This action will enhance the evidence base for EU R&I policy through in-depth analyses of the outcomes, experiences and impacts of a critical number of viability assessment projects of innovative solutions for markets outside Europe.

The assessment projects will be selected following a series of open calls organised by the action. The proposal for undertaking the action should define the organisational process for selecting the assessment projects for which financial support will be granted, including the process of selecting, allocating and reporting on the use of independent experts and ensuring no conflicts of interest.

At least 80% of the EU funding shall be allocated to financial support for the third parties carrying out the selected assessment projects. The series of open calls shall address markets of developing countries, large emerging economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China, Mexico) and developed countries with roughly the same allocation for each of these three country category.

The calls should specify that each assessment project should include a wide variety of activities to explore the practical, technological and commercial viability of an innovative solution in particular in terms of how it needs to meet local conditions and demands.

The proposal must clearly detail a fixed and exhaustive list of the different types of activities for which a third party may receive financial support such as market studies, partner search and networking, approaches for client/user involvement including societal, behavioural and cultural aspects, and other activities aimed at overcoming barriers for market introduction and uptake.

The proposal must clearly detail the criteria for awarding financial support and simple and comprehensive criteria for calculating the exact amount of such support, which may not exceed EUR 60 000 for each assessment project. The award criteria must be objective and non-discriminatory.

Each assessment project shall be led by an entity established in an EU Member State or Horizon 2020 Associated Country and shall involve at least one entity not established in an EU Member State or Horizon 2020 Associated Country. The proposal shall specify whether and how the latter would be funded according to its type of involvement (e.g. subcontractor, cooperation agreement) and its geographic origin (country automatically eligible for funding or not according to Horizon 2020 rules). Highly innovative SMEs with clear commercial ambitions and potential for high growth and internationalisation shall be targeted in particular.

The open calls must be published widely, including on the Horizon 2020 Participants Portal and through National Contact Points, and Horizon 2020 standards with respect to transparency, equal treatment, no conflict of interest and respect of confidentiality must be adhered to. The results of the calls must be published without delay, including, for each assessment project, a description of the project, the legal name and country of the third party, the start date and duration of the project, and the amount of the award.
The proposal should specify how it will promote the calls, how it will monitor and report on call results and how it will assess the quality of the outcomes and experiences from the assessment projects, as well as how it will provide regular in-depth analyses and which indicators will be used for measuring the impacts achieved. Analyses should draw up R&I policy conclusions on questions such as which additional joint R&I activities in third countries should be supported, what framework conditions for R&I cooperation need improving, and what further R&I support services should be implemented.

The Commission considers that a proposal requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 9 million would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting another amount. The selected beneficiary or beneficiaries should have a solid operational and financial capacity.

New and emerging markets outside Europe offer huge opportunities for the European industry. To compete effectively in these markets, European companies and especially SMEs need to develop partnerships with innovation players in these economies from early on and to develop receptiveness for local success. This is crucial to better understand the specific market context and the consequent needs and demands of emerging users and consumers. The end goal is to bring a new product, service or process to the foreign market, possibly through an innovative application of existing technologies, methodologies, or business processes.

- Economic growth and job creation, both in Europe and in the target countries, as well as additional societal and environmental benefits.
- Increased European economic and industrial competitiveness and excellence and participation in international value chains.
- Inclusion of locally developed and accepted technology and business models, including through co-creation with innovation players in the target countries.
- Greater availability, uptake and use of innovative solutions responding to the specific local needs and circumstances of the target countries and markets.
- R&I policy conclusions based on better connections and larger insights into market conditions outside Europe.