*[17/04/2024]*

*[VLAIO]*

*Measure name:*

*[MILESTONE 194/R.507 Widening the innovation base]*

**Milestone/target description:**

Publication of a report endorsed by Flemish minister of Economy, Innovation, Work, Social economy and Agriculture providing an overview of new and reviewed measures to improve access for SMEs to measures for innovation support, and the related government decisions.

**Verification mechanism:**

Summary document duly justifying how the milestone (including the relevant elements of the milestone, as listed in the description of milestone and of the corresponding measure in the CID annex) was satisfactorily fulfilled. This document shall include as an annex the following documentary evidence: a copy of and a link to the published report endorsed by the Flemish minister of Economy, Innovation, Work, Social economy and Agriculture, and a signed document signalling the endorsement by the aforementioned Flemish minister.

**A. Evidence provided:**

* Annex 1. Rapport verbreding innovatiebasis: Report in Dutch about the initiatives taken by the Flemish Region to widen the innovation base
  + Annex 1.3.a.i. 020 Haalbaarheidsstudies
  + Annex 1.3.a.ii. 007 Innovatieve starterssteun
  + Annex 1.3.b.i. addendum 23-1551 getekend document minister
  + Annex 1.3.b.i. Convenant tussen het Vlaams Gewest enTeam Bedrijfstrajecten vzw 2023-2027
  + Annex 1.3.b.ii. VR 2020 2606 DOC.0644-1 Ondernemerschap en innovatieversnelling – nota
  + Annex 1.3.b.ii. VR 2020 2606 DOC.0644-2 Ondernemerschap en innovatieversnelling – bijlage
  + Annex 1.3.b.ii. VR 2020 2606 DOC.0644-3 Ondernemerschap en innovatieversnelling – bijlage
  + Annex 1.3.b.ii. VR 2020 2606 DOC.0644-4 Ondernemerschap en innovatieversnelling – bijlage
  + Annex 1.3.b.ii. VR 2020 2606 DOC.0644-5 Ondernemerschap en innovatieversnelling – bijlage
  + Annex 1.3.b.ii. VR 2020 2606 DOC.0644-6 Ondernemerschap en innovatieversnelling – bijlage
  + Annex 1.3.b.ii. VR 2020 2606 DOC.0644-9 Ondernemerschap en innovatieversnelling – BA
  + Annex 1.3.b.iii. besluit\_blikopener\_2021
  + Annex 1.3.b.iii. Subsidiebesluit\_Blikopener\_2020
  + Annex 1.3.b.iii. VR\_22\_18.02\_doc.0180
  + Annex 1.3.c.i. Ministerieel besluit over de oproep 2023-3
  + Annex 1.3.c.i. Ministerieel besluit over de oproep 2024-1
  + Annex 1.3.c.i. Ministerieel besluit tot uitvoering van het besluit van de Vlaamse Regering van 26 februari 2016 tot toekenning van steun aan kleine en middelgrote ondernemingen voor ondernemerschapsbevorderende diensten en kmo-groeitrajecten
* Annex 2. Endorsement minister getekend document: Signed document signalling the approval of the report by the Administrator-General of VLAIO and the Flemish Minister for Economy, Innovation, Work, Social Economy, and Agriculture
  + Annex 2.a. Verbreding innovatiebasis – nota aan de minister

**B. Detailed justification:**

*[Explain clearly how the achievement of the milestone/target is demonstrated by the evidence provided,* ***covering ALL elements of the milestone/target.***  *(e.g. the fact that (i) a certain institution had (ii) to accomplish something (iii) in a certain way in order (iv) to achieve a certain goal (v) by a certain date). The Commission is looking* ***for a clear link between the elements of the milestone/target and the evidence provided.***

**Summary document duly justifying how the milestone (including the relevant elements of the milestone, as listed in the description of milestone and of the corresponding measure in the CID annex) was satisfactorily fulfilled. This document shall include as an annex the following documentary evidence: a copy of and a link to the published report endorsed by the Flemish minister of Economy, Innovation, Work, Social economy and Agriculture.**

The summary document is found in Annex 1. Rapport verbreding innovatiebasis, which explains how the innovation base was broadened in Flanders. The first two chapters provide an introduction as well as a brief explanation of the policy context of the widening of the innovation base. Thereafter the summary document expands on 7 different initiatives taken by the Flemish Government to widen the innovation base. These 7 initiatives are grouped into 3 categories, which will be expanded on below.

The first category, “New instruments” (NL: Nieuwe instrumenten), concerns two new initiatives taken by VLAIO. The first one, “R&D feasibility studies” (NL: O&O haalbaarheidsstudies) gives Flemish companies the opportunity to gauge the feasibility of an innovation project with the help of VLAIO analysers. The second one, “Innovative starter support” (NL: innovatieve starterssteun), is a new R&D subsidy initiative for innovative start-ups with high potential growth.

The second category, “Reinforced commitment to guide new and smaller enterprises towards innovation” (NL: Versterkte inzet op toeleiding van nieuwe en kleinere ondernemingen naar innovatie), concerns initiatives which have been either started or significantly altered to widen the innovation base. The first one, “Guiding SMEs towards support: Team Bedrijfstrajecten vzw” (NL: Toeleiding naar steun voor kmo’s: Team Bedrijfstrajecten vzw) is about a reform of the provincial innovation centres to better provide a ‘VLAIO front office’ for Flemish entrepreneurs. The second one, “Parcel ‘innovation acceleration’ in the entrepreneurship contract” (NL: Perceel ‘innovatieversnelling’ in contract ondernemerschap) is about an enlargement of the VLAIO Network to improve access to information and guidance with regards to innovation in Flanders. The third, “Blikopener” (a play on words in Dutch; while it literally means “can opener”, it can also be interpreted as “view opener”), is an initiative to better distribute knowledge from Flemish university colleges (NL: hogescholen), as well as providing data from the Flemish business world to improve the applicability of research programs at the university colleges in question.

The third category, “Reform of existing instruments” (NL: Hervorming bestaande instrumenten), refers to two existing subsidy programs that have been revamped to be more accessible to Flemish entrepreneurs. The first reform, called “Reform SME portfolio” (NL: Hervorming kmo-portefeuille), changed a VLAIO advice and training program to be more thematically-oriented, with themes specifically chosen to reflect the needs of SMEs. The second reform, called “Reform SME growth subsidy” (NL: Hervorming kmo-groeisubsidie), changed a small (max €50.000) SME subsidy program from a continuous initiative to a thematic one following a project call cycle, in order to better accommodate SME needs.

After the 7 initiatives have been explained, the summary document showcases numbers which show the evolution in outreach to Flemish companies, showing how the innovation basis has been widened throughout the Flemish Region.

Evidence for government decisions is provided in the documents under Annex 1.3. The evidence follows the same order and structure as the chapters in the report. All adjustments to the instruments required decisions by the Flemish government (Vlaamse overheid), albeit not all are government decisions in the strict sense of the word (regeringsbeslissingen). The authority for the R&D instruments was delegated by the Flemish government to the decision-making committee at the Fonds Innoveren en Ondernemen (HBC). The new measures (R&D feasibility studies and innovative start-up support) were therefore decided by this decision-making committee. Regarding the instruments SME growth subsidy and SME portfolio, the authority was delegated by the Flemish government to the Minister of Economy. The other measures were decided directly by the Flemish government (Vlaamse regering)

The endorsement of the report can be found in Annex 2. Endorsement minister getekend document. The proof of authenticity can be found under Annex 2.a.

The summary report has been published on the VLAIO website, and has been made accessible to any interested readers. You can access it by following this link: <https://www.vlaio.be/nl/media/2481>. Alternatively, you can go to <https://www.vlaio.be/nl/over-ons/beleidsdocumenten>, scroll down to “Studies”, and download the report (name: Rapport verbreding innovatiebasis) there.

**Achievement of the requirements in the description of the measure:**

**Description of the measure in the CID Annex**

Reform R-5.07: ‘Widening the innovation base’ of the Flemish Region

This reform aims at ensuring that the existing instruments do not put constraints on the access to innovation subsidies by SMEs. It shall consist in a review of the existing instruments aimed at stimulating innovation that is more easily accessible and adapted to the needs of SMEs. At the end of the review, a report shall be published providing an overview of new and reviewed measures.

The implementation of the reform shall be completed by 31 December 2022.

**Milestone 194 – Reform of the regulation for innovation support**

**Qualitative indicator:** Publication of a report and related government decisions

**Requirements:** Publication of a report endorsed by Flemish minister of Economy, Innovation, Work, Social economy and Agriculture providing an overview of new and reviewed measures to improve access for SMEs to measures for innovation support, and the related government decisions.

*•* Requirement is achieved by the publication of the report in Annex 1. Rapport verbreding innovatiebasis and the endorsement in Annex 2. Endorsement minister getekend document