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Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

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2015 European Social Innovation Competition

New Ways to Grow

Rules of contest

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The European Social Innovation Competition (hereinafter referred to as 'the Competition') is organised by the European Commission (hereinafter referred to as 'the Commission') with the support of a consortium made of Nesta, Kennisland, ImpactHub, Shipyard and Matter&Co (hereinafter all referred to as 'the Contractor'). The Commission department in charge of the Competition is the Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, also known as DG Growth.

The Competition website is: <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/social-innovation-competition>.

The Competition is funded under the European Union budget. The legal basis for this Competition is the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, also known as Horizon 2020 (see http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference_docs.html), and more particularly the 2014-2015 work programme for the societal challenge *Europe in a changing world – Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies* (see pages 102-104 in the work programme posted at http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/main/h2020-wp1415-societies_en.pdf).

The Competition is open to any legal entity (including single persons or group of legal entities except public administrations) established in EU Member States or Associated countries to Horizon 2020 (the latest list of Associated Countries can be consulted at http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/3cp/h2020-hi-list-ac_en.pdf).

Please read these rules of contest carefully before submitting an entry. By submitting an entry, you accept these rules of contest and agree to comply with them.

1. Objective of the competition

The Competition aims at raising awareness of social innovation's potential to provide solutions to societal challenges and foster sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe. It will directly support some ideas best illustrating that potential. It will engage citizens and businesses (including start-ups) in a large range of sectors, thereby creating new connections and job opportunities.

More specifically, the 2015 Competition is entitled "**New Ways to Grow**" and will support entrepreneurial ideas that can advance Europe's growth model. Further background and examples about the theme of the 2015 Competition are available on the Competition website.

All types of ideas and solutions are welcome, even if they are not mature yet. One of the objectives of the Competition is to help the best ideas to reach the stage of prototyping and implementation.

The Competition will support the winning solutions with cash prizes in two steps:

- as an inducement competition in 2015, it will award **3 challenge prizes of 50,000 euros** each to the best 3 ideas, amongst those selected as 'semi-finalists';
- as a recognition competition in 2016, it is expected to award **1 impact prize of 50,000 euros** to the project which has achieved most results amongst the above-mentioned 2015 semi-finalists.

The Competition has been designed to offer more than just prizes. It includes a strong mentoring component that will benefit not only the winners but all semi-finalists. This mentoring component aims at turning their ideas into tangible and sustainable projects, so that they deliver results and achieve maximum impact. The Competition provides other benefits such as free publicity for the ideas and networking opportunities. It will allow semi-finalists to connect to a wide range of social innovation experts, organisations, investors and networks from Europe and beyond.

2. Timelines

Entries for the first phase of the Competition must be received on the Competition website by 8 May 2015, at 12:00:00 the latest (noon, Brussels time).

There is no other way to submit entries than through the on-line entry form to be filled on the above-mentioned Competition website. Late entries will not be accepted. The Commission is not responsible for entries which are lost, damaged or late due to computer, network or telecommunications failure.

In **May-June 2015**, all entries which have been received by the deadline will be assessed in order to select the most promising ideas which will qualify for the second phase of the Competition.

In **mid-July 2015**, the final decision in this regard will be taken and made public by the Commission, upon recommendation from an external jury. The entries which are selected for the second phase will be designated as semi-finalists and be informed immediately about that decision. Indicatively 30 ideas are expected to be selected as semi-finalists for the second phase. At the same time, the other contestants will be informed that their entry has not passed the first phase. Given the large number of entries which are expected over the first phase of Competition, the Commission will not be in a position to provide individual and customized feedback to unsuccessful contestants at that stage.

During the **first half of September 2015**, the semi-finalists will be invited to attend the Social Innovation Academy. The Academy will consist of a mentoring session of several days where semi-finalists will receive coaching by international business, communication and finance professionals as well as advice from social entrepreneurs and representatives of public sector organisations. The travel and accommodation costs for their participation in the academy will be covered by the Commission (in principle two persons per entry). The fact not to participate in the mentoring session will not prevent semi-finalists to compete for the second phase. Their participation is however highly recommended. Invitation with detailed information will be sent to the semi-finalists as soon as they are informed of their selection in mid-July 2015.

During the **second half of September 2015** (right after the Academy), the second phase of the Competition will start. Once this second phase has begun and with the view of ensuring equal treatment between contestants, no contact will be allowed between, on the one hand, the semi-finalists and, on the other hand, Competition organisers and jury members. On the basis of the inputs received during the mentoring session, the semi-finalists will be asked to re-work their idea and to submit a 'detailed plan'. Practical modalities will be further specified and communicated to them.

Detailed plans are expected to be submitted **by the end of September 2015**. The exact deadline will be communicated in due time to semi-finalists.

In **October 2015**, on the basis of the detailed plans submitted by the semi-finalists and upon recommendation from the jury, the Commission will select the best entries which will be called 'finalists' and will compete for the 3 challenge prizes. Indicatively 10 ideas are expected to be selected as 'finalists' for the award ceremony. The travel and accommodation costs for their participation in the ceremony will be covered by the Commission (in principle two persons per entry). The other semi-finalists will be informed that their entry has not passed the second phase and will receive feedback about strengths and weaknesses of their detailed plans. They will nonetheless be encouraged to join the ceremony. Travel and accommodation costs for their participation in the Ceremony will also be covered by the Commission (in principle one person per entry), considering the unique networking and exposure opportunities that the Ceremony provides.

In **late November 2015**, the 3 winners of the prizes will be announced amongst the finalists during the Award Ceremony. The award of 3 prizes must be considered an indicative maximum number. Following the Ceremony, the transfer of prize money to the winners will be initiated by the Commission

once the legal identification and bank identification forms have been filled in, signed and returned to the Commission.

Apart from the deadline applicable to the first phase of the Competition (**8 May 2015, 12:00:00, noon, Brussels time**), other timelines remain indicative at this stage and will be confirmed thereafter, with sufficient notice to allow the selected contestants to organize their travels.

After the award ceremony, all semi-finalists will continue being supported with mentoring or networking, so that their idea can succeed whether or not they won a prize.

Once the competition for the 3 challenge prizes is over, the third phase of the Competition is expected to open with a view of awarding the impact prize in 2016. This third phase will be restricted to the 2015 semi-finalists and aim at incentivizing faster implementation of their ideas and greater results from the projects. This impact prize may be awarded to a winner of a challenge prize or to a non-winning semi-finalist irrespectively. The impact prize is expected to be awarded during the award ceremony of the 2016 edition, together with the next group of challenge prizes.

Subject to budget availability, the Commission intends to launch the competition for the impact prize in January 2016. The deadline, for the 2015 semi-finalists to report back on their results, would be communicated to them at that time. The documentation which is expected from them would be specified on the same occasion.

3. Prize

The Commission plans to award a maximum of 3 challenge prizes to the best ideas according to the judging criteria set out below. The amount of each of the 3 challenge prizes is 50 000 euros. There will be no ranking among the winners. Afterwards, the Competition will be re-opened for the semi-finalists in order to select the winner of the impact prize of 50,000 euros according to distinct judging criteria.

Challenge prize money will be paid by the Commission after the 2015 Award Ceremony by bank transfer, provided the winners have submitted the required forms and evidence as regards their eligibility (see section 4). Impact prize money will be paid after the 2016 Award Ceremony provided the winner have submitted the required forms and evidence as regards their eligibility (see section 4).

Both award decisions remain subject to the availability of budgetary appropriations.

Winners are expected to use the prize money to implement their ideas. Winners are responsible for payment of taxes and charges applicable when using the prize money.

At all stages, entries will be assessed by an external jury appointed by, but independent from the Commission, composed of various profiles and originating from various countries. The jury will make recommendations to the Commission, which will take the final decision on the lists of semi-finalists, finalists and winners of the Competition. This applies to the challenge and the impact prizes.

The organisation of the Competition is supported by the Contractor, which notably includes facilitating jury's meetings, facilitating the Social Innovation Academy and organising the Award Ceremony.

4. General conditions – Eligibility

The Competition is open to everyone (individuals or legal entities except public administrations) resident in EU Member States (see http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm) and in countries participating in Horizon 2020 (see http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/3cp/h2020-hi-list-ac_en.pdf).

Ideas and proposals from all sources, sectors and all types of organisations including for-profit, non-for-profit, or private companies are welcome. Applications involving several organisations and/or from various countries are possible. The direct participation of public administrations and other public sector organisations in the Competition is excluded.

Entries must be original ideas from contestants. They may propose new or improved ways to implement, combine, or adapt to a different context or target group existing solutions, but they cannot be exact copies of those.

Contestants may submit more than one entry and be named as a partner in more than one entry. All costs of entering the Competition must be borne by contestants.

Entries competing for the challenge prizes must be received on the Competition website **by 8 May 2015, at 12:00:00 the latest (noon, Brussels time)**. Entries received after this deadline – whatever the reason may be – will be considered ineligible and will be automatically rejected. The deadline applying to the impact prize will be communicated to 2015 semi-finalists afterwards but the same rule will apply: reports received after that deadline will be considered ineligible.

Entries must be submitted on the Competition website in one of the official languages of the European Union. They are expected preferably in English.

Members and staff of the Commission and of its offices/agencies, staff of the Contractors and other individuals working on the Competition are not eligible to submit an entry.

The Commission will use the contact details provided in the entry form to contact the contestants about the Competition. The Commission is not responsible for inaccuracies in the details which have been submitted by the contestants.

The contestants undertake to take all the necessary measures to prevent any risk of conflict of interests which could affect the impartial and objective performance of the Competition. Such conflict of interests could arise in particular as a result of economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional reasons, or any other shared interest.

The contestants shall undertake to take whatever steps are necessary to rectify this situation at once. The Commission reserves the right to check that the measures taken are appropriate and may demand that the contestants take additional measures, if necessary, within a certain time. Any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests during the Competition must be brought to the attention of the Commission, in writing, without delay.

Entries must not invade publicity rights or privacy of any person, living or deceased, or otherwise infringe upon any individual's personal or proprietary rights. Entries and supporting visual material must be suitable for publication in a public forum and must not contain nudity, profanity or threats of violence. Entries must not serve advertising purposes for products and services (commercial and non-commercial) of particular businesses or economic interests or be inappropriate in any other way.

Contestants will be excluded from the Competition if they are in any of the following situations:

- (a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;

- (b) they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment of a competent authority of a Member State which has the force of res judicata;
- (c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify including by decisions of the European Investment Bank and international organisations;
- (d) they are not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the Responsible Authorising Officer or those of the country where the action is to be performed;
- (e) they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such an illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;
- (f) they are currently subject to an administrative penalty referred to in Article 109(1) of the Financial Regulations.

Winners of the Competition will not be granted the prize if, in the course of the Competition, they:

- (a) are subject to a conflict of interest;
- (b) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Commission as a condition of participation in the Competition or fail to supply this information;
- (c) find themselves in one of the situations of exclusion, referred above.

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

Administrative and financial penalties may be imposed on applicants, or affiliated entities where applicable, who are guilty of misrepresentation.

Before winners of the Competition can receive their prize, the Commission will check their eligibility by asking them to sign a declaration of honour that they are not in a position described above. In case of doubts, additional evidence may be required by the Commission.

By entering the Competition and registering their entry on the Competition website, contestants certify that they meet these eligibility criteria and that all information they submitted is true, accurate and complete. They agree to abide by and be bound by the Competition rules and the decisions of the Commission, which are final in all matters relating to this Competition.

Furthermore, the Competition will be run in the most open and transparent manner. For that purpose, the Commission may post the summary of any entry – exactly as it has been submitted by contestants in the entry form – on Competition website or on dedicated social media accounts for the Competition. In addition the Commission will carry out promotional activities and publish results of the Competition. The Commission will publish the name of the winner, the locality, the purpose of the project and the amount of the prize. By entering the Competition, contestants agree with this policy and consent to the use of their name, the summary of their proposal, and additional photographs/recordings/visual material/web links which have been attached to their entry.

If an entry is submitted by a group of individuals or organisations, the person completing the entry form is responsible for compliance with these rules of contest by other group members.

5. Judging criteria

The successful entries for the challenge prizes will be those that best meet the criteria outlined below. Additional information may be provided in the frequently asked questions section (FAQs) and in the entry form template, which are posted on the Competition website.

Judging criteria for the challenge prizes will be the following three:

- **degree of innovation** assessed as the innovativeness in a given context of the proposed idea; of the approach and solution to an economic, social or environmental issue; of the proposed product, service, process, technology implied by this solution; or of the business, implementation, organisation or marketing models underpinning this solution – *innovations can be understood as genuinely new ideas as much as new or improved ways to implement, combine, or adapt to a different context or target group existing solutions*;
- **impact** assessed as the potential of the proposed idea to both create economic value and meet social or environmental objective(s);
- **sustainability and scale** assessed as the potential of the proposed idea to turn into a project which can be sustained, have long-lasting and increasing impact or inspire others in Europe (e.g. to be applied/transferred/adapted to another area of the same country; to another or more EU Member State(s); or to another issue, sector or population category).

For the **first phase of the Competition** (i.e. for the selection of semi-finalists based on initial entries), the following weights will apply to the judging criteria:

- degree of innovation – 50%;
- potential impact – 30%;
- potential for sustainability and scale – 20%.

For the **second phase of the Competition** (i.e. to select the finalists/winners amongst the semi-finalists), the three judging criteria will have equal weight: one third each.

The third phase of the Competition for the impact prize is expected to be launched in January 2016. The Commission intends to award the impact prize against the sole criterion of *impact* as described above but no longer for the potential of the idea. The impact prize would be awarded to the project having achieved the most substantial results. Those results would have to be evidenced and, to the extent possible, quantified against smart indicators.

The Commission has sole and absolute discretion to determine which submissions, in any, merit to be selected for the next phase and to be awarded a prize. No individual feedback will be provided to the unsuccessful contestants after the first phase of the Competition. However unsuccessful semi-finalists will receive comments about the strengths and weaknesses of their proposal. Such an assessment will also be provided to finalists and winners, once the Ceremony has taken place.

The Commission reserves the right to refuse any entry, to suspend or terminate the Competition and to amend the present rules of contest at any time without prior notice.

The Commission will inform the public of any such a change on the Competition website. Changes will take effect from the date they are posted on the Competition website. Contestants are meant to visit the Competition website regularly in order to get the most up-to-date information. Failing to do so may not be used by a contestant as a valuable reason to challenge Competition results.

6. How to enter the competition

Entries have to be submitted to the above-referenced Competition website.

For the first phase of the Competition a short form will have to be filled in and submitted on line by contestants. For the second phase, the requirements will be further elaborated. Practical modalities about the detailed plans expected from the semi-finalists will be communicated to them in due time. For the third phase and the impact prize, the semi-finalists will also receive more detailed guidance as soon as the second phase is closed and the challenge prizes have been awarded.

Within the on-line entry form, contestants for the first phase will also be asked to provide a brief summary of their idea that may be posted on the Competition website or on dedicated social media accounts for the Competition, in line with the communication policy stated above.

Subject to the possibilities offered by the Competition website and social media accounts, the contestants may be encouraged to support their entry with visual material, recordings, or documents that they deem relevant. Allowed format for the related files will be specified by the Commission

7. Ownership/Use of the entries

Ownership of the idea and of its implementation results, including industrial and intellectual property rights, and of the reports and other documents relating to it, shall be vested in the contestant.

Without prejudice to the previous paragraph, the contestants grant the Commission the right to display, reproduce by any technical procedure, translate or communicate the idea and its results by any medium, including on the Competition website, provided it does not thereby breach its confidentiality obligations or existing industrial and intellectual property rights. The contestants grant the Contractors the same right, within their legal and contractual obligations.

Any communication or publication by the winners of the Competition, including at a conference or seminar, shall indicate that the project has received funding from the European Union.

By submitting an entry, contestants declare that they have obtained, or will obtain, all authorisations, consents and permissions necessary to submit their entry, carry out their proposal and comply with these terms and conditions and, to the best of their knowledge, that their entry will not infringe any intellectual property or other third party rights or breach any contractual obligation.

The Commission assumes no responsibility for disputes between persons claiming copyrights on any sort in relation to an entry submitted for the Competition.

Where industrial and intellectual property rights, including rights of third parties, exist prior to the Competition ("pre-existing intellectual property rights"), contestants shall establish a list which shall specify all rights of ownership and use in the pre-existing intellectual property rights and may be asked to disclose it to the Commission – should they be proposed as winners – at the latest prior to the commencement of implementation of their idea.

The winners of the Competition shall ensure that they have all rights to use any pre-existing intellectual property rights in implementation of their idea.

8. Equal opportunity

The European Union promotes equality between women and men and shall aim in all its activities to eliminate gender inequalities. Women are particularly encouraged to enter the Competition.

9. Personal data

Entries will be processed by computer. All personal data (such as names, addresses and other details) will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the European Union institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.

Details about contestants and replies to the questions in the entry form are necessary information in order to assess the entries and inform the contestants about the results of the Competition. Data will be processed solely for the purposes of the performance, management and monitoring of the Competition by the Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs acting as data controller without prejudice to possible transmission to the bodies charged with monitoring or inspection task in application of European Union law.

Contestants will have the right to access their personal data and the right to rectify any such data. Should the contestants have any queries concerning the processing of their personal data, they will address them to the entity acting as data controller and will have right of recourse at any time to the European Data Protection Supervisor.

The Contractor supporting the Commission for the organisation of the Competition is bound to strict legal obligations as regards the processing of data of third parties.

10. Liability

Contestants shall have sole responsibility for complying with any legal obligations incumbent on them.

The Commission shall not be held liable for any damage caused or sustained by any of the participants, including any damage caused to third parties as a consequence of or during the implementation of the activities related to the Competition. Consequently, the Commission will not entertain any request for indemnity or reimbursement accompanying any such claim.

Except in cases of force majeure, contestants shall make good any damage sustained by the Commission as a result of the execution or faulty execution of their project.

Contestants shall bear sole liability vis-à-vis third parties, including for damage of any kind sustained by them while the project is being implemented.

11. Checks and audits

The contestants accept that, if they are awarded a prize, the Commission, OLAF and the Court of Auditors may carry out checks and audits in relation to the contest and the received prize.

The winners of the Competition shall keep at the Commission's disposal all original documents, especially accounting and tax records, or, in exceptional and duly justified cases, certified copies of original documents relating to the Competition for a period of five years.

The winners undertake to allow Commission staff and outside personnel authorised by the Commission the appropriate right of access to sites and premises where the action is carried out.

The Court of Auditors shall have the same rights as the Commission, notably right of access, as regards checks and audits.

12. Recovery

If any amount is unduly paid to a winner of the Competition or if recovery is justified under these rules of contest, the winner undertakes to repay the Commission the sum in question on whatever terms and by whatever date it may specify.

If the winner fails to pay by the date set by the Commission, the sum due shall bear interest at the rate indicated in standard grant agreement under European Union law. Interest on late payment shall cover the period between the date set for payment, exclusive, and the date when the Commission receives full payment of the amount owed, inclusive.

Any partial payment shall first be entered against charges and interest on late payment and then against the principal.

If payment has not been made by the due date, sums owed to the Commission may be recovered by offsetting them against any sums owed to the winner, in cases where the winner of the Competition also has a claim on the European Union, after informing him accordingly by registered letter with acknowledgement of receipt or equivalent. In exceptional circumstances, justified by the necessity to safeguard the financial interests of the European Union, the Commission may recover by offsetting before the due date of the payment. The winner's prior consent shall not be required.

Bank charges occasioned by the recovery of the sums owed to the Commission shall be borne solely by the winner of the Competition.

The winner of the Competition understands that, under Article 299 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union, the Commission may adopt an enforceable decision formally establishing an amount as receivable from persons other than States. An action may be brought against such decision before the General Court of the European Union.

13. Penalties

By virtue of Article 212 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and with due regard to the principle of proportionality, a contestant which has committed irregularities or fraud, has made false declarations shall be liable to:

(a) administrative penalties consisting of exclusion from all contracts, grants and contests financed by the Union budget for a maximum of five years from the date on which the infringement is established and confirmed following a contradictory procedure with the beneficiary; and/or

(b) financial penalties of 2% to 10% of the value of the prize.

In the event of another infringement within five years following the establishment of the first infringement, the period of exclusion under point (a) may be extended to 10 years and the range of the rate referred to in point (b) may be increased to 4% to 20%.

14. Law applicable and competent court

The Competition is governed by these terms and conditions, the European Union law applicable and, on a subsidiary basis, by the law of Belgium relating to prizes.

The contestants may bring legal proceedings regarding decisions by the Commission concerning the application of the provisions of these terms and conditions, and the arrangements for implementing it, before the General Court of the European Union and, in the event of appeal, the Court of Justice.

15. Questions and answers

A list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) and their answers will be published on the Competition website and thereby made available to all.