

## **VBN InnoReg Pilot Action: Automotive Transfer Workshops “Transferwerkstatt Brandenburg Kompetenzfeld Automotive“ (TWB)**

### **Summary**

#### **Objective and general design**

With a funding volume of 330,000 EUR (mainly from ESF), TWB aims at supporting local SMEs in the innovation process. TWB is a funding opportunity to develop concrete concepts for technology transfer cooperation and has been running from 01 July 2006 until 30 June 2008. The project aimed at stimulating the innovation process in small and medium sized enterprises by setting up mixed teams of scientists from university, research organisations and employees of SMEs. The funding covers overall project management costs at ZAB and finances workshop series with an average grant of 12.800 EUR. SMEs contribute with 20% of the total costs.

The overall objectives are:

- § Promotion of R&D, innovation and technology transfer,
- § Qualifying and improving employees' innovation capacity,
- § Networking between science and the business sector,
- § Protection and creation of jobs.

ZAB helps to set up teams of research staff and practitioners. Innovation projects are developed and discussed in specific workshop series with four sessions. There is a standard process to set up innovation workshop series:

1. Acquisition of SMEs with innovative ideas.
2. Partner matching: support to find the right partners from research.
3. Set up initial and follow up workshops.
4. Work out specific cooperation result.
5. Support SMEs to set the innovation project into practice.

SMEs enjoy constant support by TWB project staff. One general workshop has been conducted to kick start the pilot and reach the target group. Further contacts have been established to multipliers such as ZAB regional centres, branch teams, network management automotive and transfer departments. Until the end of 2007, 12 innovation contracts with SMEs have been targeted.

## Final results and critical review

Close to the end of the project, there have been about 100 contacts to SMEs in the automotive sector through direct marketing of the programme. Also, the initial target to set up at least 12 transfer workshops has been reached. Nearly all automotive companies contacted have already had contacts to research organisations. This is a very good result concerning the awareness of technology transfer and innovation measures in the automotive industry.

However, for a number of reasons, continuation of the project is not planned so far:

- § Those companies with difficulties to innovate and problems to get in touch with research partners, could not be reached with this project. This also means, there was no clear benefit of having this additional instrument.
- § It has also been difficult to reach the target group with the general workshop to kick-start the project. At the end, private contacts were much more successful in motivating businesses to take part in the workshops.
- § Finally, co-ordination of activities has been difficult in the initial phase of the project. Finally, the costs for administration of the project were too big in relation to the actual direct benefits for SMEs.

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