



**INSME**  
International Network for SMEs

## INSME Association

International Network for Small and Middle Sized SMEs

### INSME in Brief

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, and the Italian Government through the Ministry of Economic Development (MSE) is the main financial sponsor of the Association since its establishment.

As of September 2011, the INSME Association comprises 81 Members, based in 33 different countries: 18 governmental bodies, 17 International Organisations, 12 International NGOs and representatives of 34 networks and intermediaries acting in the field of innovation and technology transfer to SMEs.

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 "sectoral dialogue partner" status by the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC).

### INSME Outputs 2004-2011

#### INSME Association Annual Meetings

- » **7<sup>th</sup> INSME Annual Meeting** on "**Competitiveness, Culture and Cross-Border Co-operation: Assisting SMEs to Grow, Innovate and Reach International Markets**" took place on 23 - 26 May, 2011, in **Helsinki (Finland)**. The meeting was organised by the INSME Secretariat in collaboration with the **European ProClusters Association (EPROCA)**, and supported by the **Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland**, the **Finnish Innovation Fund - Sitra**, the **City of Helsinki**, the **British and Commonwealth Chamber of Commerce in Finland**, **Legistum Ltd** and the **Suomen Yrittäjäopisto - Finnish Institute for Enterprise Management**.

More information on the 7<sup>th</sup> INSME Annual Meeting can be found on the dedicated website at: <http://www.annualmeeting2011.insme.org/>.

- » **6<sup>th</sup> INSME Association Annual Meeting 2010** on "**SME Innovation: boosting development and growth in times of change**" took place from 10 to 13 May 2010 in **Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**. The meeting was co-organised with SEBRAE - the Brazilian Micro and Small Business

Support Service ([www.sebrae.com.br](http://www.sebrae.com.br)). The event included the **7<sup>th</sup> INSME Board Meeting**, the **6<sup>th</sup> INSME General Assembly**, the **INSME 2010 International Conference** and the **Industrial visit to Rio Tech Park**. Over **190 participants from 25 countries** attended this event. More information is available at: <http://www.annualmeeting2010.insme.org>

- » **5<sup>th</sup> INSME Association Annual Meeting 2009** on ***“Building a Knowledge based eco-system for SMEs: Finance, Innovation, Technology and Networking”***, took place from 20 to 23 April 2009, in **Dubai, UAE**. The event was organised by the INSME Secretariat in collaboration with the Dubai Institute of Technology (DIT) – Dubai Technopark ([www.technopark.ae](http://www.technopark.ae)) and it was held within the **DIT SMEs Forum**. This 4 day event included the **6<sup>th</sup> INSME Board Meeting**, the **5<sup>th</sup> INSME General Assembly**, the **INSME 2009 International Conference**, the **Industrial Site Visits** in Dubai. Over **200 participants** attended this event. More information is available at: <http://www.annualmeeting2009.insme.org/>
- » **4<sup>th</sup> INSME Association Annual Meeting 2008** held on **July 2-4, in Guangzhou (Canton), P.R. China** on: ***“Encouraging SME Innovation and Growth: Increasing Capital Access”***. It was organised in collaboration with the following Chinese INSME Members: Torch Center INNOFUND; Department of Science and Technology of Guangdong Province; Guangdong Science & Technology Exchange Center and Guangdong Productivity Center. Over 150 participants attended the International Conference. More information is available at: [http://www.insme.org/page.asp?IDArea=1&page=insme\\_meeting\\_2008](http://www.insme.org/page.asp?IDArea=1&page=insme_meeting_2008)
- » **3<sup>rd</sup> INSME Association Annual Meeting 2007** on ***“Reinvigorating our Global Partnership for Innovation”*** and **4<sup>th</sup> INSME Board Meeting** held in **Rome, Italy**, on the **13th July 2007**. This International Meeting (for INSME members only) was attended by over 50 participants from 12 countries representing public and private organisations operating in the field of SMEs, innovation and technology transfer. The Conference gave to Members the opportunity to share views and good practices on how innovation in SMEs can be supported in order to help them cope with international competition. More information is available at: [http://www.insme.info/page.asp?IDArea=1&page=insme\\_meeting\\_2007](http://www.insme.info/page.asp?IDArea=1&page=insme_meeting_2007)
- » **2<sup>nd</sup> INSME Association Annual Meeting 2006** on ***“Boosting Innovation by Bridging the Knowledge Gap: A Developer-User Approach”***, held from **24 to 26 April 2006**, in **Montevideo, Uruguay**. Co-organised by the INSME Association in cooperation with the Technology Management Center (*Centro de Gestión Tecnológica, CEGETEC*, [www.ciu.com.uy/cegetec](http://www.ciu.com.uy/cegetec)) of the Chamber of Industries of Uruguay (*Cámara de Industrias del Uruguay*). This 3-day event included the **3<sup>rd</sup> INSME Board Meeting**, the **2<sup>nd</sup> INSME General Assembly** the **INSME 2006 International Conference** and Site Visits to technological and scientific centres surrounding Montevideo. Approximately 230 representatives from 24 countries attended this meeting. More information is available at: <http://www.annualmeeting2006.insme.org>
- » **1<sup>st</sup> INSME Annual Meeting 2005** on ***“International Cooperation to Seize Innovation Opportunities for SMEs”*** held in April 2005, in Barcelona, Spain. This international event was co-organised by the INSME Association in cooperation with the Spanish agency of innovation CIDEM, INSME Member (*Generalitat de Catalunya*, [www.cidem.com](http://www.cidem.com)) and the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade (*Ministerio de Industria, Turismo y Comercio*). This 3-day event included the **2<sup>nd</sup> INSME Board Meeting**, the **1<sup>st</sup> INSME General Assembly**, the **INSME 2005 International Conference 2005**, the **INSME Award Ceremony** and Site Visits to technological and scientific centres surrounding Barcelona. About 200 representatives from 35 countries attended this event. More information is available at: <http://www.annualmeeting2005.insme.org>
- » **1<sup>st</sup> INSME Association Board Meeting** took place on June 1, 2004 in Istanbul, Turkey.
- » **The brainstorming meeting of the INSME Think Tank** was held in **Rome (Italy), at INSME premises, in December 2004**. The main objective of the International Think Tank of independent experts, was to provide INSME Secretariat with innovative information, proposals and advices in order to generate new ideas about vision, strategies, policies, methodologies, projects, products, services, etc, related to innovation and technology transfer to the support of intermediaries' competitiveness and SMEs through the INSME.

- » **INSME Promoting Committee Meeting in Malmö, Sweden**, was organised in February, 2004 and was followed by the **IKED-INSME international Roundtable on “Enabling Growth and Innovation in SMEs”**, held in Helsingborg. The 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the event included Site Visits to relevant innovation intermediaries and service centres/networks in the Baltic area. Around 80 delegates from 23 countries, consisting of private and public sector representatives and international organisations and NGOs attended this event. More information is available at: [http://www.insme.net/page.asp?IDArea=1&page=malmö2004\\_public](http://www.insme.net/page.asp?IDArea=1&page=malmö2004_public)

The next **8<sup>th</sup> INSME Annual Meeting “Innovation across borders: building competitive nations through SMEs networks”**. will take place on 21 - 24 May, 2012, in **Daejeon (Republic of Korea)**. It is being organised by the INSME Secretariat in collaboration with **World Technopolis Association - WTA, Daejeon Metropolitan City, Innobiz Association and Daejeon Convention Center**.

To learn more about the forthcoming event, please, download the [presentation here](#).

## International Joint Training Programmes

### 2011

- » The **INSME International Training Programme on “Access to research and innovation for SMEs: challenges and tools”** took place in the framework of the 7th INSME Annual Meeting in Helsinki, Finland, on **May 26, 2011**. The one day training was organised in collaboration with the INSME Members INNOVA S.p.A., D’APPOLONIA, Meta-Group and Intrasoft International. More information is available at: <http://www.annualmeeting2011.insme.org/training-agenda-may-26/>.

### 2010

- » **3<sup>rd</sup> WIPO-INSME International Training Programme** organised in collaboration with WIPO SMEs Division on **“Financing your Business with Intellectual Property (IP)”** at the WIPO’s Headquarters in Geneva (Switzerland) on 1 -2 December 2010. The training was offered **for free**.

### 2008

- » International Training on **“Innovation and Technology Transfer Services for SMEs: the role of the Intermediary organisations”**, jointly organised by the **APEC SME Innovation Center** and the INSME Association, and co-hosted by the Korean Small and Medium Business Administration (SMBA) and the Korea Technology and Information Promotion Agency for SMEs (TIPA). The workshop, aimed at establishing strategies for a successful technology transfer of SMEs and developing their abilities, helping them to turn technology into business value, was held in **Seoul, Korea on 26-27 June, 2008**, and provided participants with the opportunity to share experience on innovation and technology transfer in terms of technology diagnosis and evaluation, strategies for developing technologies, financing, patent strategy, building network, etc. through advanced techniques and success cases on technology transfer of European SMEs. It was led by Mr. Aleardo Furlani, CEO of INNOVA (INSME Member from Italy) and gathered the participation of 50 trainees coming from 9 different countries. The training was offered **for free**.

### 2006

- » **INSME-IPI training programme on “Business Start-ups and Access to Finance for SMEs”** held in **Rome, Italy** in collaboration with the **Institute for Industrial Promotion (IPI, [www.ipi.it](http://www.ipi.it))**, INSME’s Sustaining Member, on **30 November, 1 December 2006**. The course, offered free of charge, was attended by 50 participants coming from different regions, mostly high level representatives from intermediary organisations, university incubators and private institutes operating in the field of innovation and financing. Lectures were given by 20 speakers mainly selected among INSME Members and Partners.

- » 2<sup>nd</sup> **WIPO-INSME** training, on **“the Use of Intellectual Property as a Financial Tool”**, organised in collaboration with the SME Division of the World Intellectual Property Organization (**WIPO**, [www.wipo.int](http://www.wipo.int)), INSME Member, was held from **11 to 12 July, 2006 in Geneva, Switzerland**. The training was offered **for free**.

## 2005

- » **INSME-CFI** Training Course on the **“Management of Innovation and Technology Transfer”** took place in **Buenos Aires, Argentina** from the **5<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> of July, 2005** in cooperation with the Argentinean Federal Investment Council (**CFI**, [www.cfired.org.ar](http://www.cfired.org.ar)) and in partnership with the Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs, the SME Division of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (**WIPO**), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (**OECD**), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (**UNCTAD**) and the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Division of the Inter-American Development Bank (**IADB**). The course was attended by 65 participants from 10 countries.
- » **INSME-WIPO** Training on the **“Role of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) for Innovation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise”** organised in collaboration with INSME Member, the SME Division of the World Intellectual Property Organization (**WIPO**, [www.wipo.int](http://www.wipo.int)). The 3-day training programme was held in **May, 2005 in Geneva, Switzerland**. The course was offered free of charge and was attended by 70 participants from 33 countries.
- » **INSME-API** training programme on **“Supporting the Creation and Development of Innovative Enterprises”** held in December 2005 **Tunis, Tunisia** in collaboration with INSME Member, the Tunisian Agency for the Promotion of Industry (**API**, [www.tunisianindustry.nat.tn](http://www.tunisianindustry.nat.tn)) of the Ministry of Industry and IPI. This 3-day training was attended by 40 participants from 4 countries.

## 2004

- » **INSME-WASME** Training Programme on **“Management of Innovation and Technology Transfer for SMEs”** organised together with WASME (World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises) on 12 to 15 October, 2004 in New Delhi, India. The course was attended by 35 participants from Asia, Africa and Europe.

## Online Services and Activities

- » **Database** of Member and Partner organisations that are willing to **participate in international calls for tenders**. This catalogue enables INSME Members to find suitable partners and also facilitates the INSME Association’s participation as a partner or leader in calls for tenders.
- » **INSME Experts’ Database of CVs** within the intranet area on the INSME portal to assist INSME Members in finding appropriate international professionals for specific projects or positions. This database currently includes over 40 expert profiles.
- » **INSME Newsreader service**, is made available to any INSME portal reader interested in receiving INSME portal news and headlines directly on his/her desktop.
- » **INSME Content Feed Service**, is dedicated to the Association's Members interested in featuring INSME portal content directly on their websites.
- » **“Ask INSME Service”**, offering a network of experts and professional and timely answers to specific questions related to innovation and technology transfer.
- » **E-mail Alert service**, designed to inform subscribers about the new contents added to the Events Section of the INSME portal.
- » **Online Thematic Working Groups (TWG)** were launched in 2005 as a first step to foster dialogue on specific issues and launch projects among some INSME Members on a voluntary basis. TWGs have so far focussed on **Innovation Finance** and **Venture Capital**, **Information and Communication Technology (ICT)** and **Innovative Enterprises**.

## General Services and Activities

- » **Personal Assistance to Members** in finding business and funding opportunities, experts and partners for international collaborations and projects
- » **Mail alert on Calls** (for tenders, for proposals, for papers, events and awards) to INSME Members
- » **Cross-border matchmaking and networking opportunities** (offline/online)
- » **Bilateral meetings and site visits/study tours designed on request according to Members' needs**
- » **Customised information delivery** and **Opportunity alert** to Members on selected topics of interest through **targeted e-mails**.
- » **Promotion and marketing of Members' activities and events** (offline/online)
- » Participation in a number of events and Conferences as guest speakers.

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.

## Project Development Unit (PDU) Working Groups

The **INSME Project Development Unit (PDU)** was launched in the occasion of the **III INSME Annual Meeting** held in July 2007, in Rome (Italy). The INSME PDU is aimed to better exploit and maximise the transnational networking and the collaboration offered by the INSME Association to its Members through the creation of voluntary groups of members engaged in developing together specific activities/projects of common interest. The INSME Secretariat was involved in the set up of the following PDU Groups:

- » In 2008, an International Training on "***Innovation and Technology Transfer Services for SMEs: the role of the Intermediary organisations***", was jointly organised with the **APEC SME Innovation Center**, and co-hosted by the Korean organisations SMBA and TIPPA. The training course was held on June 26-27, 2008, in Seoul (Korea).
- » In **2009**, a survey on "***Knowledge based Entrepreneurship Support***" was elaborated as a result of the set up of another **PDU group** on "***SME financing***". The results of this survey were used as a basis for discussion and to start-up the activities of the group. 26 organisations (8 INSME Members and 18 Non - Members), from 12 Countries (4 EU and 8 extra EU), including one International Governmental Organisation, participated in this survey. It investigated the capability to build up programs and initiatives in the fields of "***Investment Readiness***" for the entrepreneurs and "***Ready to Invest***" for the investors. All the participants were interested to some extent in joining in the future an **INSME pilot initiative for transferring practices and building competences**.
- » In **2010**, the INSME Secretary General proposed to create and coordinate a new **PDU Group among the Innovation Networks**, members of INSME, which are all invited to participate.

## Publications

- » **INSMEnews**, the Association's free monthly newsletter, is sent to about **19,000 readers** each month: 91 issues have been published to date (as of September, 2011). In addition, 28 numbers were translated into Spanish thanks to the collaboration with the INSME Members ABCnet,

FUNDES International and De Tullio & Partners and 11 numbers have been translated into Russian thanks to the collaboration with the INSME Member SIORA (the Russian Agency for Small and Medium Business Support).

- » **Annual INSME Members' Compendium** presenting the Association's Members, promoting their activities and facilitating contacts among them (available also on cd-rom).
- » **Business Incubation and Venture Capital: An International Survey on Synergies and Challenges** was released in January 2005 and written in collaboration with INSME Full Members IKED (the International Organisation for Knowledge Economy and Enterprise Development) and IPI (the Italian Institute for Industrial Promotion) as a result of a global survey of 28 incubators from 15 different countries. This document aims to investigate and shed light the following questions: How can business incubators and venture capital investors cooperate? How lucrative is the collaboration for the involved parties and is it possible to increase the VC investment flow to firms within incubators?
- » **Handbook on Innovative Thinking "A methodologies collection to stimulate innovation through creativity"** published in September 2005 by the INSME Secretariat, with the support of international experts that operate in this sector. This publication aimed at contributing to the enhancement of creativity, by offering an overview of different, useful methods that could be applied to improve such capabilities. In 2008, this publication was translated in Korean by the APEC SME Innovation Centre, INSME Member.

## International Partnerships

The INSME Association has created partnerships with **26 organisations** that deal at international, level with issues related to innovation and technology transfer for SMEs, share the objectives set by the Network and are interested in developing synergies, exchanging know how and cooperating with INSME and its Members to gain mutual benefits.

### INSME Partners worldwide:

- Arab Regional Center for Entrepreneurship and Investment Training (ARCEIT)
- ASTP: Association of European Science and Technology Transfer Professionals
- BAIA – Business Association Italy America
- Black Sea Economic Cooperation – BSEC
- BSEC Business Council
- Camera di Commercio Italo Argentina – CaCIA
- China IPR SME Helpdesk
- CORDIS: the Community Research & Development Information Service
- Development Gateway Foundation
- European Alliance for Innovation (EAI)
- EU Gateway Programme
- EU Project Incubation Centre (EUPIC)
- EUREKA
- European Venture Market
- G-ACUA
- EU SME Center
- HTIBI
- IKED – International Organisation for Knowledge Economy and Enterprise Development
- Innovation Management
- IPR HelpDesk
- LEED Programme: Local Economic and Employment Development (OECD)
- LexEcon Consulting Group - LexEcon Pro Bono Initiative
- SPICE Group: Science Park and Innovation Center Experts
- TII: Technology, Innovation, Information
- UNIDO Exchange
- WORLDBIZBANK



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