Enhancing the innovativeness of food SME’s through the management of strategic network behaviour and network learning performance

Fact Sheet

Project Information

NETGROW

Grant agreement ID: 245301

Funded under
FP7-KBBE

Project website

Overall budget
€ 3 646 352,40

Status
Closed project

EU contribution
€ 2 956 186

Coordinated by
UNIVERSITEIT GENT
Belgium

Start date
End date
1 May 2010
30 April 2014

Objective

Strategic network learning is of crucial importance for innovation as it enables the food company to expand its resource base and to absorb new trends and technologies. It is observed that food SMEs often fail in establishing a strategic and efficient network. This project sheds new light on this issue by combining research actions at two levels: the focal company level, investigating how attitudes and preferences determine the food SME’s individual network behaviour in order to achieve business objectives. The network level, investigating the functioning of the network as a whole and how this results in innovation and economic growth and how network stakeholders can make the network better performing. The project combines scientific research with developing network learning tools of practical use to food SMEs, network organisations and policy makers. A broad definition of networks is applied, including networking with competitors, suppliers, knowledge centres and a
variety of other actors through formal and informal linkages. Research activities take three steps: (1) profound analysis of success factors and barriers for network learning. Particular focus is on the relationship between informal and formal networking and global networks. (2) Network behaviour is analysed at the focal company level, providing insight in network characteristics affecting innovation and SMEs’ preferences for different network designs. (3) a prototype tool is developed and tested to assess performance of the network at network level. In the development stage of the project, the network learning toolbox will be developed, market-tested and launched. It consists of a set of instruments to enhance the capacity of SME’s, network organizations and policy makers to improve network learning based on strategic network management. The strength of the toolbox lies in the confrontation of our instruments with the business perspective and two-stage testing within SMEs and network organizations.

Programme(s)

Topic(s)

Call for proposal

FP7-KBBE-2009-3

Funding Scheme

CP-FP - Small or medium-scale focused research project

Coordinator

UNIVERSITEIT GENT

Address
Sint Pietersnieuwstraat 25
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Activity type
Higher or Secondary Education Establishments

EU contribution
€ 647 079

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Activity type
Private for-profit entities (excluding Higher or Secondary Education Establishments)

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Agricultural Catchments Programme

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€ 351 592

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EU contribution
€ 397 720

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**DEBRECENI EGYETEM**  
Hungary

EU contribution  
€ 169,360

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Higher or Secondary  
Education Establishments

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EU contribution  
€ 316,560

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Other

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Denmark

EU contribution  
€ 299,640

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RHEINISCHE FRIEDRICH-WILHELMS-UNIVERSITAT BONN

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