

THE RUSMECO PROJECT

– creating a "Community of Practice" for Russian SMEs

Motivation

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play an increasingly important role in the Russian economy, with significant social and economic functions. However, the Russian SME sector hasn't reached the status of its Western European equivalent, which is responsible for 2/3 of total employment (Russia: 50%) and which has become the main driver of innovation in the European Union, whereas Russian SMEs - despite their high innovation potential - do not possess yet the capabilities to defend their position on the global market.

Project Objectives

The aim of the EU-funded project RUSMECO is to raise competitiveness of innovative Russian SMEs through establishing an inter-regional network, a so-called "Community of Practice (CoP)", between SME clusters in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Ekaterinburg. The intention of this Community of Practice is to enable SMEs and other interested organisations to share knowledge and experiences on subjects of common interest and thereby to enhance individual management capabilities and SME performance.

Main Platform Contents

The topics the RUSMECO CoP will focus on are

- **innovation:** i.e. marketing, intellectual property rights and technology transfer,
- **external relationships:** i.e. value-chain aspects (interaction with suppliers and customers),
- **internal processes:** i.e. quality management and internal communication processes.

Main Platform Features

The community will interact via web-based **collaboration tools** such as chats, online workshops and discussions forums. A knowledge repository with case **studies, training modules, articles** and **links to experts** will be used to make knowledge easily accessible. A **self-assessment tool** will help companies to further specify their main problems.

RUSMECO intends to foster the collaboration and exchange of the community companies with further organisations outside the consortium. The platform thus contains a "*brokerage area*", where external companies can identify suitable SMEs from the RUSMECO community for collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Consortium

The **RUSMECO consortium** consists of a mix of 12 partners from Russia and four EU countries, universities, research institutes and industrial companies. Five SME networks from the three regions the project concentrates on (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ekaterinburg) are formally committed to the project as supportive partners.

PARTNERS

