

Crossroads Vlaanderen-Nederland



Interreg
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Gefinancierd door
de Europese Unie

CrossRoads Vlaanderen-Nederland

What is Crossroads?

- Empowering SME's on both sides of the border to collaborate, innovate and grow in a competitive landscape
- Partnership between JS and regional development agencies
 - JS
 - LP
 - Direct contact with SME by giving support in the whole proces
 - All the organisational tasks
 - Regional Development Agencies
 - Network (acces to SME's)
 - Acquisition and back-office support during execution
 - Guidance after the project: market entry or other funding opportunities

Interesting numbers

- Small projects :10,5m ERDF directly to SME's (50% ERDF, 50% funding of their own)
 - 8,65m allocated since first call (september 2024)
- Total investment of the project approx. 24,5m
- High demand
 - Last two calls: project applications exceeded the available budget by a factor of 6
- High return on investment for the region
 - Leverage up to 10x in 5 years
 - Increase in turnover 90% vs. 38% (70m€)
 - Employment (6 fte / SME)
 - Doubling of R&D investment in 5 years
(Source U Hasselt, Eindverslag CR2SE)

Purpose on SME's in programme

- Important drivers of innovation next to other actors;
- Important catalysts for mainstreaming solutions, practices...into the day-to-day life of citizens, society in general;
- Translate innovations into economic added value (jobs, prosperity, resilience of territories...)
- Easy to align with government needs, resulting in more political traction
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Process of a call

- Call : approx 1-2 months open
 1. Eligibility check on application (3 weeks)
 - Undertaking in difficulties
 - SME or not?
 - ..
 2. Board of experts : value-for-money assessment (beauty contest)
 3. Final decision by the Crossroads Board, based on the experts' advice
- Whole process takes 2 months maximum

Hands-on approach to support SME throughout the whole process

1. Acquisition
 - Role business developer
 - Matchmaking
 - Support with project content (project plan)
 - Role Lead partner (division of JS)
 - Support eligibility, technical issues, advice
 - Most common problems SME status or UID.
 - Draw up Supporting tools
2. Execution
 - Support desk through lead partner (division of JS)
3. Advance payments possible
 - Up to 50% of the ERDF budget
 - Usually paid in installments to spread the risk
 - Very attractive to SME's.

Simplification

- Use of SCO's
 - Most projects:
 - Staff costs + 40% sco
 - In case of investment projects (e.g. building a pilot)
 - Invoices possible
 - Sco's also still possible
- Supporting Tools
 - Acquisition: manuals (SME, application) budget tool, template & guidance
 - Execution: manuals, roadmaps & in-depth information

Project Stories

- 3D Farming:

Potato blight causes major crop losses, and Croptic and Tective Robotics aim to detect it early using semi-autonomous drones.

By combining precision agriculture, AI and remote-operated drone flights, they enable faster, more accurate and affordable disease monitoring.

The project targets a 10–20% reduction in fungicide use by 2030, supporting both sustainable food production and the EU Green Deal goals.

- Spinal project

The “Spinal” project united Dutch and Flemish SMEs to develop biodegradable prosthetics that stimulate natural bone growth, offering a safer, sustainable alternative to metal implants.

Initially launched under an early CrossRoads framework, it expanded into two later Prosperos projects with more SMEs and academic partners.

It stands as a powerful example of how cross-border SME collaboration, supported by CrossRoads, can achieve breakthrough medical innovation.