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# Voucher on innovation & social innovation

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# Voucher on innovation... in a nutshell

## Specific objective

The «voucher on innovation» intends to encourage small and medium enterprises to develop innovative ideas in cooperation with the university researchers, so that to promote and favour the transfer of technology and know-how from the research system to SMEs.

## Main institutions involved

- Chamber of Commerce
- University of Pisa

## Location of the practice

- province of Livorno

## Timescale

- September 2015 – March 2017

# Voucher on innovation

## About the context

In recent years Tuscany Region presents a transformation process of its production structure → **resizing of industry in favour of the tertiary sector**. The same process is characterising the province of Livorno.

A constantly evolving world raises challenges and opportunities for companies and innovation can impact on this process by helping businesses to make the most of this chance → **Innovation is a key element of economic growth and competitiveness.**

The indicators on the innovation capacity (*patents per inhabitants; investments on R&D; employees on research per inhabitants; graduated in technical sciences*) concerning our area of intervention are very low.


To sustain the development and competitiveness of the enterprises, the Chamber of Commerce has set up a **strategic program on «research, innovation and development»**. In particular it offers services to entrepreneurs (and aspiring ones) to progress and implement innovative ideas which could be translated in entrepreneurship development.



Competition notice for SMEs : «**Voucher on innovation**» to enhance the research activity aimed at the growth and competitiveness of the area

# Voucher on innovation

## About the process

1. MoU between the Chamber of Commerce and the University of Pisa;
2. Design and drafting of the call for proposal;
3. Launch of the call for proposal (open for 4 months);
4. Proposal's evaluation;  *On the basis of the following criteria:  
justification for the request; consistency with Tuscany Smart  
Specialisation; results sustainability and capitalisation*
5. Match SMEs/researchers according to the field of intervention;
6. Innovative projects' development (duration 3 months);
7. SMEs' final report;
8. Grants to SMEs for the researchers' advice.

# Voucher on innovation

## About the beneficiaries

The competition notice targets **SMEs, cooperatives and consortiums**.

Applicants must be:

- Small and medium sized enterprises as defined in the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/CE ;
- Legally established in the province of Livorno;
- Registered on the Italian Business Register;
- Up to date with the annual fee in the last 5 years.

# Voucher on innovation

## About the stakeholders

The practice impacts on several stakeholders.

The action enables to test the portability of the academic knowledge to the market.



**University and research centers**

The innovation tested by the enterprises could open new job opportunities...



**Youth and unemployed**

...and favour the cooperation with **other companies** active in the field of intervention.

The results achieved by the innovative projects' implementation could encourage enterprises' investments. Funds and policies contribute to create the conditions to move on this way.



**Credit institutions, Municipalities, Regions and other public authorities**

# Voucher on innovation

## About the resources

*Innovation on the following sectors:  
Agriculture; Manufacturing;  
Information Technology.*

### *Financial resources*

The Chamber of Commerce's grants to SMEs targeted by the project **amount to 36.000,00 €** → 6 innovative projects have been funded.

### *Human resources*

The Chamber of Commerce has employed the **Economic and Promotion Services Department** and the University of Pisa has involved the **Research Valorisation Unit's** staff → cooperation on the action planning.

In the innovative projects' evaluation process have been involved **two officers** of the Chamber of Commerce and **two professors** of the University of Pisa (Research and Economic and Management Department) → selection panel.

The Chamber of Commerce's employees have supported the SMEs on their cooperation with the researchers selected by the University of Pisa according to the innovative projects' field of intervention.

# Voucher on innovation

## About the methodology

### Open innovation model

Innovation is the outcome of an interactive process involving different spheres of actors, each contributing according to its function in society → sharing of knowledge and transfer of know-how.

**Open innovation model bases on Quadruple Helix Approach (Public-Private-People-Partnership) :**

*innovation seekers* (firms and public authorities)

*innovation solvers* (universities and research centers)

*innovation users* (civil society)


*cooperate to drive the change and to contribute to the social and economic development.*




# Voucher on innovation

## Evidence of success


By the end of March 2017 the SMEs have finished their innovative projects' implementation. **The results achieved in their field of intervention consist in innovative solutions with a market value.** So, the practice represents a success :

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*for SMEs*, because they can seize new economic opportunities and decide to invest on innovation
- 

*for researchers*, because they can finalise their know-how and research activity to market needs

The efficacy of this practice both for the economic framework and the academic one has fostered the Chamber of Commerce and the University of Pisa to publish a **new call for proposal** to fund enterprises interested in developing innovative projects in cooperation with the researchers → this second grant amounts to 70.000,00 €

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*8 innovative project proposals*  
on the following sectors:  
*Human health; Industry; Commerce;*  
*Information Technology; Agriculture*

# Voucher on innovation

## About difficulties and lessons learned

### *On project planning...*

This is the first pilot action to sustain SMEs' innovation designed together by the Chamber of Commerce and the University of Pisa based on Open Innovation. The departments involved in this practice have worked hard to **plan the action in terms of contents and management process.**

### *On project implementation...*

The main difficulty encountered during the implementation of the practice has been the **researchers' identification and involvement** in the innovative projects' development.

The university's staff has employed a lot of time to select the researchers to match with the SMEs because of their unwillingness to be involved and/or incompetence with regard to the field of intervention → delay on the innovative projects' launch.

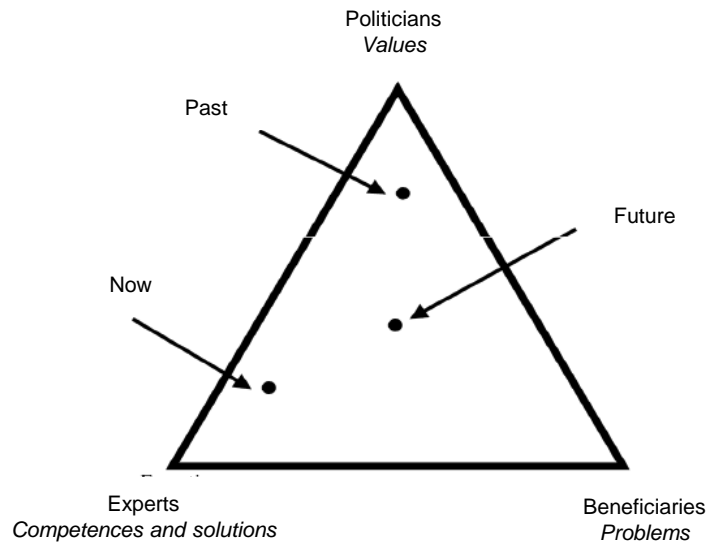


*This difficulty could be interpreted as a sign of the mismatch between academic (theory) and economic (practice) system*

# Voucher on innovation

## Potential for learning or transfer

The **Open Innovation model** ensures the involvement of all the actors interested in innovation process and it makes sure the portability of the action according to the characteristics of the target areas → *model to adapt development policies and projects to the socio-economic needs.*



# Voucher on innovation

## Potential for learning or transfer

At cross-border level the practice and its methodology has been introduced in two project proposals submitted on **Interreg V A Italy – France Maritime 2014 – 2020**:



«**MARITTIMOTECH**», leaded by the CCI Ajaccio et Sud Corse (first call for proposal; ongoing)



«**SUCCESS**», leaded by the CCI Bastia et Haute Corse (second call for proposal; in evaluation)

The projects aim at encouraging SMEs' development and innovation on sustainable tourism, maritime activities, renewable energies, blue and green biotechnologies.

The successful experience has encouraged the Chamber of Commerce and the University of Pisa to transfer this practice on social innovation item → **voucher on social innovation**

# Toward...social innovation

## About social innovation

*Innovation* → refers to the capacity to create and implement novel ideas producing market value

*Social* → refers to the kind of value which could be produced by innovation, a value more addressed to the quality of life, the solidarity and wellbeing.



**Social innovation means to develop innovative solutions and new way of organisation and interaction to face social themes and challenges**



# Voucher on social innovation... in a nutshell

## Specific objective

The «voucher on social innovation» action intends to encourage the conception and the implementation of innovative ideas and entrepreneurship paths to develop the creativity, the digital and resourcefulness skills, so that to favour innovative solutions enhancing society wellbeing and economic competitiveness.

## Main institutions involved

- Chamber of Commerce
- University of Pisa

## Location of the practice

- province of Livorno

## Timescale

- May 2016 – ongoing

# Voucher on social innovation

## About the process

1. Design and drafting of the call for proposal;

2. Launch of the call for proposal;

3. Proposal's evaluation;

*On the basis of the following criteria:  
justification for the request; solution's innovativeness;  
management team; financial feasibility; social impact;  
identification of the relevant market*

4. Projects' development;

5. Final report;

6. Grants to the beneficiaries.

# Voucher on social innovation

## About the beneficiaries and stakeholders

The competition notice targets:

### → **SMEs, cooperatives and consortiums**

- As defined in the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/CE ;
- Legally established in the province of Livorno;
- Registered on the Italian Business Register;
- Up to date with the annual fee in the last 5 years.

### → **Aspiring entrepreneurs**

applying for innovative ideas in **several fields of intervention** → *agriculture, fisheries, commerce, tourism, education, job, mobility, human health and social work, etc.*

The projects impacts on society, so the **stakeholders** are all the *public institutions*, the *companies* and the *citizens* interested in the sectors targeted by the actions.



# Voucher on social innovation

## About the resources

### *Financial resources*

The Chamber of Commerce's **grants to SMEs** targeted by the project **amount to 70.000,00 €**.

### *Human resources*

The Chamber of Commerce has employed the **Economic and Promotion Services Department** and the University of Pisa has involved the **Economic and Management Department's** staff → cooperation on the action planning.

In the social innovative projects' evaluation process have been involved **two officers** of the Chamber of Commerce and **two professors** of the University of Pisa → selection panel.

# Voucher on innovation and social innovation

## Conclusion

The vouchers on innovation and social innovation are **among the first experiences** promoted by Chamber of Commerce and University to sustain SMEs' innovation as socio-economic development's driver → recognized as best practice at regional and national level.

### Why?

#### Comprehensive actions

- ➔ mobilising different type of partners and stakeholders
- ➔ targeting several economic sectors
- ➔ meeting the needs expressed by local and regional context

which could be transferred to other areas thanks to the **open innovation model.**

# Voucher on innovation and social innovation

## Further information

[www.lg.camcom.gov.it](http://www.lg.camcom.gov.it)

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Thank you!

