



**INSME**  
International Network for SMEs

## The INSME Association

### About INSME

The International Network for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises - INSME - is a non profit Association, open to international membership. It aims at fostering transnational cooperation and **public and private partnership** among economic players and intermediaries worldwide **to help bridge the innovation and knowledge gap** for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

Since **access to innovation** is a key factor for enterprises to be competitive, INSME acts to indirectly stimulate SMEs' innovation processes and competitiveness by promoting and strengthening the collaboration and the international outreach of **business support intermediaries and their networks**.

The INSME Association was formally established as a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) in 2004. Its Secretariat headquarter is located in Rome, Italy. The Italian Ministry of Economic Development (MSE) is the sponsor of the Association since its establishment.

INSME's main goals are:

- To create a **permanent forum** for promoting an open, strengthened multilateral dialogue among different stakeholders (policy makers and intermediaries) engaged in making innovation happen in SMEs, turning potential competitors into new partners; particular importance is given to the development of "North-South" interactions and cooperation across different geographical regions
- To be a multiplier and disseminator of information and opportunities for cross border collaboration, knowledge exchange and mutual learning on focused thematic areas relevant for **SMEs' competitiveness, for their innovation and internationalization**
- To act as a **problem solver, incubator of new project ideas and facilitator** for its Member Organisations
- **To be an information hub, a catalyser, accelerator and broker** for creating a stable collaboration platform among innovation players on an international scale to better address SMEs problems and challenges emerging from the globalisation process.

## INSME main activities and topics

The portfolio of services provided by the INSME Secretariat to its Members includes:

- ✓ GENERAL AND TARGETED INFORMATION SERVICES
- ✓ INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS DEVELOPMENT
- ✓ ACCESS TO EXPERTISE and KNOWLEDGE SHARING
- ✓ CROSS BORDER MATCHMAKING & NETWORKING/PARTNERING SUPPORT
- ✓ ON DEMAND HELP DESK AND OPPORTUNITIES' ALERT SYSTEM
- ✓ INSME ANNUAL MEETING AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL EVENTS
- ✓ THEMATIC INTERNATIONAL TRAININGS
- ✓ PROMOTION AND MARKETING OF MEMBERS ACTIVITIES
- ✓ COUNTRY STUDY VISITS

The Network deals mainly with the **following topics**:

Innovation Financing; Business Creation and Development; Transnational Technology Transfer; Research-Industry Cooperation and linkages; Intellectual Property Rights and their valorisation on the market; Industrial and Technological Clusters and Networks; Start-ups and High Growth SMEs ("Gazelles"); Policy Measures to Support Innovation in SMEs; Governance and Business Model of intermediaries and their networks supporting SME innovation and internationalisation.

Since 2004, INSME has been granted with the **moral sponsorship** from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (**OECD**). It has been also designated as an NGO in Special Consultative Status within the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations and within the UNIDO Industrial Development Board. It has been granted a "**sectorial dialogue partner**" status by the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (**BSEC**).

The INSME Association welcomes strategic linkages and partnerships with other international bodies, networks, projects and initiatives in order to promote and to develop collaboration activities for mutual benefits. Among them, the European Association of Development Agencies (EURADA), the European Trade Association for Business Angels, Seed Funds and other Early Stage Market Players (EBAN), the ANIMA Investment Network, Institute for Small Business & Entrepreneurship (ISBE), the World Business Angels Association (WBAA) and the World Technopolis Association (WTA), which have all joined the INSME Network, exchanging membership with INSME.

### The INSME International Meetings

- » **7<sup>th</sup> INSME Annual Meeting 2011 on "Competitiveness, Culture and Cross- Border Co-operation: Assisting SMEs to Grow, Innovate and Reach International Markets"**  
Helsinki, Finland ( 23-26 May 2011)
- » **6<sup>th</sup> INSME Annual Meeting 2010 on "SME Innovation: boosting development and growth in times of change"**  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (10-13 May 2010)
- » **5<sup>th</sup> INSME Annual Meeting 2009 on "Building a Knowledge based eco-system for SMEs: Finance, Innovation, Technology and Networking"**  
Dubai, UAE (20-23 April 2009)
- » **4<sup>th</sup> INSME Association Annual Meeting on "Encouraging SME Innovation and Growth: Increasing Capital Access"**

Guangzhou (Canton), P.R. China (2 – 4 July 2008)

- » **3<sup>rd</sup> INSME General Assembly on “Reinvigorating our Global Partnership for Innovation”**  
Rome, Italy (13 July 2007)
- » **2<sup>nd</sup> INSME Association Annual Meeting on “Boosting Innovation by Bridging the Knowledge Gap: A Developer-User Approach”**  
Montevideo, Uruguay (24 – 26 April 2006)
- » **1<sup>st</sup> INSME Association Annual Meeting on “International Cooperation to Seize Innovation Opportunities for SMEs”**  
Barcelona, Spain (13 – 15 April 2005)
- » **INSME Promoting Committee Meeting and IKED-INSME International Roundtable on “Enabling Growth and Innovation in SMEs”**  
Malmo-Elsingborg, Sweden (25 - 27 February 2004)

## Partnerships and Sponsorships

INSME welcomes international partnerships with organisations, projects or initiatives dealing with SME innovation issues and SME competitiveness. It also welcomes sponsorship from public and private bodies and moral sponsorship from International Intergovernmental Organisations. Through its ever-growing network, its widely disseminated free monthly newsletter (*INSMEnews, in English, Spanish and Russian*), its Internet portal and thematic meetings and trainings, the Association offers a wide range of benefits for its Sponsors and open new opportunities for its Partners in several regions worldwide to interact with Policy Makers, Intermediaries and SMEs support organisations.

## Stakeholders

Public and private organisations dealing with SMEs, their internationalisation and innovation related issues are invited to join the Network. Only legal entities can apply for membership. Individuals cannot join the Association. As a general rule, annual membership is on a fee basis.

Among public bodies: Ministries, SME Development Agencies, Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Financial Institutions, Research and Technology Institutes, International Organisations, etc.

Among private and mixed organisations (profit and non profit): business support intermediaries, associations, networks, incubators, science & technology parks, innovation centers, universities, innovation support services providers, research centers, consultancy firms, etc.

Commercial and manufacturing SMEs cannot join the network but are the indirect final beneficiaries of the activities run by INSME Members at international, regional, national and sub-national level.

As of October 2011, the INSME Association gathers the following **82 members from both the public and private sector, from 34 countries in 4 continents:**

**Governmental bodies and Intermediaries:** Small Business Foundation (Albania); Women Watch Bangladesh, Small & Medium Enterprise Foundation - SMEF (Bangladesh); Wallonia Foreign Trade and Investment Agency - AWEX, INNOVA Europe sàrl (Belgium); Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service - SEBRAE (Brazil); PROPAÍS - Corporation for the Development of Micro-Enterprises, Chamber of Commerce of Manizales – CCM (Colombia); Torch Center Innofund (China); OSEO (France); Central Hungarian Innovation Centre - CHIC (Hungary); Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship – IIE, Shriram Institute for Industrial Research –SRI; BLEND Financial Services Ltd. (India); Ministry of Economic Development (in kind), ABCnet, ASTER, API Turin, CENTURIA–RIT, CODEX Cooperative Company, D’APPOLONIA, De Tullio & Partners, FILAS S.p.a, INNOV-Hub, INNOVA S.p.a., Polo Navacchio S.p.a., Studio Brevetti, Unioncamere Piemonte, Umbria Innovazione (Italy); Italian – Libyan Chamber of Commerce (Libya), Ministry of Economy – Secretariat of Economy (Mexico); RMRDC, NOTAP, NASME (Nigeria); Technology Upgradation and Skill Development Company - TUSDEC (Pakistan); CEFIAL - Centre for Education and Information on Latin America (Peru); INNOBIZ Association (in kind), Daejeon Metropolitan City (in kind) (Republic of Korea); Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Environment, Research and Development National Institute for Textile and Leather - INCDTP (Romania); SASME (Serbia); METAGroup D.o.o. (Slovenia); Osiba Research CC (Sud Africa); State Secretariat for Economic Affairs - SECO (Switzerland); Agency for the Promotion of Industry - API (Tunisia); VEGO Consulting and Information Technologies Co (Turkey); Dubai Institute of Technology - Dubai Technopark DTI, Ruwad Establishment, Mohammed Bin Rashid Est. for SME Development, Khalifa fund for Enterprise development (UAE), VINASME (Vietnam).

**International Governmental Organisations** African Development Bank Group; APEC SME Innovation Center; Central European Initiative – Executive Secretariat (CEI-ES); Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS); European Investment Fund (EIF); Global Network of Export-Import Banks and Development Finance Institutions (G-NEXID); Inter-American Investment Corporation (IIC); Latin American Association for Integration (ALADI); Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA); Latin American Technological Information Network (RITLA LATIN); Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP - Mexico Office); United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

**International NGOs and Networks:** ANIMA Investment Network; Arab Science and Technology Foundation (ASTF); EURADA - European Association of Development Agencies; European Trade Association for Business Angels, Seed Funds and other Early Stage Market Players (EBAN); European Business and Innovation Centre Network (EBN); European Proclusters Association (EPROCA); FUNDES International; Italian Business Angels Network (IBAN); Institute for Small Business & Entrepreneurship (ISBE); Intrasoft International Luxembourg; International Society for Professional Innovation Management (ISPIM); Russian Agency for Small and Medium Business Support (SIORA); World Business Angels Association (WBAA); World Technopolis Association (WTA).

## Contact Details

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