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(Announcements)

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

COMMISSION

CALL FOR PROPOSALS — DG ENTR — ACTION No ENT5/CIP/07/B/N02C00
IPR Awareness and Enforcement Project (including IPR Helpdesk)
(2007/C 79/03)

1. Objectives and Description

As part of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme and following the recommendations of the Commission's Communication 'Putting knowledge into practice: A broad-based innovation strategy for the EU' the European Commission implements a measure to increase innovation of enterprises by addressing their needs in the area of IPR usage and enforcement, targeted especially to SMEs.

The legal basis for this Call for proposals is the Article 13 of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP). This Call constitutes part of the work programme of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP), which is one of the three CIP sub-programmes.

The objective of this call is to implement a 3-year IPR Awareness and Enforcement Project targeted primarily at SMEs, taking into full consideration their specific needs and contributing:

— To raise significantly SMEs interest and knowledge about Intellectual Property issues,

— To raise SMEs understanding of the need to integrate IP in their innovation strategies and their business planning,

— To improve the protection of SMEs IP rights through increased registration of rights across the EU and internationally and increased use of non-registered protection methods,

— To improve the protection and enforcement by SMEs of their IPR from infringements whether originating from within or outside the EU,

— To raise SMEs ability to fight counterfeiting.

In addition to deliver broad-based SME awareness and enforcement actions, the project will address specific sectoral needs and support IPR usage in international research and technology transfer projects.

The project will cover all forms of IPR, both those formally registered (patents, designs, trade marks etc.) and those protected by non-registered or informal methods (non-disclosure agreements, trade secrets etc.).
The project will build upon major existing players and services. It will cooperate with the members of the CIP Network in support of Business and Innovation (1). It will foster closer collaboration between IP experts and innovation and enforcement actors across Europe, in order to improve SMEs and public Research Organisations access to IPR services at EU, national, and regional levels. Close collaboration will also be ensured with the National Patent and Trademark Offices, the Office of Harmonization for the Internal Market, the European Patent Office and with relevant Commission IPR initiatives.

The project will be developed in 3 modules targeting each specific needs and audiences. In addition, a fourth module is designed to constitute the base for this project by providing a common knowledge base and toolbox and by ensuring the overall project coordination and management. Each single proposal will cover all 4 modules.

— The first module will deliver general awareness and enforcement support actions to European SMEs, including high-tech SMEs, covering both IP usage and enforcement, based on local collaboration between IPR experts and innovation structures (Network in support of Business and Innovation, innovation and enforcement agencies, industry stakeholders etc.).

— The second module will provide specific support on protection of IPR to the fashion and design industries (textiles, leather, footwear and furniture) trough a multilingual guide and a series of awareness-raising.

— The third module (FP7/CIP IPR Helpdesk) will contribute to raise IPR awareness and usage in the frame of EU-funded research and technology transfer activities and provide first-line assistance CIP and FP7 beneficiaries.

— The last module will develop and maintain a common knowledge base (guidelines and tools) for the project in order to achieve the economies of scale, promote cross-fertilisation, and ensure the development of best practices across the European Union. This module will also ensure the overall project management, ensuring good coordination and synergy between the different modules and efficient implementation of the project.

2. Eligible applicants

Applicants eligible to present proposals are groups of organisations (referred to as ‘consortia’) from Member States of the EU, Associated candidate countries or Associated States, or countries that establish a bilateral agreement with the European Community to participate in the CIP programme or parts of it, as defined in Article 4 of the CIP.

Organisations based in Candidate countries (Croatia, Turkey and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and EEA countries (Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland) are eligible on the same conditions as those from EU member states to apply in a consortium.

Co-operation with other third countries (2) can be based on the envisaged participation in the CIP as described above for candidate countries. In this case, negotiations with the European Commission on participation in the CIP should be reasonably advanced at the time of the deadline of this call.

3. Budget and project duration

The total budget earmarked for the cofinancing of is estimated at EUR 7 900 000 maximum. Financial assistance from the Commission cannot exceed 80 % of the total eligible costs.

The maximum duration of projects is 36 months.

(1) The CIP Network providing services in support of Business and Innovation, co-funded by the European Commission, aims at offering to SMEs a comprehensive set of business and innovation services. It will replace the current Innovation Relay Centres Network and the Euro-Info Centres Network. It is currently subject to a call for proposal under the CIP. For more information see: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/funding/grants/themes_2006/eic_irc/calls_prop_2006_eic_irc_d2.htm

(2) Including the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, including Kosovo UNSCR 1244).
4. **Deadline**
Applications must be sent to the Commission no later than 22 June 2007.

5. **Further information**
The full text of the call for proposals and the application forms are available on the following website:
Applications must comply with the requirements set out in the full text and be submitted using the form provided.