



Innovation assistant at S.M.I.L.E.

THE COMPANY

S.M.I.L.E. ENGINEERING

location: Heikendorf (near Kiel)

established: 1997

Products & services:

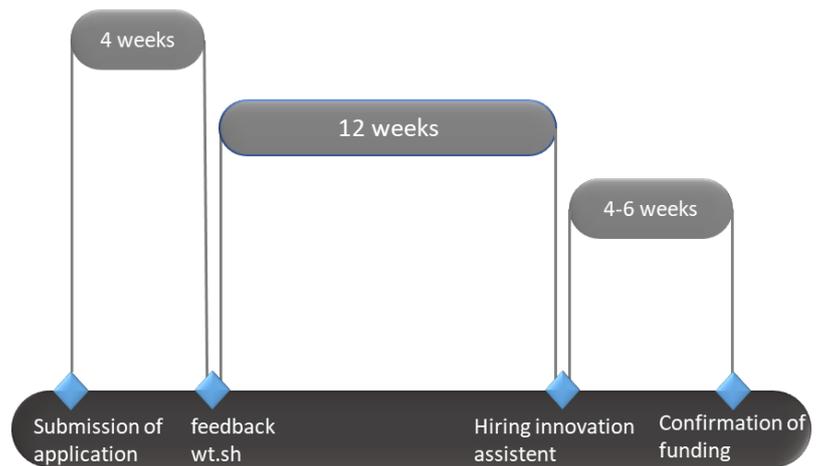
Engineering services in several fields such as shipbuilding and industrial and offshore plants

STARTING SITUATION

S.M.I.L.E. Engineering from Heikendorf offers a wide range of engineering services in the fields of shipbuilding, mechanical engineering, industrial and offshore plants, logistics and documentation.

The drawing of constructions in 2D and 3D format is an important service of the company. The required programs are often difficult to use because they contain several software packages and do not have a user-friendly interface. In attempt to meet the requirements of the customers for a technically flawless, yet appealing design of the construction drawings, the company decided to hire an employee who works on the standardization of construction elements within a 3D software. The objective of the project is to make it easier to use the software, to improve the design of the graphics and to make the software compatible for other applications, for example the use of virtual reality glasses.

In April 2017, the funding period for hiring the innovation assistant at S.M.I.L.E. started.



THE GUIDELINE

Object of funding:

- First employment of an innovation

Time limits:

- Max. funding period is limited to 24 months

Responsible agency:

- wt.sh

INNOVATION ASSISTANT

- Graduates from universities of applied sciences and scientific universities
- to work on innovation projects
- in small young enterprises.

INNOVATION PROJECTS

- technical research and development activities
- Introduction of new or significantly improved products, services, processes or workflows, marketing, or organizational methods as well as market relationships.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Before hiring an innovation assistant, two **conditions** should be met:

Sustainable benefits of the project

The outcome of the project should represent a sustainable enrichment for the company. In the case of S.M.I.L.E. the standardized construction elements can be individually adapted to customer requirements.

Suitable candidate

For a successful project, a suitable graduate must be selected. S.M.I.L.E. chose an intern who was already familiar with the company. The experience of the engineering office has shown that the graduates have a great motivation to familiarize themselves with complex issues.

As soon as the requirements were met, S.M.I.L.E. began to process the application form. It contained general information about the company and the innovation project, personal specifications about the university graduate and the employment relationship. In addition to the form, further information had to be added as an attachment. It included statements on the company's development and prospects, information on the innovation project and an extract from the commercial register. Furthermore, the graduation certificate and the curriculum vitae of the graduate had to be presented.

After the application had been submitted, it took a month for wt.sh to reach out to the company regarding a missing document. The final certificate of the graduate was not available yet, because of the current student status of the future innovation assistant. After consultation between the two parties, the wt.sh issued a preliminary notification by

THE PROJECT

HIRING AN INNOVATION ASSISTENT

April 1, 2017- March 31, 2019

objective:

- Standardization of construction elements for fiber composites using special 3D construction software.

Total subsidies:

- 24,000 €

which S.M.I.L.E. was able to hire the innovation assistant in official manner. As soon as the certificate was available, S.M.I.L.E. displayed it to the responsible agency.

A few weeks later, the wt.sh attested the confirmation of funding.

IMPLEMENTATION

During the implementation, S.M.I.L.E. was facing two main **challenges**.

On the one hand, it took more time than expected to understand the software completely because the user interface was not very intuitive. On the other hand, the company's hardware environment was overestimated. The systems needed several days to process the computing.

After the end of the two-year funding period, S.M.I.L.E. had to submit a detailed proof of use of the subsidies including a technical report. It had to be handed in within two months to the responsible body.

In the two years after the funding, S.M.I.L.E. is obliged to submit a utilization report annually. Among other details, it contains information on the impact of the project and the activities of the innovation assistant.

FURTHER INFORMATION

REGARDING THE COMPANY

<http://www.smile-consult.de/startseite.html>

REGARDING THE FUNDING

https://www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/Fachinhalte/F/foerderprogramme/MWAVT/landesprogramm_Wirtschaft.html

DOCUMENTS & CONTACT

<https://wtsh.de/foerderberatung/foerderprogramme/foerderprogramm-innovationsassistent-ia/>

RECOMMENDATION

Review the need for an innovation project

A project should be carried out with your own motivation and not just for the financial support.

Have a consultation with the wt.sh

To speed up the process a meeting with the application agency should take place. The appointment can be used to discuss the appropriate vocabulary for the application and any difficulties in the process.

EVALUATION FROM THE COMPANY 'S PERSPECTIVE

S.M.I.L.E assesses the funding as a financial aid for the training of new employees. In particular, the lack of practical experience among university graduates often requires a longer settling-in phase and thus causes personnel costs.

The company estimates that around 10% of the funding is used as an expense for processing the necessary documents. However, according to S.M.I.L.E., the bureaucratic proportion is comparable to the internal documentation that is otherwise required for similar projects.

Overall, the company is satisfied with the application process and the cooperation with the wt.sh.

A Clipper Case Study



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