Europe’s Innovation Voucher Schemes: What makes them successful and for whom?

Christopher McInnes, Esteban Pelayo, Elzbieta Ksiazek, and Nathalie Boulanger

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Europe’s Innovation Voucher Schemes

Introduction

Elzbieta Ksiazek
Christopher McInnes & Esteban Pelayo
Nathalie Boulanger
Europe’s Innovation Voucher Schemes

Innovation Vouchers & ESSPO Project

Practitioner Paper: Case Studies

The future of voucher schemes
Europe’s Innovation Voucher Schemes

Innovation Voucher Schemes?

• A simple and effective instrument of regional and territorial development (a direct government support).

• A small line of credit for Small-to-Medium Sized Enterprises (c. €5K).

• First introduced 20 years ago and now counting at least > 50 across the EU.
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How does a Voucher Scheme work?

1. Application (service 10,000 €)
2. INFO approves the grant (Voucher)
3. The service is provided
4. Payment of the service
5. Justification
6. Transferring the economic value of the voucher

Observations from regional developers

- Simple, ‘fast and light’
- Needs conscious
- Responsive-ness
- Going beyond

(+) VAT of the invoice

Approved service Provider

SME

2,500 €
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A successful instrument?

• Promotes innovation in regional SMES
• Boosts regional market of innovation services for KSPs
• Low level and bureaucratically simple tool of economic development for delivery agencies/development agencies
• Allows development agencies to foster new relationships - a ‘wedge’. 
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3 Regions: 3 Voucher Schemes?

- WIELKOPOLSKA REGION
- Centre-Val de Loire
- Región de Murcia
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A Voucher Scheme in development

**STAGE I : DIAGNOSIS**

1. The agency delegates the networked advisers (intermediaries) to a specific group of SMEs

2. The adviser arranges an appointment with the company owner/manager

3. Diagnostic conversation about products, market, financial results, clients, competition, staff potential ...

4. The adviser prepares diagnostic report with recommendations and inserts it in IT coordination tool for a quality check

5. The adviser presents the report & works out company development plan with the owner/manager

**STAGE II : VOUCHER**

6. The SME applies for a voucher: a few questions on-line, development plan as an attachment.

7. The SME chooses the supplier from an accreditation list or on the market (it gets enrolled & a contract to participate in the voucher system)

8. The supplier provides support, sends the invoice to the SME and the report to the agency

9. The SME opresents a short report and an invoice to the agency

10. The agency pays 80% of the invoice value, but not more than 50,000 PLN
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National/Regional Voucher Schemes

- “This low level instrument needs to be accompanied by ‘soft support’ (coaching, signposting, networking) to increase its leverage effect.”
- “Financial instruments must meet the main needs of the companies and avoid overlaps but there is no systematic relation between each financial instruments but an informal continuum.”
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Regional voucher towards a European Label

INNOvoucher
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3 Regions; 3/2 Voucher Schemes?

Wielkopolska, Poland
- 2 phase scheme in development

Centre Val De Loire, France
- Nationally funded programme, regionally administered scheme

Murcia, Spain
- Regional scheme & future European label
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An instrument for whom?

Development Agency and/or Delivery Agency

SME

Knowledge Service Provider
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Considerations

• Review of the literature: understudied.
• Review of policy debate: most recent JRC publication was in 2016.
• Methodology and Methods: ex-ante evaluations of delivery agencies is a starting point.

Questions

• Measuring the Impact of voucher schemes beyond a case per case basis?
• Situating voucher schemes in their wider private and public financing context: do they fit?
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The Future of Innovation Voucher Schemes
: a Brexit voucher scheme
Thank you!

Contact:
Christopher.mcinnes@eurada.org