

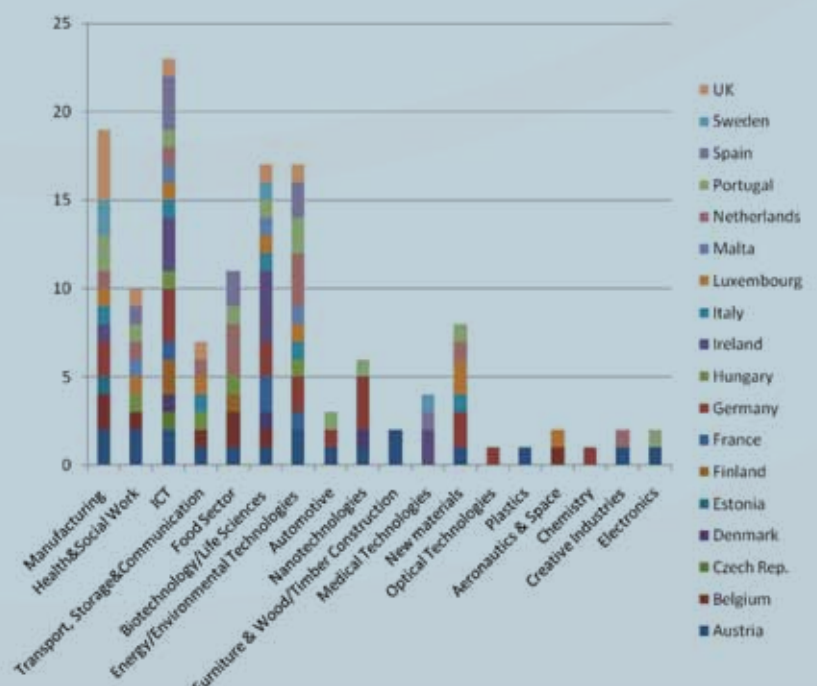
Our goal is to acquire comprehensive insight into the design, implementation and impact of existing SME research and innovation programmes and initiatives. Particular emphasis is being placed on identifying characteristics of the RTD programmes targeted implicitly or explicitly at SME.

As a result, a total of 28 national reports have been elaborated covering the analysis of over 200 SME supporting national and regional RTD programmes.

These programmes are:

- SME-focused, involving all important SME stakeholders  
i.e. slightly over 200 programme managers and policy representatives had been interviewed
- Nationally and regionally focused, covering the 27 EU member states plus Bosnia-Herzegovina  
National programmes have been analysed in all EU-27 countries + BiH
- Regional programmes have been analysed in countries, where they were of relevance with respect to SMEs needs and thematic priorities addressed by MAPEER (i.e. in Austria, Belgium, Hungary, Spain and Ireland)
- Thematically focused on science – industry cooperation referring to knowledge and technology transfer.

The analysed RTD programmes address the business sectors in line with the cross-sectoral approach of the MAPEER methodology:



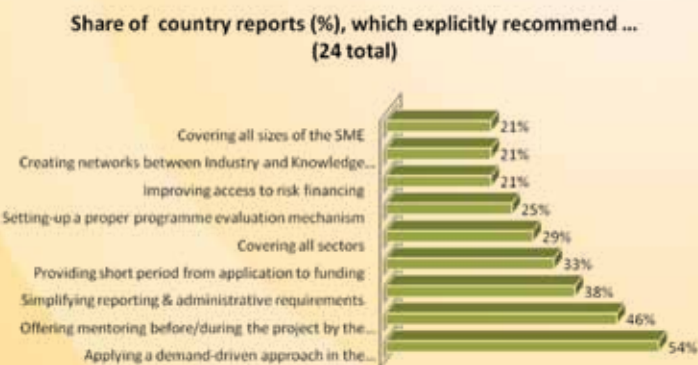
# Which are the key-factors for designing SME-friendly programmes across the analysed countries?

Based upon the programme analysis across the analysed MaPEeR countries, examples of key success factors of supporting research programmes to SMEs are:

- Cutting Red Tape
- Improving Access to Funding
- Focusing on Knowledge Generation within Networks
- Focusing on the “Close to the Market” Phase
- Offering Personal Counselling during/before the Project
- Facilitating the Accessibility of Programmes for SME
- Applying a Demand-driven Approach
- Encouraging Know-how transfer
- Setting-up a Proper Programme evaluation mechanism
- Encouraging coherence of innovation policy& collaboration at the policy level

The European Experts Panel on SMEs and Research is taking the above conclusions in addition to European experts' experiences in order to develop a set of recommendations for the enhancement of SME participation in the Research Programmes.

An overview of these key factors ranked according to frequency, with which they were identified by all analysed national reports, helps to have a clearer picture of the commonalities across the 27 member countries and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Applying a demand-driven approach by focusing more on SME needs in the programmes' design is a key measure that is most frequently recommended by slightly more than half of the country reports. 46 percent of all national reports recommend explicitly providing personal counselling, mentoring and mediation to SMEs before and during the project by a key contact person (most often project officer). In addition, providing technical assistance support in a flexible way in accordance with project demands at different developmental stages has been shown as being useful. Cutting red tape has also been perceived as being



crucial for designing SME-friendly programmes: ca. 40 percent of all reports recommend simplifying overall reporting and administrative requirements and ca. a third support speedy assessment procedures, as reflected in the shortening of time from application to funding. Slightly less than 30 percent of reports include recommendations for facilitating the accessibility of programmes for SMEs by covering all sectors and a quarter of reports support setting-up a proper programme evaluation mechanism. The latter should be done by providing transparent data about the participants, impact and acceptance of the programmes (see Graph 2). Improvements in programme design with respect to covering all sizes of the SME, facilitating the access to risk financing as well as creating networks between Industry and Knowledge Institutions have been identified as success factors by one-fifth of national reports, respectively.

For further information on MaPEeR SME activities in your country please contact:

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The MaPEeR SME project is funded by the European Commission

