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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

List of EU actions supporting SMEs in a green economy

Accompanying the document

**Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the
European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions**

GREEN ACTION PLAN FOR SMEs

Enabling SMEs to turn environmental challenges into business opportunities

{ COM(2014) 440 final }

GREEN ACTION PLAN FOR SMEs

ENABLING SMEs TO TURN ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES INTO BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

LIST OF ACTIONS

Information on the actions that appear in this Staff Working Document will be punctually updated and uploaded on the following website:

European Commission, Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry:

http://wcmcom-ec-europa-eu-wip.wcm3vue.cec.eu.int:8080/enterprise/policies/sme/public-consultation-green-action-plan/index_en.htm

Section	Why is this important for SMEs? Objectives	Action	Description of the action
I. Greening SMEs for more competitiveness and sustainability	I.1 Provide European SMEs with practical information, advice and support on how to improve their resource	1. Establishment of a “ European Resource Efficiency Excellence Centre ”	<p>European SMEs often need to improve their resource-efficiency, in order to increase their competitiveness and contribute to a greener economy. For that purpose, the Resource Efficiency Excellence Centre to be set up in 2015 will provide information, advice and support, directly and through partners, on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. actual SME resource efficiency performance, compared to the sector benchmark2. technological options to increase this resource-efficiency in their sector3. cost-effectiveness of those options, with a view to financing them <p>The European Resource Efficiency Excellence Centre will progressively develop databases and assessment tools in those 3 domains, with a modular approach and using the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) agreed taxonomy. It</p>

	efficiency in a cost-effective manner		<p>will also provide technical assistance/free advice to help SMEs to be more resource efficient in specific areas.</p> <p>The Resource Efficiency Self-Assessment Tool for SMEs (COSME 2014) is conceived as the first module towards the establishment of a European Resource Efficiency Excellence Centre, and will be further developed and integrated into the Centre. The Resource Efficiency Self-Assessment Tool for SMEs will be developed to provide SMEs with a user-friendly method to assess their resource efficiency performance and to explore and decide which measures could be taken to improve their resource efficiency performance. This two-year action will develop the tool based on a proven methodology adapted to an EU-wide context, as well as test it with SMEs, and also set up a European information database on the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of different types of resource efficiency improvements, collected from SME self-assessments.</p> <p>The European Resource Efficiency Excellence Centre (COSME 2015) will integrate data from, and encourage data provision by the EEN sector groups, as well as from other relevant EU initiatives.</p> <p>The European Resource Efficiency Excellence Centre will provide the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - integration, maintenance and development of the Resource Efficiency Self-Assessment Tool for SMEs. It will assess the economic impact of resource efficiency measures. Cost savings and returns on investments are key data that the tool should be able to quantify and collect. - development of technological fiches explaining in a user-friendly way the available resource-efficiency technologies, listing the sectoral applications and providing, when available and agreed, examples. - mapping of national strategies, programmes and actions in the field of resource efficiency and SME support in order to be able to refer SMEs to such initiatives when appropriate. - liaising with national and regional partners and with the EEN partners, who will develop advisory services in that domain, building on the information services of the Resource Efficiency Excellence Centre. - providing training to its partners and to EEN experts 4 times per year, by providing 3 training sessions in a central location, and one back-to-back with the EEN Annual Meeting, in order to get the maximum impact of such trainings. - providing clear statistical data on the Return on Investments (RoI) of specific resource efficiency investments to financial institutions. SMEs asking for financing will also have this information at their
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			<p>disposal to support their demand. Where appropriate, the Commission services will disseminate information to the financial sector about the financial viability of resource efficiency improvements in SMEs through its stakeholders meetings and platforms.</p> <p>The development and the operation of the European Resource Efficiency Excellence Centre should ideally be performed by a consortium formed by a network of officially recognised partners with proven track records of working on improving resource efficiency in SMEs over a three-year period. Partners should guarantee large territorial coverage for the activities, ideally at national level or at regional level. The consortium should actively seek new officially recognised partners in those Member States where support for SMEs on resource efficiency is at early stages of development or still missing, building also on the EEN. The consortium should be open to new members up until 6 months before the end of the period. The objective is to gather partners that cover at least 80% of the EU economy.</p>
		<p>2. Information on the drivers and obstacles that SMEs face to be more resource efficient</p>	<p>Flash Eurobarometer survey designed specifically to address the drivers and obstacles that SMEs face to be more resource efficient. Representatives of companies, both SMEs and large companies serving as a reference group, will be interviewed across the EU, a number of other European countries and the US. The survey will be launched over time in intervals of 2-3 years to assess resource efficiency trends among SMEs.</p> <p>The content of the survey will be designed with a view to orientate the work of the Resource Efficiency Excellence Centre.</p> <p>The surveys launched in 2012 and 2013 revealed sources of untapped potential for improving resource efficiency in EU SMEs. The next survey should take place in 2015.</p> <p>Link to surveys 342 and 381: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/flash_arch_390_375_en.htm</p>
		<p>3. Awareness raising campaign on resource efficiency by the Enterprise Europe</p>	<p>Enterprise Europe Network partners will be encouraged to</p> <p>1) organise a European Resource Efficiency campaign with awareness raising activities (information on their websites, social media, presentations in (existing network) events, B2B events) to inform SMEs of the positive benefits and opportunities offered by resource efficiency (to encourage the take-up of green technologies and showcase green technologies developed or tested by EU programmes) and</p> <p>2) provide resource efficiency advisory services to SMEs (information on relevant programmes/sources of</p>

	<u>Network</u>	finance/funding, foster business partnerships to enhance resource efficiency).
	4. Guide for Managing Authorities of the European Structural and Investment Funds to support resource efficiency in SMEs	<p>The guide, to be published in 2015, will showcase successful projects and studies executed in the field of resource efficiency and provide a practical toolbox and recommendations to decision-makers in the Managing Authorities of the <u>European Structural and Investment Funds</u>. Projects enabling SMEs to exploit opportunities in green markets would be especially highlighted (e.g. projects in support of resource efficient or environmental product and service design, developing skills for adopting green business models, improving the resource efficiency and environmental performance of enterprises or helping them to produce for green markets).</p> <p>The guide will also provide information on the specificities of the circular economy, i.e. the role of treating waste as a resource for industry and the need for further developing collaborative business approaches such as industrial symbiosis.</p> <p>The guide will be part of the existing Guidebook Series which are published here: <u>http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/regional-sme-policies</u></p>
I.2 Support efficient technology transfer mechanisms for green technologies	5. Revision of the classification methodology of green technologies in the <u>technology transfer database of the Enterprise Europe Network</u>	<p>The action will update the classification of keywords describing resource efficiency and climate related technologies in order to keep up with the evolution of technologies and the key business sectors in which EEN clients are active.</p> <p>This action is instrumental for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – better showcasing technologies conducive to resource efficiency in awareness raising campaigns – closer collaboration with other EU funded initiatives for environment and climate change and it is therefore of strategic relevance for the development of synergies with those EU initiatives. <p>EEN partners will, within the scope of their competencies and tasks, assist SMEs in exploiting the results of EU-funded projects, in particular those financed through COSME and the <u>SME Instrument of Horizon 2020</u>.</p>
	6. Capitalise on Enterprise Europe Network	<p>Invite partners of the future Enterprise Europe Network to ensure close cooperation between the different sector groups dealing with resource efficiency.</p> <p>The objectives of this cooperation will be to exchange information on the work of the different EEN sector groups and to help transfer good practice within the Network on how to help SMEs improve their resource efficiency.</p>

	partners' experience on resource efficiency for SMEs	This will also play a role in obtaining feedback from SMEs on resource efficiency matters and provide this data to the Resource Efficiency Excellence Centre.
I.3 Facilitate the access to finance for resource-related improvements and energy efficiency in SMEs	7. Provide accessible information for SMEs on actions in support of resource efficiency improvements	<p>Several SME- oriented websites of the European Commission will be updated and gradually start transition to the Commission's new web presence due to be launched in 2015. The new site (or sites, depending on the timing of the transition) will focus on the user and therefore structure content according to users' top tasks and themes. This will contribute to better showing available environmental information, EU funding available for resource efficiency improvements as well as non-financial support, clearly separating documents referring to the political context from financial support measures as such.</p> <p>In particular, the action will focus first, on updating the 'European Small Business Portal' (funding section), the 'Access to Finance Portal', the EEN website as well as 'Your Europe-Business', second, switching focus to identification and satisfaction of user needs, and third, further promoting resource efficiency to SMEs through transitioning to the Commission's new user-centric presence, including through the Horizon 2020 web portal and participant portal.</p> <p>Links will be established to the European Resource Efficiency Excellence Centre (Action1 in this table).</p>
	8. European Investment Bank to provide financing through financial intermediaries for resource efficiency improvements linked to	<p>The European Commission and the European Investment Bank are developing the Natural Capital Financing Facility (NCFF), an instrument that will serve three objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – establish a pipeline of replicable, bankable natural capital projects that will serve as a "proof of concept" – demonstrate to private investors the attractiveness of natural capital projects for the longer term – leverage funding from private investors for this pipeline of projects through the use of EU funds <p>SMEs will be one of the categories of final beneficiaries that will be funded through this instrument.</p> <p>In addition, sharing of best practices for innovative financing for biodiversity, including for SMEs, will be developed through the EU Business @ Biodiversity Platform.</p>

		<p>ecosystem services and climate change adaptation</p>	
		<p>9. Financial instruments specifically targeting SMEs</p>	<p>Private Finance for Energy Efficiency instruments (PF4EE)</p> <p>The targeted final recipients under the PF4EE instrument are expected to be defined in the context of Member States' National Energy Efficiency Action Plans (NEEAP) and will primarily be those targeted by the national/regional schemes developed by Member States to implement their NEEAPs. They would comprise SMEs and mid-cap larger companies and private individuals, but could also include small municipalities or other public sector bodies undertaking small energy efficiency investments, capable of using energy savings to repay up-front borrowing.</p>
		<p>10. Establish a Network of Eco-Innovation financiers</p>	<p>This action (CIP 2013) will establish an EU-wide network and community of public and private financiers and investors that support eco-innovation. It will create a one-stop-shop web platform for eco-innovation business projects and investors that will provide information, guidance and tools and it will also incorporate a matchmaking platform. It will also establish an Eco-Innovation Investors Network, with participants who have a direct interest in exploring and investing in business opportunities stemming from the very broad eco-innovation market segment. The action is expected to generate deals and investment for the creation and growth of a large number of clean-tech companies and to increase the capital raised for clean-tech.</p>
		<p>11. Possibilities for investments in competitiveness and energy efficiency and renewable energy use in SMEs under</p>	<p>Member States and regions may support investments in the competitiveness and greening of SMEs and improvements of energy efficiency and renewable energy use by using the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for the period 2014-2020.</p> <p>Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs and promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy use in enterprises are key thematic priorities under the ERDF which are also subject to thematic concentration of the available funds.</p> <p>Therefore, Member States and regions may support various investments in the competitiveness and greening of the SMEs (e.g. productive investment, support for enterprises, networking, cooperation and technical assistance). Member States and regions may also provide investments in the improvements of energy efficiency and renewable energy use. As in general, the energy efficiency investments will entail a cost-savings and even revenue-</p>

		the European Regional Development Fund	<p>generating stream (from renewables), the focus should be on leveraging private invests (e.g. through financial instruments) and limited use of grants mainly to more advanced but costly solutions (e.g. support deep renovation of buildings).</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/regional/index_en.cfm</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/fiche_sme_en.pdf</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/fiche_low_carbon_en.pdf</p>
		12. Possibilities for investments in energy efficiency under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund	<p>Member States may support various investments in energy efficiency of marine and inland waters fishing vessels and of processing of fishery and aquaculture products by using the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) for the period 2014-2020.</p> <p>Member States can also use the EMFF to support various investments intended to increase resource efficiency in fisheries (including inland fisheries), aquaculture and processing of fishery and aquaculture products. Promoting and fostering environmentally sustainable, resource efficient, innovative and knowledge-based fisheries and aquaculture are key thematic priorities under the EMFF.</p> <p>Support is available under increased aid intensity for operations implemented by SMEs.</p>
II. Green entrepreneurship for the companies of the future	II.1 Promote all forms of eco-innovation, including non-technological eco-innovation	13. Support the development and demonstration of eco-innovative business ideas	<p>“The new SME Instrument under Horizon 2020 will encourage SMEs to put forward their most innovative ideas with an EU dimension. It targets highly innovative SMEs showing a strong ambition to develop, grow and internationalise. It consists of three separate phases and a coaching and mentoring service for beneficiaries. Participants can apply to phase 1 with a view to applying to phase 2 at a later date, or directly to phase 2.</p> <p>In phase 1, a feasibility study shall be developed verifying the technological/practical as well as economic viability of an innovation idea/concept with considerable novelty to the industry sector in which it is presented (new products, processes, services and technologies or new market applications of existing technologies). Bottlenecks in the ability to increase profitability of the enterprise through innovation shall be detected and analyzed during phase 1 and addressed during phase 2 to increase the return in investment in innovation activities. The proposal should contain an initial business plan based on the proposed idea/concept. Funding will be provided in the form of a lump sum of EUR 50.000. Proposals should last around 6 months.</p>

		<p>In phase 2, innovation projects will be supported that address the specific challenges identified and that demonstrate high potential in terms of company competitiveness and growth underpinned by a strategic business plan. Activities should focus on innovation activities such as demonstration, testing, prototyping, piloting, scaling-up, miniaturization, design, market replication and the like aiming to bring an innovation idea (product, process, service, etc.) to industrial readiness and maturity for market introduction close to deployment and market introduction, but may also include some research. For technological innovation a Technology Readiness Levels of 6 or above (or similar for non-technological innovations) are envisaged. Proposals shall be based on an elaborated business plan either developed through phase 1 or another means. Particular attention must be paid to IP protection and ownership. The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of between EUR 0.5 and 2.5 million would allow phase 2 to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts. Proposals should last between 12 and 24 months.</p> <p>In addition, in phase 3, SMEs can benefit from indirect support measures and services as well as access to the financial facilities supported under Access to Risk Finance of this work program.</p> <p>Successful beneficiaries will be offered coaching and mentoring support during phase 1 and phase 2. This service will be accessible via the Enterprise Europe Network and delivered by a dedicated coach through consultation and signposting to the beneficiaries.</p> <p>The single SME instrument call includes topics particularly relevant to innovation-driven SMEs seeking to commercialise eco-innovative products, services or processes, including under Horizon 2020 societal challenges 2, 3, 4 and 5.</p>
	14. Support systemic approach to eco-innovation and circular economy	Horizon 2020 funds collaborative R&D actions that are of particular relevance to eco-innovation driven SMEs, not least under its Societal Challenge "Climate Action, Environment, Resource Efficiency and Raw Materials" , in terms of increasing resource efficiency through a systemic approach towards eco-innovation and in the setting up of a circular economy. All form of innovation are covered. Different types of activities going from research to demonstration, to market uptake, coordination and networking are addressed, for instance in the fields of waste and water.
	15. Possibilities for investments in SME innovation	Innovation and SMEs' entrepreneurship are key thematic priorities under the European Regional Development Fund for the period 2014-2020 which are also subject to thematic concentration of the available funds. Member States and regions are, therefore, encouraged to provide funding for various activities, including related to eco-innovation and green entrepreneurship. For example, these could include research/innovation vouchers, financial instruments, technology audits, advisory services and platforms, intellectual property management and acquisition,

	and entrepreneurship under the European Regional Development Fund	incubators, clusters, business angel networks, university-business cooperation schemes, large scale demonstrators. http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/regional/index_en.cfm http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/fiche_sme_en.pdf http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/fiche_low_carbon_en.pdf
	16. Possibilities for investments in innovation under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund	Support for innovation is a key thematic priority under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). Support for investments in innovation regarding products, processes and techniques, management and organisation systems is available for fisheries (including inland fisheries), aquaculture, community-led local development with regard to the sustainable development of fisheries areas and processing of fishery and aquaculture areas. Support is available under increased aid intensity for operations implemented by SMEs.
II.2 Facilitate business partnering, skills and knowledge for green entrepreneurship	Skills development for the greening of the economy	The Communication <i>Green Employment Initiative</i> . – <i>Tapping into the job creation potential of the green economy</i> proposes a comprehensive roadmap for skills development for the greening of the economy such as, inter alia, actions 17-19 below.
	17. Promote green entrepreneurship and related business creation skills	The Climate Knowledge and Innovation Community (Climate-KIC) of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) will deliver innovative climate-focused education models at graduate and post-graduate levels and develop further its new business creation instruments to foster climate-related entrepreneurship.

18. Foster higher education and enterprise cooperation to trigger innovative solutions and entrepreneurship	<p>The Erasmus+ programme, key action 2 'Cooperation for innovation and good practices' supports the establishment of Knowledge Alliances, which are transnational, structured and result-driven projects between higher education institutions and public or private, small, medium or large enterprises for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - jointly designed and delivered innovative learning and teaching methods - introducing entrepreneurship knowledge, skills and motivation in order to trigger students, enterprise and academic staff to engage in entrepreneurial activities in their environment - cross-sectoral and reciprocal mobility for continuing educational programmes, supervision, teaching and activities with and within companies <p>The programme is open to any discipline, including the field of the green economy. Selected Knowledge Alliances are funded with EUR 700,000 (for a 2-year project) or up to EUR 1,000,000 (for a 3-year project) following yearly calls for proposals.</p> <p>150 Knowledge Alliances between 1500 higher education institutions and enterprises are expected to be built by 2020.</p>
19. Vocational Education and Training to tackle sector-specific skills gaps on environmental technologies and eco-innovation	<p>The Erasmus+ programme, key action 2 'Cooperation for innovation and good practices' supports the establishment of Sector Skills Alliances, which are transnational projects drawing on evidence of trends in a specific economic sector and the skills needed in order to perform in one or more professional field. They support the design and delivery of joint vocational training curricula.</p> <p>Selected Sector Skills Alliances are funded with a grant ranging from EUR 700,000 (for a 2-year project) or up to EUR 1,000,000 (for a 3-year project) following yearly calls for proposals.</p> <p>One of the sectors which are eligible under this action is "environmental technologies" (eco-innovation). Public or private, small, medium or large enterprises (including social enterprises) are eligible participating organisations for the Sector Skills Alliances.</p> <p>Up to 150 Sector Skills Alliances are expected to be set up by 2020.</p>
20. Verify the performance of innovative	<p>Environmental Technology Verification (ETV) helps bringing innovative environmental technologies to the market by providing verified evidence that they are credible, scientifically sound and that they perform as claimed. This is particularly beneficial for technologies whose performance goes beyond established standards, and for</p>

environmental technologies	<p>SMEs willing to differentiate their innovative products from those of competitors and to penetrate new technology markets.</p> <p>The on-going pilot project on ETV tries out ETV on a large scale with volunteer organisations and Member States. 9 verification bodies have been accredited and have begun implementing ETV. Grant agreements were concluded with Verification Bodies under the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme to help kick-start ETV.</p> <p>On the basis of a positive evaluation of the pilot project, planned in 2015, the ETV pilot programme may be rolled out on a full scale as of 2016.</p> <p>In the Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2014-2015, ETV is addressed in the impacts of four topics under the societal challenges on 'secure, clean and efficient energy' and on 'climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials'. ETV may also be included in proposals under other topics as far as it is consistent with the topic description and eligible activities.</p>
21. Enhance new business models for resource efficiency and energy efficiency in SMEs	<p>The LIFE programme prioritises projects implementing new business models for resource efficiency and energy efficiency, including establishing resource efficiency practices in SMEs, focusing on the environmental impact, durability, reuse, repair and recycling of their products and processes – including sharing or leasing of products rather than selling them. This should involve one of the industrial sectors considered as a priority in the Roadmap for a Resource Efficient Europe, and the new business model should result in a reduction in material use and/or energy and water use.</p>
22. Recognise the efforts to support green entrepreneurship	<p>The European Enterprise Promotion Awards is a competition to reward the most imaginative and successful initiatives of EU public bodies and public-private partnerships which support entrepreneurship. Since 2013, there is a specific category to reward organisations which support the development of green markets and resource efficiency:</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=7239&lang=en&title=2014%2DEuropean%2DEnterprise%2DPromotion%2DAwards%2Dlaunch%2D</p> <p>The possible inclusion of 'Circular Economy Awards' at firm level, sector level and systems level will be explored.</p>

	II.3 Exploit better the role of clusters in support of eco-innovative SMEs	23. Integrate the resource efficiency topic into the trainings on cluster excellence	Resource efficiency will become a specific topic in the trainings under the Cluster Excellence Programme (COSME 2014-2020). This will aim to make cluster managers fully aware of the potential of the actions that can be launched in their clusters to further foster productivity, sustainability and competitiveness within and between their SME members.
III. Opportunities for SMEs in a greener value chain	III.1 Address systemic barriers to cross-sectoral and cross-national value chain collaboration and business creation and cooperation, by facilitating the creation of service business models and the re-use of materials, products and waste	24. Analysis of barriers to, and potential of the circular economy, including SME aspects	<p>Analysis of the systemic barriers impeding the deployment of circular business models is crucial to develop the best possible actions at EU level to address any possible shortcomings.</p> <p>An on-going study, entitled "Scoping study to identify potential circular economy actions, priority sectors, material flows & value chains" is looking at systemic barriers such as policy issues and gaps, and it aims to identify priority value chains, material flows and sectors or products where the adoption of the circular economy model would be particularly beneficial. SME aspects will be systematically analysed during the study.</p> <p>A forthcoming study will analyse certain waste streams and the potential of industrial symbiosis to promote waste as a resource for EU industry. This study will complement the work already carried out on the analysis of various waste streams and the competitiveness of their client industries, as well as other relevant reports in this area.</p> <p>These studies will identify possible actions at EU level.</p>
		25. Incentivise cross-sectoral and cross-regional cooperation in support of new resource-efficient value chains	<p>The Horizon 2020 action ‘Cluster facilitated projects for new industrial value chains’ to be implemented as of 2015, is aimed at better unlocking the innovation potential of SMEs, including the eco-innovative and resource-efficient solutions they offer. The action will support cross-sectoral and cross-regional collaboration and innovation projects driven by SMEs by better integrating them into clusters and different value chains. This shall lead to value chain innovation and the development of emerging industries as well as progress towards a more resource-efficient circular economy.</p> <p>At least 75% of the total proposed budget of each project shall be allocated directly or indirectly to support innovation in SMEs.</p>
		26. Benchmark favourable	The European Cluster Observatory (CIP 2013) will provide regions with a better mapping of geographic concentrations of competences in eco-industries as well as identification and analysis of cross-sectoral clustering

<p>conditions conducive for green industries in a region and carry out a "stress test" of the regional eco-system</p>	<p>trends, including cluster internationalisation and industrial transformation trends, related to eco-industries. The European Cluster Observatory will also develop a methodology for the analysis of the framework conditions conducive for the development of emerging industries, such as eco-industries, and will provide a European Regional Ecosystem Scoreboard and a European Stress Test for Cluster Policy, including a self-assessment tool, in order to help regions develop modern cluster strategies. The European Cluster Observatory webpages on the DG ENTR website are currently under construction.</p> <p>The "Emerging industries" report of the European Cluster Observatory already identified eco-industries as an emerging industry based on cross-sectoral financial deals (i.e. mergers & acquisitions and equity deals). An analysis of the industry and cluster-specific framework conditions relevant for the development of world-class clusters in eco-industries has also been carried out.</p> <p>The future European Cluster Observatory for Industrial Change (COSME 2016) will build on the work of the European Cluster Observatory and focus more specifically on the resource efficiency dimension with a view to identify best practices and contribute to the development of circular business models that can underpin the European industrial renaissance.</p>
<p>27. Model demonstrator regions showcasing systemic eco-innovative solutions</p>	<p>Demonstration of systemic eco-innovation best practice examples is needed to raise awareness among individuals, entrepreneurs and policy makers of the social, economic and environmental benefits of a systemic approach that goes across sectors and involves all societal actors.</p> <p>Three or more on-going experiences in which eco-innovative solutions have been implemented with a systemic approach will be identified all over Europe. The aim is to select experiences in which the initiating actor would be either public authorities, or local industries, or individuals.</p>
<p>28. Promote the take-up of the circular economy concept and showcase its benefits</p>	<p>The LIFE programme prioritises support to projects implementing the circular economy concept through actions spanning the value chain or ensuring the use of secondary resources/scrap material/waste in other industries or value chains, including eco-design, cascading use of materials, repair, remanufacture, reuse, recycling, new circular business concepts, innovative take-back and collection systems, and industrial symbiosis-related projects.</p>

		29. Establish an expert group to focus on systemic approach to eco-innovation	As foreseen in the Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2014-2015, in the Societal Challenge 'Climate Action, Environment, Resource Efficiency and Raw Materials', under 'Other Actions', the European Commission will set up an Expert Group to focus on a systemic approach to eco-innovation.
IV. Access to the markets for green SMEs	IV.1 Promote a greener European internal market	30. Encourage European Standardisation Organisations to take into account circular economy objectives when creating standards	<p>The action will ensure that the European Standardisation Organisations take environmental aspects into consideration in standardisation and consider key resource efficiency (and circular economy) issues such as durability, recyclability, reparability (ref CEN/CENELEC Guide 4). This action will also encourage all stakeholders in standardisation to take account of environmental issues through training modules.</p> <p>The action is a logical consequence of the Commission's previous efforts to integrate environmental aspects into European standardisation.</p> <p>This action should take into account the Annual Union Work Programme for European Standardisation (AUWP) drafted in accordance with the Regulation on Standardisation (1025/2012).</p> <p>Through the AUWP the European Commission will also support its bio-economy strategy and foster markets for green products, speeding up the development of standards and their international recognition, promoting labelling and green public procurement.</p>
	IV.2 Facilitate access to international markets for green entrepreneurs	31. Establish European Strategic Cluster Partnerships fostering closer cross-sectoral collaboration in the fields of green technologies	<p>The European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) has enabled the establishment of pilot European Strategic Cluster Partnerships (ESCPs) with no EU funding. These partnerships consist of an alliance between clusters from different sectors, with a view to develop a joint strategy for internationalisation. Some of the existing ESCPs focus on water, energy, clean-tech and natural resource efficiency.</p> <p>The Cluster Internationalisation Programme for SMEs (COSME 2014-2020) will support preparatory actions for the establishment and shaping of new ESCPs with a common European strategic vision, which shall develop and implement a joint strategy to promote cross-sectoral cooperation and to facilitate SME internationalisation in emerging industries. Alliances in the field of green technologies and eco-innovation will be encouraged. Identification of strategic partners across Europe, the development of a legal representation, the preparation of a joint branding and marketing strategy and a roadmap for cooperation can be supported.</p>

		and services.	<p>Moreover, the programme will support the further development and running of established ESCPs or similar existing pan-European alliances of cluster and business network organisations, with actions such as tailored analysis and fact-finding missions or assistance for opening of a joint office abroad, preparing joint business plans and bankable proposals.</p> <p>Finally, the measure will support international cluster and business network cooperation and promotion of ESCPs through the further development of the ECCP.</p>
		32. Ensure that resource efficiency markets are a key sectors in international matchmaking missions	<p>Cluster matchmaking missions will continue to be organised, building upon the experience of the Missions for Growth and the cluster matchmaking events funded under CIP. Those missions will encourage cooperation in the fields of resource efficiency and eco-innovation, and be prioritised on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the specificities of the country targeted and the trading potential. Eco-innovation and resource efficiency will also be priority sectors for cluster matchmaking missions, as well as for B2B and C2C matchmaking events organised by the EEN.</p>
	IV. 3 Facilitate the uptake of resource efficiency technology in partner countries through cooperation with European SMEs	33. Low carbon business action with middle income countries	<p>This action to be implemented under the Partnership Instrument 2014-2020 will provide technical assistance for the establishment of Cooperation Partnerships between EU businesses and clusters and businesses and other counterparts in middle income countries and for the elaboration of joint bankable proposals that reflect the interests of both parties, with the aim of obtaining financial support for the implementation of the resulting low carbon technology solutions.</p> <p>The action will engage actors at three levels, (local) governmental, intermediary business associations such as clusters, and companies directly, with the goal of greening industries by adopting low carbon technology in areas such as energy production and consumption, transport, manufacturing process, waste management, agriculture and forestry. This action will be coordinated with, and seek synergies among the different EU instruments at work, and ensure EU policy coherence for development.</p> <p>Pilot actions with Brazil and Mexico are being launched under the Annual Action Programme 2014.</p>
		34. Green technology transfer action	<p>The green technology transfer action from Europe to South Mediterranean countries shall help entrepreneurs and SMEs from these countries build new entrepreneurial activities based on green technologies, such as clean-tech services that support the “greening of industry” and innovative business solutions in support of resource</p>

		<p>from Europe to South Mediterranean countries</p>	<p>efficiency, through cooperation with European SMEs.</p> <p>This action will be coordinates with, and seek synergies among the different EU instruments at work, and ensure EU policy coherence for development. It will build on the 2012 Survey on Sustainable Enterprise Development in the Mediterranean Partner Countries and also consider the 2013 evaluation of progress in this area with reference to the Small Business Act.</p> <p>A pilot action was launched in 2013 under the 'EuroMed Innovative Entrepreneurs for Change' preparatory action funded by the European Parliament. It is being implemented as part of the joint EU-UNIDO action SWITCH-MED.</p>
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