



RYME+

Transnational internationalisation support network for SMEs

CASE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

RYME + is a transnational network geared to support innovative SMEs through the use of innovative mentoring and matching tools to internationalize their activity. It is carried by a consortium of nine partners (Business Innovation Centers, Chambers of Commerce and Industry and private companies) from the French region Nouvelle-Aquitaine, the Portuguese regions of Norte and Centro and the Spanish regions of Asturias and Murcia. It is co-financed by the Interreg V-B SUDOE programme.



SUMMARY

RYME (Reactivation of SMEs: Innovation and International) was a first European project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), through the Interreg IV-B Southwest Europe Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 (SUDOE).

Between 2012 and 2014, RYME developed and tested a methodology for the internationalisation of companies from SUDOE Area (France, Portugal and Spain) in cooperation with partners from Brazil and The United States of America. A total of 99 companies from ICT, Biotech and Greentech sectors participated in RYME, from those 9 signed up 6 commercial agreements.

RYME+ will capitalize the results of its forerunner project RYME. Learn more about RYME history [here](#)

CHALLENGE

The South-West European's productive structure (SUDOE) is characterized by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which, due to the weakness of their financial resources, limited capacity to access funding and lack of knowledge on foreign markets, face the challenge to compete at the international level with larger competitors.

RYME+ project focuses on solving this problem. The main goal of RYME+ is to support the international development of innovative SMEs and to contribute to increasing the competitiveness of the SUDOE Area (Spain, France and Portugal).



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STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

Consortium

- Instituto Pedro Nunes (PT);
- CEEIM - Centro Europeo de Empresas e Innovación de Murcia (ES);
- UPTEC - Parque de Ciência e Tecnologia da Universidade do Porto;
- CEEI Asturias - Centro Europeo de Empresas e Innovación del Principado de Asturias (ES);
- CCI La Rochelle - Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de la Rochelle (FR);
- CCI Nouvelle - Aquitaine - Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie Nouvelle - Aquitaine (FR);
- PROASISTECH - Proyectos y Soluciones Tecnológicas Avanzadas SLP (ES);
- B Cell Design (FR).

Partners

- Illinois Institute of Technology - University Technology Park (USA);
- Instituto de Fomento de La Región de Murcia (ES);
- Openlimits - Business Solutions, LDA (PT);
- McCombs School of Business, The University of Texas at Austin (USA);
- AVRUL - Agence pour la Valorisation de la Recherche Universitaire du Limousin (FR);
- CIETEC - Centro de Inovação, Empreendedorismo e Tecnologia (BR);
- AICEP - Agência para o Investimento e Comércio Externo de Portugal, E.P.E. (PT);
- ANII - Agência Nacional de Investigación e Innovación (UY);
- Sociedad de Promoción Exterior Principado de Asturias, S.A. (ES);
- EMGI Israel, Next Generation Entrepreneurship, (IL).

TARGET

The target group to which RYME+ is focusing are innovative companies from the SUDOE territory and following sectors, that want to internationalize:

- Health&Welfare
- Energy, materials and industrial sustainability
- Smart-Cities
- ICT and Creative Industries

SERVICE OFFER: PROCESS

RYME+ aims at supporting innovative companies which fulfil the 5 eligibility criteria:

1) Country

RYME+ will support companies from the SUDOE territory: France, Portugal, and Spain.

2) Region

RYME + will help companies located in the following Regions:

France: Nouvelle-Aquitaine

Portugal: Norte, Centro, Lisboa, Alentejo, Algarve

Spain: Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria, País Vasco, Navarra, La Rioja, Aragón, Castilla y León, Castilla-La Mancha, Extremadura, Cataluña, Comunidad de Madrid, Comunidad Valenciana, Andalucía, Murcia, Ceuta, Melilla, Islas Baleares

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SERVICE OFFER: PROCESS

3) Company's Size

RYME+ will provide support on the internationalization process of innovative SMEs:

Micro enterprises

employs fewer than 10 people and whose annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total does not exceed EUR 2 million

Small enterprises

employs fewer than 50 people and whose annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total does not exceed EUR 10 million

Medium enterprises

employs fewer than 250 people and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.

4) Sector of activity

RYME+ supports companies that are on, at least, one of the following sectors of activity:

- Health&Welfare
- Energy, materials and industrial sustainability
- Smart-Cities
- ICT and Creative Industries

5) Target Markets

RYME+ supports the target companies, to get to the following foreign countries: Brazil, France, Israel, Portugal, Spain, The United States of America and Uruguay.

With RYME+ selected companies will have access to the following benefits:

International networking

RYME+ gives access to the target companies to an international network of support. Through the web platform they can interact with innovative SMEs from other countries and contact RYME+ partners that can help them find the most suitable commercial partner for the company.

Mentoring

RYME+ gives companies access to a network of international mentors that will guide them through every step of the internationalization process.

Commercial preparation

RYME+ helps companies to prepare commercially, giving advice and recommendations for successfully affording an internationalization process.

Training in foreign markets

RYME+ provides training in legal requirements, tax frameworks, cultural barriers, funding, etc to guarantee them the best entry into every market.

Speed meetings

RYME+ helps companies accelerate the interaction with other innovative companies through the arrangement of multilateral speed meetings.

Trade and benchmarking missions

RYME+ gives companies the chance to go on trade missions to Brazil, United States of America and Uruguay or on a benchmarking mission to Israel with the purpose of transferring good practices of entrepreneurship and technology development.

The project is divided into three stages:

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SERVICE OFFER: PROCESS

1) Registration on the platform, use of the matching tool and self-diagnosis. Goal: 200 companies from the covered area will have access to this level;

2) Access to self-training, mentoring, commercial preparation and speed meetings to improve their internationalization capacities. Goal: Of the initial 200, a maximum of 100 companies will have access to this level;

3) B2B meetings on company missions or benchmarking missions. Goal: 50 companies that participated in the previous stages.

It is expected that approximately 1/3 of the companies will be French, 1/3 Portuguese and 1/3 Spanish.

Participation in each stage will be subject to a selection process which starts with the Calls for Expressions of Interest.

Participants are expected to:

- Comply with the criteria set out;
- Provide proof of their financial and fiscal situation and not be subject to any ongoing criminal or redress procedure;
- Commit to take part in all the selection stages of the project and, in the case of selection, participate in the concerned stage;
- Confirm the agreement with the project's Regulation;
- Adhere to EU principles on sustainable development, equal opportunities and gender equality.
- Participants will be entitled to:
 - Challenge the selection process within one week of the notification of the final result;
 - Count on the fact that all financial and fiscal data will be confidential and just used within the scope of the project.

Selection takes place in each region. Each partner sets up an internal evaluation panel. Evaluators base their initial evaluation of the following criteria:

- Eligibility of the application according to criteria set out in section 3 and 4;
- Average growth of exports for the last 3 years;
- Average growth of the investment in R&D for the last 3 years;
- Average growth of Total Sales Revenue for the last 3 years;
- Quality of Business Plan (Business Strategy, Financial Capacity and Human Resources);
- Synergies with the innovation ecosystem of RYME+.

Further selections are foreseen to enable participants to take part in the following stages (Trade and benchmarking missions).

FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the Interreg V-B Southwest Europe Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 (Interreg Sudoe Programme).

TOTAL COST: 1.363.268,37

IPN COST: 258.146,74

EU FINANCIAL SUPPORT: FEDER - 193.610,06

DURATION: 3 years

The estimation of the project's business support, per company, is valued between 1.500€ to 4.000€.

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INNOVATIVE ASPECTS

On the previous project RYME, a methodology of support to the internationalization of SME's was developed and tested.

On the RYME+ project, the innovative aspect is the online adaptation of this methodology. The objective is to let companies go through the online methodology with autonomy and independence, having always the support of business mentors coming from the project partners/ associates organizations.



CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Besides the online methodology, one of the most important factors that contribute to the project's success is the commitment of the partners into bringing onboard the most effective business support entities from the targeted markets.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

The biggest difficulties are, in fact, related to the partnership (change of partners).

Regarding the project, it was already expected by the partnership that some of the startups would give up along the way.

OUTCOME AND IMPACT

For the SUDOE programme, the most important outcome is a full working and established online platform. This objective has already been reached in the project.

There are other indicators, such as:

- The application of more than 100 companies (102 effectively submitted their application);
- 50 SME's participating in the 5 missions (one to each target market).

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TESTIMONIALS

Paulo Pinto, Managing Partner @ Radosys Atlantic, Coimbra (Portugal), users of RYME +

"Our company was interested in having customers in Uruguay due to their specificities, the political context which is much easier than in other South American countries and its good technological development regarding radon; and for this purpose, we needed to understand better its market. Thanks to RYME +, I had the opportunity to participate to a business mission there and find two companies with which we are implementing partnerships to explore the market together. I think that RYME+ is very good for small companies: it allows them to explore new markets which are difficult to access. Under the project, you have a user's profile and based on it, they match you with other companies around the world. Plus, they give you a lot of support during the mission, covering the travelling and accomodation costs related to your journey."

Font: <https://interreg-sudoe.eu/gbr/communication/sudoe-news/235-humans-of-sudoe-paulo-s-words/categoria-1-General>

