



# INNO WIDE

**Go for it!**

**A Funding Instrument for  
the internationalization of  
European SMEs that works**

Brigitte Ecker, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021



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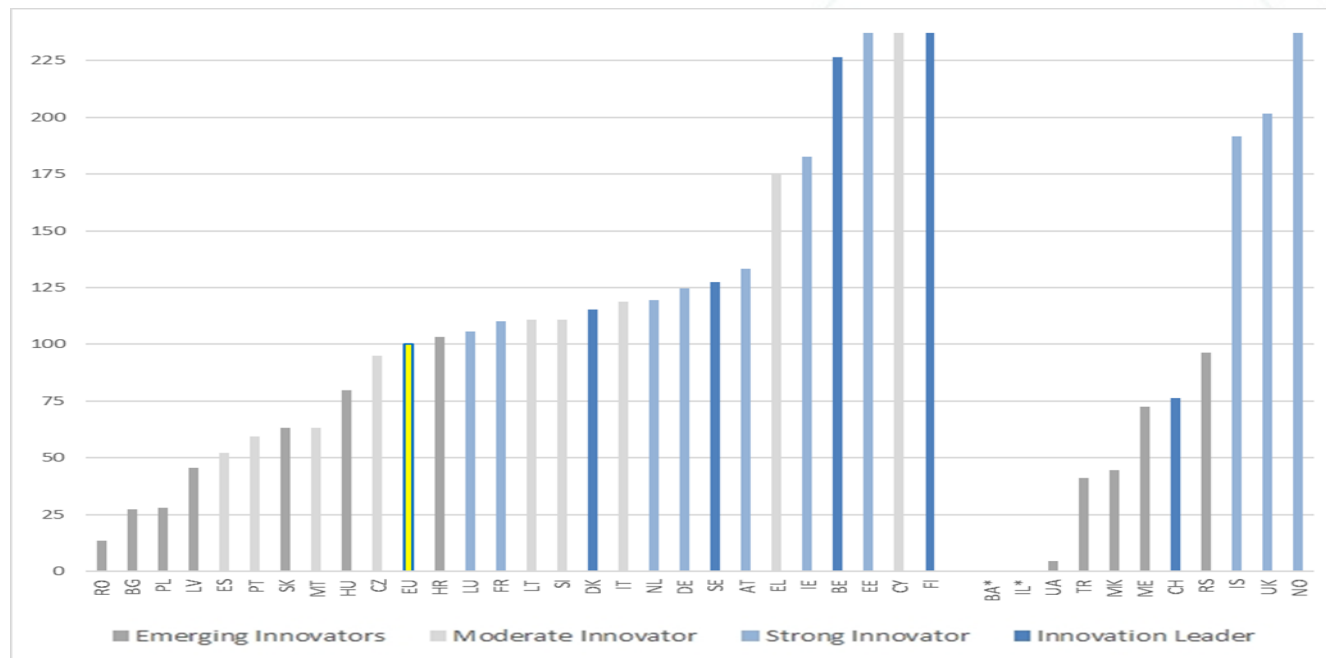
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**Chapter 1 - Is there a need? How is the Performance in Linkages?**

**Chapter 2 - Strengths of INNOWWIDE**

**Chapter 3 - Challenges**

# 1. Is there a need? Performance in Linkages



\*no data; data source: European Commission (2021).  
 Note: The colours indicate the total score's threshold values for the four categories "Innovation Leader" (above 125), "Strong Innovator" (between 100 and 125), "Moderate Innovator" (between 70 and 100) and "Emerging Innovators" (below 70).

Graphic 1 – Innovative SMEs collaborating with others as in EIS 2021, relative to the EU (= 100)

Collaboration and Linkages matter for the performance of the innovation system. Innovation Leader countries and Strong Innovators have more innovative SMEs collaborating with others.

## 2. Strengths of INNOWWIDE

- The INNOWWIDE instrument is relevant and appropriate: The Impact Assessment & Implementation Analyses show great results and impact, such as:
  - 95% of the funded European SMEs established new networks
  - 63% of the cooperation took place in the target countries for the first time
  - 94% of the INNOWWIDE-funded SMEs said that their competitiveness increased



**Bottom-up approach, open for all thematic fields works.**



**The instrument is embedded in national funding structures and is well established** to work even in crises like Corona. This evidence is to be seen for a **good program management**. With regard to economic efficiency, the already established and good structures, such as Eureka, should also be used in the future.



Because of financial restrictions, SMEs quickly reach the limits of their possibilities for operation. An instrument that provides financial resources (without administrative burdens) is a **great added value**, since there is **hardly any funding for the internationalization of SMEs at the national level**.

# 3. Challenges

1. Overall, INNOWWIDE is a well-functioning instrument; it does not need another, additional instrument. Rather, it is necessary to **integrate INNOWWIDE well into ongoing and future initiatives of the European Commission**. In addition, it is also necessary to signal that INNOWWIDE is a reliable instrument for SMEs. Appropriate funding must be made available.
2. Accompanying research and impact monitoring are important. In my view, there are two major questions that need to be addressed in the future:
  - **How to further increase the leverage effect of INNOWWIDE?** Are there bottom-up approaches, such as cluster initiatives at regional and national level, which can be exploited? Are there opportunities at the transnational level to further strengthen collaborations of and with SMEs (maybe is it possible to be linked with the IPCEIs)?
  - In the second Call, nearly half of the funded SMEs indicated that they see **cultural barriers as a risk, followed by political barriers**. Handling these is a major challenge for companies. The question is whether SMEs can be supported more in this respect in the future, e.g. by means of good practices or guide lines?



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