

Innova100: starting Innovation activities in 100 companies

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The *starting hypothesis* of the project is this: It is more difficult to initiate R&D&i activities than to sustain them, once initiated. Therefore, the efforts should be addressed to inducing R&D&i in companies without previous innovative activities.

Innova100 is a strategy implemented in four different actions, targeting different aspects that may help to induce innovation. The stated *aim of the program* is to add 100 companies to the pool of aragonese industries with significant R&D&i activity. These may be new companies (mainly through academic spin-off), or existing companies that undertake innovative activities. We expect that, by achieving this, not only innovation will start in the participating companies, but also emulation in other SMEs will occur, thereby multiplying the effect of the program.

Innova100 involves four actions financed from Directorate on Research, Innovation and Development (DGRID) –DiagTec, ForInnova, PromoTec and Spin-off– that are carried out by two agents: one university – the University of Zaragoza– and one center for innovation and technology –the Technological Institute of Aragón–.

Innova100 is innovative in its approach, combining four parallel actions with one objective (thus inducing a strong synergy between them) and also in the

fact that it does not finance directly the participating companies, but follows the principle of “transformation knowledge into wealth”. What the participating companies will receive is qualified help for starting up research and innovation activities.

Innova100 does not finance innovative activities, but makes them possible through a new strategy comprising four complementary actions, performed by two external agents that play a collaborative role. This can be schematised as follows:

Agent	Function	Action
Directorate on Research, Innovation and Development (DGRID)	Direction, coordination, evaluation	
Technological Institute of Aragon (ITA)	Implementation	DiagTec
		ForInnova
Transfer Technology Office of University of Zaragoza (OTRI-UZ)	Implementation	PromoTec
		Spin-off

Description of actions

- DiagTec
 - *Concept.* Technological diagnostics are used as a tool to identify R&D&i on non-innovating SMEs. Once these are identified, technical and administrative support is provided for the preparation of R&D&i proposals to be financed by regional, national or international agencies.
 - *Implementation. First step:* Experts from ITA select target companies and perform technological diagnostics on them. As a result, problems and opportunities for R&D&i are identified. These are then matched by ITA experts to the existing schemes for financing research and innovation at the regional, national or international level.
 - *Implementation. Second step.* ITA experts together with the technical staff from the participating companies elaborate a research proposal and present it to the financing agency. ITA experts follow up until the results of the call are released and the proposal is financed or rejected.

- ForInnova
 - *Concept.* New trainees with specific skills on innovation management are introduced in SMEs. The first 6 months of work are mostly financed by the DGRID.

entrepreneur by offering a clear itinerary from the initial idea to the creation of a spin-off company, with help along the way, including the search for venture capital.

- *Implementation* First, an office in OTRI-UZ was created to deal specifically with the promotion and management of spin-offs that exploit research carried out at the University of Zaragoza. At least once a year a call for spin-off proposals is launched, asking for a short draft of an idea to create a spin-off company. The ideas received are screened by a team of experts, and those deemed viable pass to the next step, where a business plan is drawn. If the response is positive, the proposer is given further assistance to formally constitute the company, and agreements are drawn that establish the conditions for the use of university resources. Finally, assistance in finding venture capital is also provided. If necessary, the promoter enjoys a one-year paid leave from the University, to focus completely in the start-up process.