

EU-project PLATON

**Some remarks on supporting the participation of
SMEs in socio-economic research projects**

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October 2005 – December 2007

- ◆ **Why?**
- ◆ **Which SME?**
- ◆ **For which tasks?**

- ◆ **PLATON activities**

- ◆ **First results / FP7 deadline (May 10th)**

Starting point of the project:

- ◆ **Very low interest of companies**
- ◆ **Low experience to involve SMEs or SME groupings in research activities**
- ◆ **Very low participation of companies in FP6 socio-economic research projects**
- ◆ **PLATON is the first supportive project for Social Sciences and Humanities**

- ◆ Why? Which SME? For which tasks ?

Benefits for scientists:

**SMEs or SME Groupings as partners / subcontractors / dissemination partner
can help to**

- ◆ **Transfer knowledge** (for example, SME groupings address directly 100s (if not 1000s) of companies and can communicate your results),
 - ◆ **Enhance the perception and demonstrate the value of socio-economic research to enterprises,**
- and to
- ◆ **Improve the chances for a better evaluation of your project proposal**

- ◆ Why? Which SME? For which tasks ?

Benefits for SMEs and SME groupings:

Research in the field of the Socio-economic Sciences and the Humanities (SSH) can be of high value for SMEs and SME groupings as it can help them to understand & assimilate current and future socio-economic trends that affect:

- ◆ Their business environment
- ◆ The needs and requirements of their clients
- ◆ The successful commercialisation of their products or services

- ◆ Why? Which SME? For which tasks ?

SME and SME groupings can be valuable partners at all stages, from the idea generation to post-project phase: It depends on you which roles you might

Type of company:	Possible roles:	At project stage:
SME groupings (all sectors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Advisor ◆ Project partner ◆ Projects partner for defined tasks ◆ Partner / subcontractor for surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Project design ◆ Project implementation ◆ Workpackages implementation ◆ Workpackages implementation / validation / dissemination
SMEs with SSH focus on their daily work (consultancies, research companies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Project partner ◆ Projects partner for defined tasks ◆ Dissemination partner ◆ Project management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Project performance ◆ Workpackages implementation / validation / dissemination ◆ Project management
SMEs without SSH focus (e.g. industry)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Interview partner for surveys... 	

PLATON activities

Awareness

- ◆ Information days and Trainings ..

Networking

- ◆ Networking events ...

Matching

- ◆ Through database (www.platonproject.net)
- ◆ Individually

Next steps:

- ◆ **Matching for deadline No.2 (Nov 2007)**
- ◆ **Supporting proposal writers to identify possible roles for SME groupings or individual SMEs**

In PLATONS database: 550 registered users with their profiles

- ◆ **155 are SMEs,**
- ◆ **36 are SME groupings,**
- ◆ **111 organisations characterized by themselves as “other type” (e.g. NGOs, private research organisations)**

First outcomes:

- ◆ The matching of consultancies and experienced SMEs working in the field of SSH issues has been achieved without problems. Research organisations were interested in the contact to specialized companies and were more open to involve them as SME from other sectors.
- ◆ For a successful matching of SMEs without basic experience of former FP, cooperation with other mediators (like National Contact Points and Euro Info Center) was the most important factor.
- ◆ SME groupings could be motivated to develop own research ideas and own proposals; the involvement as project partner sometimes was difficult due to long internal decision processes.

Some general suggestions from PLATON:

1. To the European Commission: design topics and calls that require specific roles and tasks for SME associations.
2. To the European Commission / SSH Coordinators: enhance the stakeholder role of SMEs from the design phase on through consultation and dissemination of results/progress.
3. To the European Commission: make validation of results by SMEs / SME associations mandatory in projects studying SMEs. Small amounts of funding for this could be made available in project budgets.
4. To the European Commission: make the analysis of the socio-economic impact of research results mandatory in all plans for using and disseminating knowledge in all research projects. This will serve to raise the awareness of SMEs and their associations about the horizontal relevance of socioeconomic considerations.

Thank you for your attention!

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