network

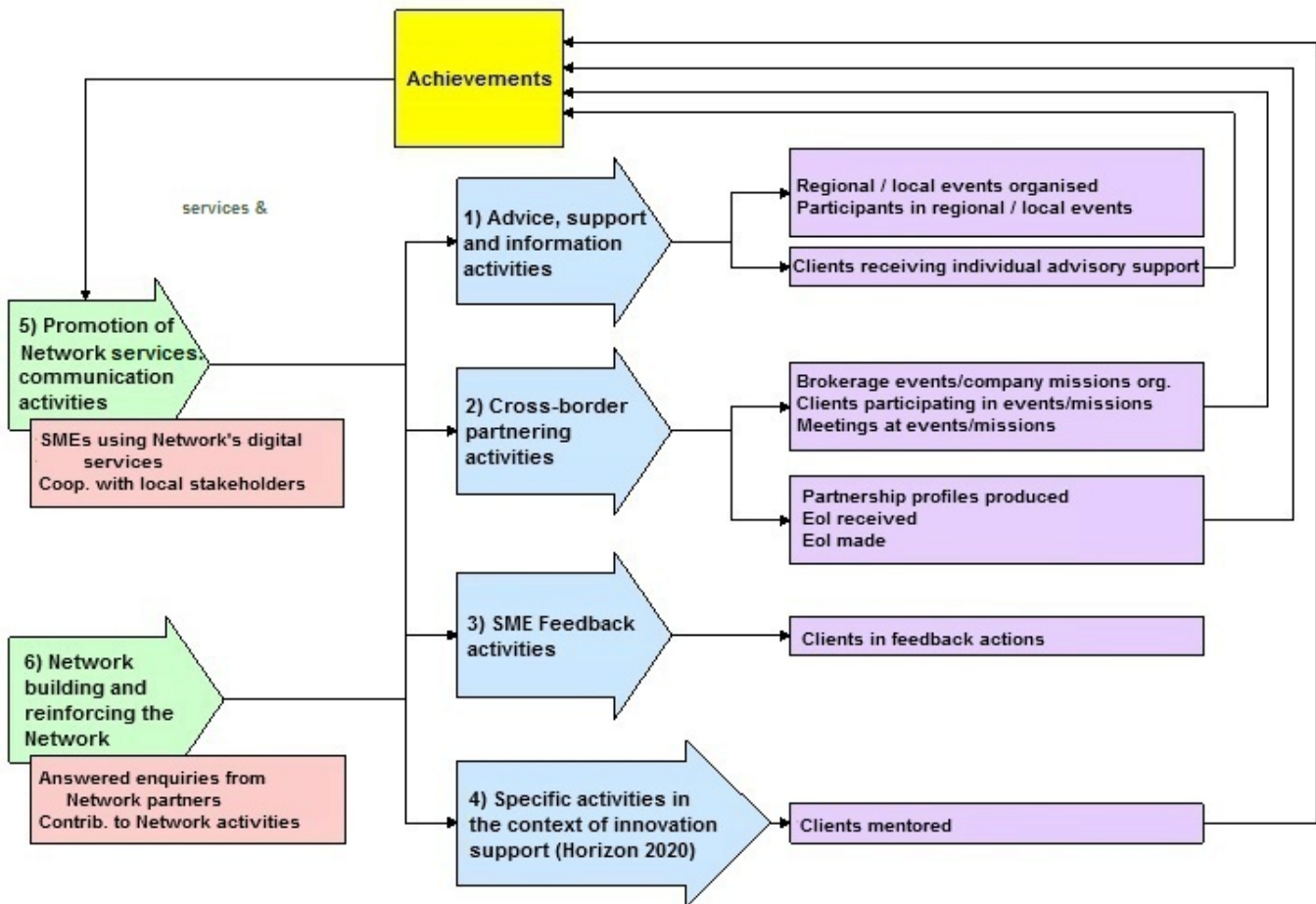


Figure 1: Activities of the Network and expected outputs and outcomes

Service Activities

1. Advice, support and information activities

The Network's primary aim is to provide added-value services that help increase the competitiveness and innovative capacities of European SMEs. In this context, Network partners will provide advice, support and information services focusing on EU programmes, policies and legislation that are relevant to SMEs.

a) Value-added advice and support activities for SMEs and other relevant target audiences on matters related to EU policies, legislation and programmes

The Network will offer **advisory services on innovation and technology transfer**, EU legislation and standards, **EU policies and programmes**, access to finance, internationalisation and access to markets, **enhancement of management capacities**, and cooperation with clusters.

In line with the Commission's commitment to mainstream climate-related actions in EU programmes, the Network shall also address energy efficiency, climate and environmental issues that help SMEs adapt to low-carbon, climate-resilient and energy and resource efficient business models. Where appropriate and in the client's interest, the Network should also promote open

innovation models and guide SMEs through the related processes. The Network shall focus on the European dimension of these topics.

Activities in this context could include:

- Value-added advisory services and support to clients or to other Network partners enquiring on behalf of their clients (individual tailor-made advice and support, including answers to complex questions)
- **Business, technology and innovation reviews of companies** to ascertain their support requirements
- **Events** (including clinics and workshops where customised individual advice, training and other relevant Network services are provided to businesses)
- **Preparatory visits and discussions with clients to establish their requirements** in the framework of the project
- Other relevant activities designed to increase the capacity or knowledge of SMEs with regard to their **internationalisation or innovation** performance and their competitiveness in the Single Market
- Services to other providers of SME support and activities contributing to the quality of the regional SME support system, in particular activities connecting them to European quality initiatives and encouraging them to take up good practices. Introducing new and **better practices** in the regions would support the investments done by the **European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) and the European Social Fund.**

Advisory services provided by the Network primarily focus on EU topics and on all matters related to the services of the Enterprise Europe. The ultimate aim always remains to increase the competitiveness of SMEs. Value-added services in the subject areas listed below must be included in the service range of all consortia. Topics covered in this context should include:

- EU legislation and policies, standards in the Single Market, EU policies, tender opportunities, public procurement, etc.
- **EU programmes and European funding opportunities** (in particular COSME, programmes for research and innovation, internationalisation and the Structural Funds¹)
- **Innovation and technology transfer services to facilitate cross-border innovation and technology transfer activities. Services guiding companies in open innovation processes, design-driven innovation, eco-design and innovation management processes may be included. The primary target audience includes SMEs engaged in innovation and SMEs with a high potential for innovation and technology adoption.**
- In order to help companies access international markets and business opportunities, advisory services supporting the partnering process are required, focusing for example

¹ Proposal-writing is explicitly excluded from the range of eligible Enterprise Europe Network activities.

on market intelligence, identification of suitable growth markets, local business conditions, and on capacity building for SMEs.

- **Access to finance for SMEs:** In addition to providing advice on EU funding (including the financial instruments of COSME and Horizon 2020 as well as the European Structural and Investment Fund), all consortia should provide basic services and information about public finance schemes for SMEs and give access to specialised advice on other sources of funding and access to finance.

More advanced services include a detailed mapping (including private financing) and complex services with a focus on individual advice, SME investment readiness programmes and advice on related matters such as business planning.

Consortia should provide access to all these services, if this is feasible under national legislation and does not overlap with other services available in the region. If need be, it is acceptable to begin with basic services if a strategy to expand the service offer over time is foreseen.

The Network shall also provide information about the proposed SME initiative (if implemented) that will help support lending to SMEs.

- **Support for improving the management capacities of SMEs in order to raise business performance and achieve sustainable growth - in particular with a view to withstanding the competitive pressures on the Single Market and on international markets.**
- **Raising awareness of intellectual property (IP)** issues and provision of support to facilitate the use of IPR (**intellectual property rights**) and help SMEs trade and exploit their intellectual assets at international level.

Furthermore, the Enterprise Europe Network will have privileged access to and relations with the European IPR Helpdesk and the IPR Helpdesks for ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations), China and MERCOSUR (Common Market of the South – free trade association of Southern America comprising Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela and Bolivia). Cooperation with them is strongly encouraged. The Network will act as a multiplier for the IPR Helpdesks, providing SMEs with access to their IP services (including joint training events and mutual signposting of clients).

Consortia or host organisations that are not able to deliver IP services for legal reasons may rely on collaboration agreements with other providers outside the consortium (as described in chapter V.c).

- **Energy and resource efficiency:** Network partners should provide services that help SMEs understand and embrace the long-term benefits of improving their resource efficiency. Services in this context also include advice on access to finance and technology transfer in the areas of eco-innovation and green entrepreneurship. The European Commission may carry out actions related to resource efficiency in SMEs in cooperation with the Network.

- Other advisory services on topics identified by Network partners as relevant in the respective regional context.

In addition to the services listed above, Network partners are encouraged to carry out some of the following services, reflecting the needs of their local client base:

- Organise study visits, seminars or workshops for specific sectors, where associations and clusters may also be involved.
- Provide technology and/or legislation watch services