

# Innovation vouchers

Versatile & SME friendly  
Innovation support instruments



ERRIN Workshop  
Brussels  
25 June 2009

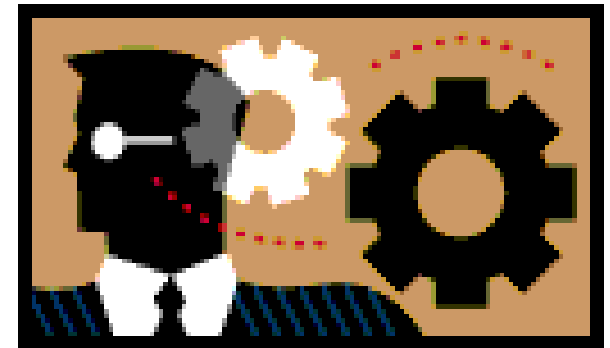
# Rationale for innovation vouchers

- SMEs are the backbone of our economies
- SMEs are under competitive pressure and need to stay state-of-the art, be innovative, reduce costs
- SMEs typically have no own R&D base
- SMEs find it complicate to access external knowledge
- If the **access to external knowledge** is crucial for SMEs to maintain competitiveness, it should be supported



3. SME asks expert for support in exchange for voucher

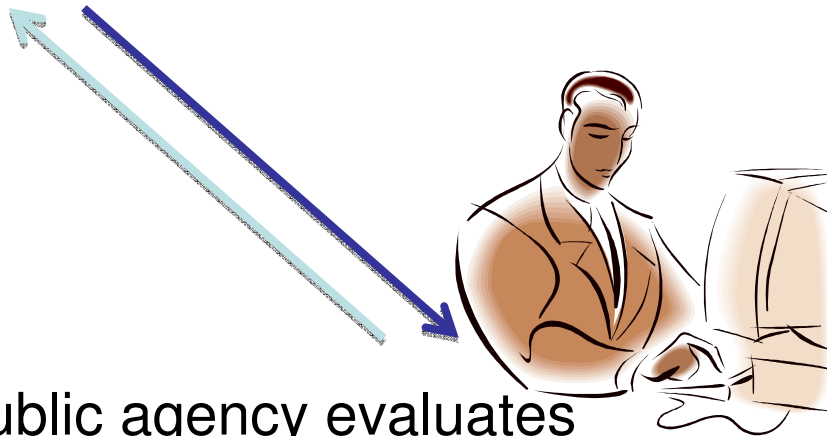
4. External knowledge provider supports SME with technical, managerial & financial expertise



7. SME continues cooperation with external knowledge provider

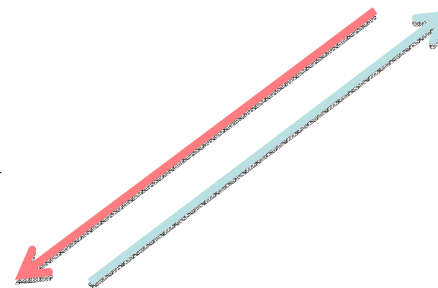
1. SME with innovation project applies for a voucher

5. Expert redeems voucher with authority, together with activity report signed off by SME



2. Public agency evaluates application and attributes voucher for use with accredited expert

6. Agency pays equivalent of voucher value to expert after approval of report



# 1<sup>st</sup> generation vouchers

- **Access to research / technical expertise**
  - Supports technological innovation and private sector investment in R&D
  - Pioneered by Senter Novem in 2005 in the NL
  - Replicated by many other innovation agencies
- 
- 70% of SMEs entered into long term cooperation with R&D centres afterwards
  - 50% of SMEs had never accessed public support before



# 2<sup>nd</sup> generation vouchers – KIS-PIMS

- **Access to business expertise**
- Pioneered by OSEO, TEKES, LEV in 2009
- Supports service innovation
- Renewable energy sector specific
- EC Europe Innova + national funding
- TECHNOFI is coordinator



# 3<sup>rd</sup> generation vouchers - GreenConServe

- **Access to technical & business expertise**
- To be pioneered by BMU/PTJ, OSEO, Innovation Norway, Norwegian Defence Agency in 2010
- Supports service innovation
- Sustainable construction sector specific
- EC Europe Innova + national funding
- G!E is coordinator



One could also imagine

## 2 – Stage Innovation Vouchers

i.e. for resource efficiency in tourism

**1<sup>st</sup> Stage:** “Audit Voucher” for energy, water, waste audit in tourism resorts

- Assessment of savings potential
- Set of technical recommendations
- Public co-financing of 90% of audit costs
- Own participation of 10% shows commitment



## 2 – Stage Innovation Vouchers (cont.)

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage: “Implementation Voucher”

- Conditional upon promise of “audit voucher”-recipient to implement at least 50% of the technical recommendation from the audit
- Public co-financing of up to 40% of the costs
- Quantifiable reduction of water and energy use and of waste generation
- Greener resorts



# Specificities

- Small size of grants
- Large quantity of grants
- Targeted at SMEs that usually do not receive public support (additionality)
- **Easy to access**
- Quick to access
- Flexible in their use



# The « beauty » of innovation vouchers

- Low administrative costs for public authorities, applying SMEs and external experts
  - Simplicity
  - Speed
  - Fixed amount

= a robust innovation support scheme capable of reaching the masses



# Facts on vouchers in action today

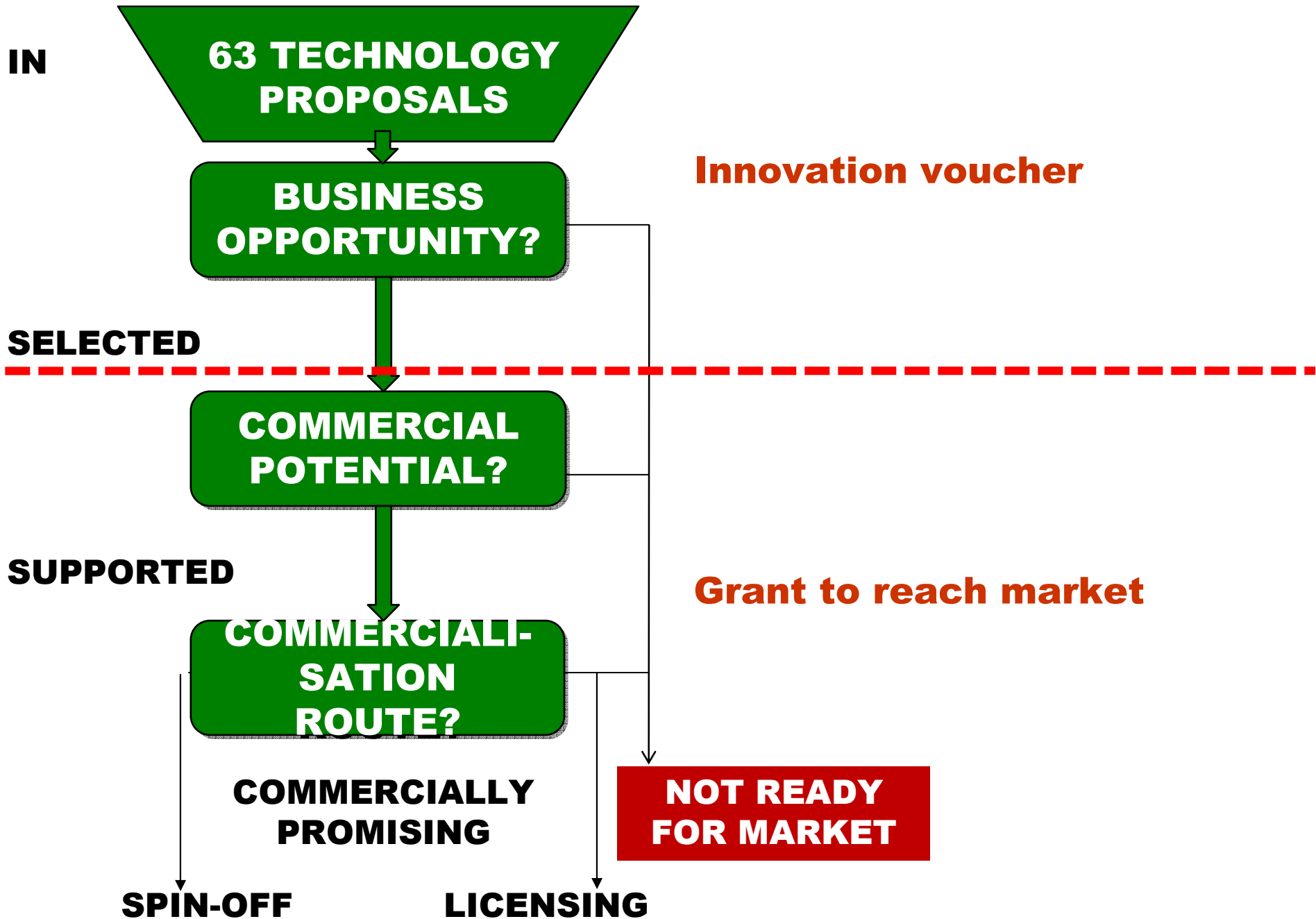
- 2.500 – 90.000 EUR / project
- Grants
- Usually co-financing by recipient (except for smallest)
- Subject to State-Aid rules
- Handled by national or regional agencies
- External expertise by research centres, universities and (accredited) experts / consultants
- Financed by...i.e. ERDF, emissions trading receipts,...

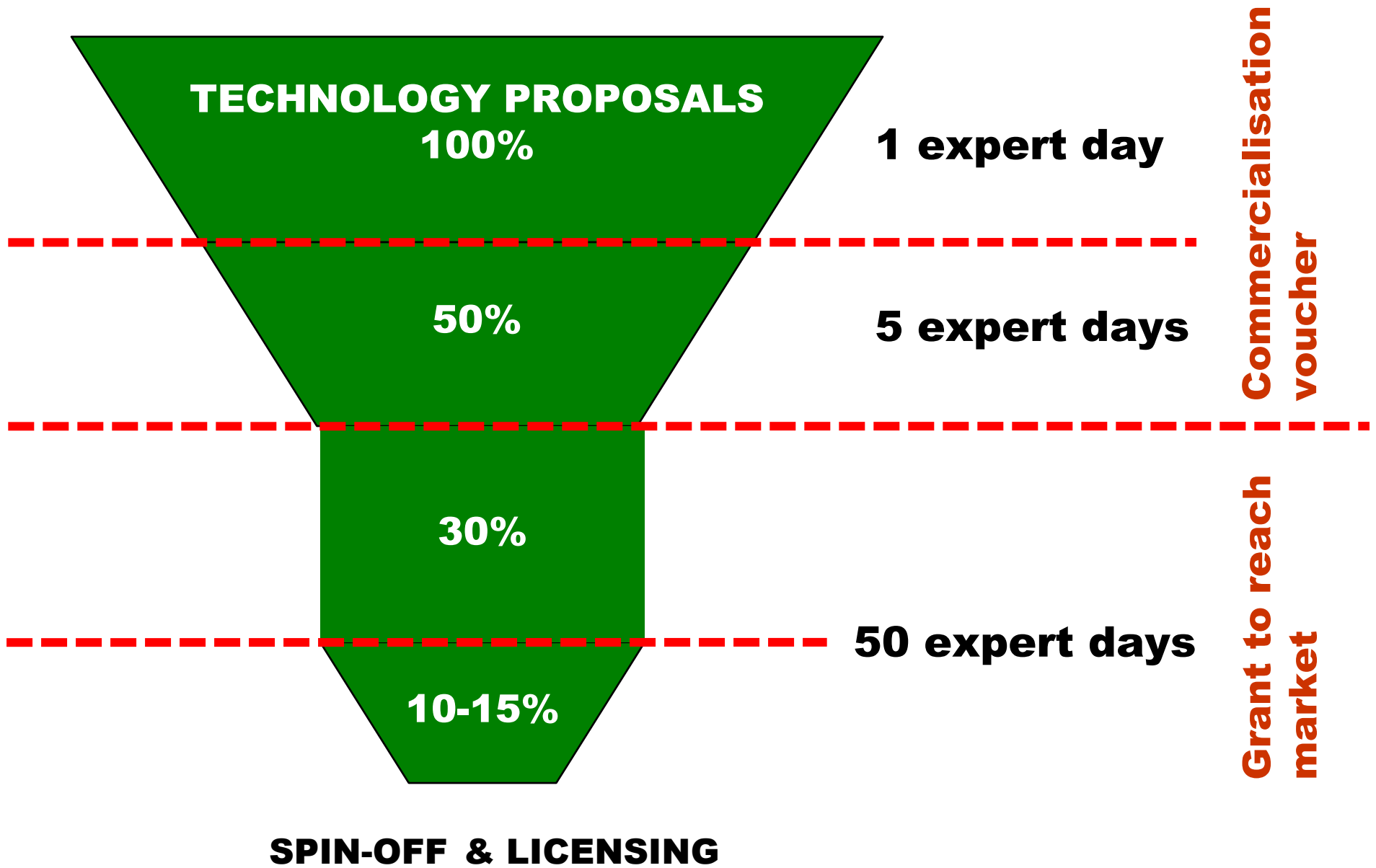


# A very versatile policy instrument

- Can support any policy objective!
- At national level or regionally
- Different amounts, subject to State Aid
- For specific sectors or horizontally
- SME access to research & innovation management expertise
- Greening of production processes
- Resource efficiency
- Phasing out of toxic products
- Energy audits for industrial SMEs
- **Commercialisation of R&D results, ....**







# Contacts

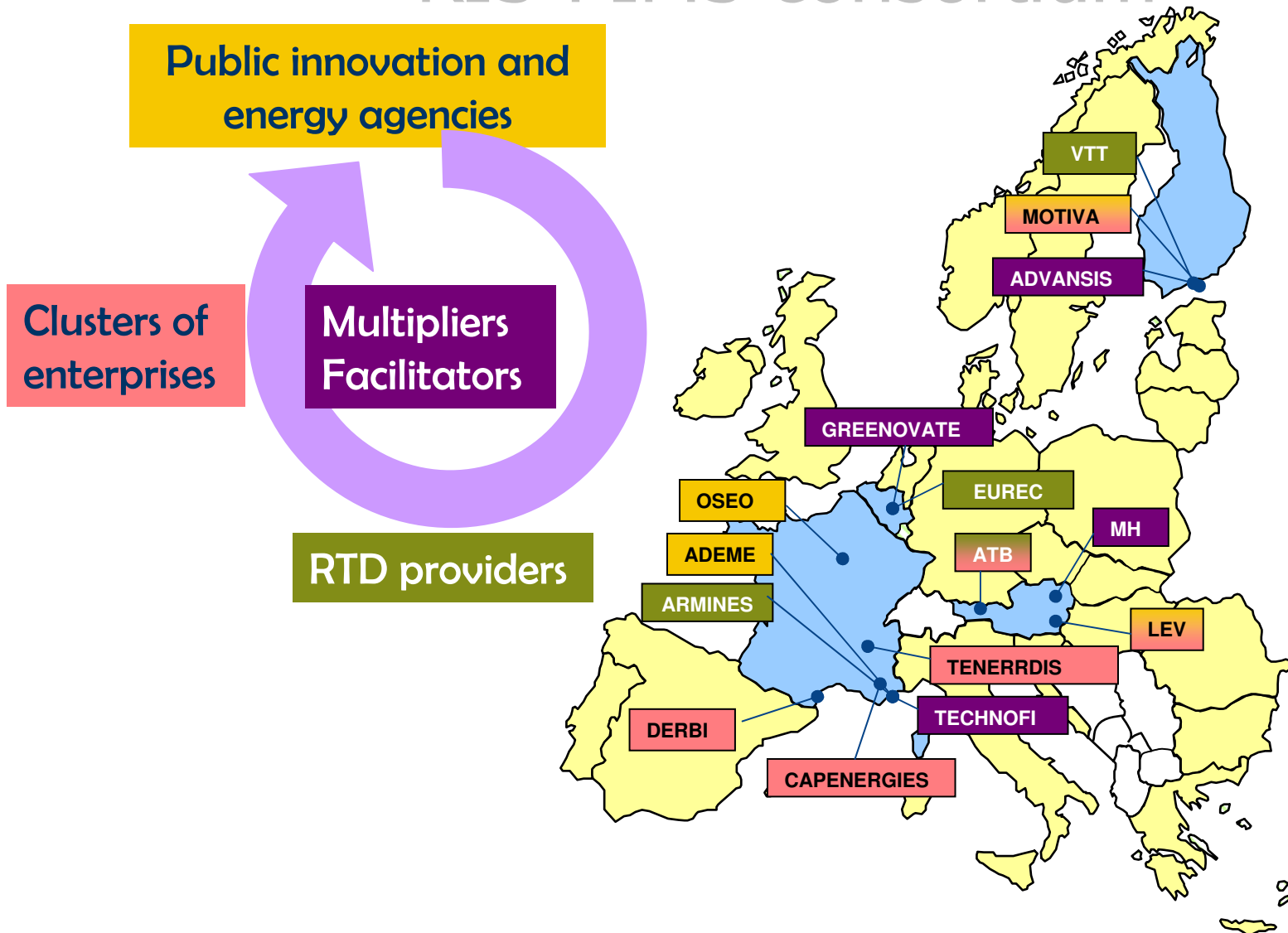
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# KIS-PIMS consortium



The European experts for green innovation

# KIS-PIMS implementation in France

- OSEO has committed 900.000 EUR to be used for 60 vouchers
- Call for proposals is open until the end of 2009
- Companies can apply continuously with a 2-5p application
- Selection committee: Cluster expert, OSEO and ADEME
- Choice of accredited experts from a list
- SME pays 25% of total cost for expertise; voucher pays 75%



# KIS-PIMS implementation in Finland

- Call published 13 March 09 by TEKES & MOTIVA
- Continuously open call until 31th October 09
- 50.000 EUR / successful application allows long-term coaching relationship between SME and innovation expert
- SMEs free to chose their consultant



# A glimpse on what we support...

- Innovative drying services of solid biomass
- Online CO2 balance model to assess the CO2 impact of energy services
- Integration concept of innovative energy solutions
- Financing and delivery model for pico-hydropower
- Innovation at the intersection of different disciplines



# KIS-PIMS (Knowledge Intensive Services for the Planning, Installation, Maintenance, and Scrapping of renewable energy production systems

- The goal: to ACCELERATE the development of the services related to the production of renewable energy
- The means: 100 2<sup>nd</sup> generation vouchers
- The external support:
  - in-depth risk analysis of innovation project
  - business plan consolidation with European dimension
  - connection to follow-up funding

