

Press release

Innovation for Sustainable Islands' Growth

On November 4th to 6th, this challenging objective will bring together the innovation managers of 20 European overseas countries and territories (OCTs) in Brussels. During this first seminar, facilitated by the OCTA Innovation team, they will discuss the tools and the methodologies for developing innovation strategies in their respective territories located in the Caribbean Sea, the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

The **Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)** include 25 islands, linked to Denmark, France, the Netherlands or the United Kingdom, hence associated to the European Union. As islands, they face particular challenges, such as geographical isolation, high transport costs, heavy dependency on imports, exposure to climate change impacts and no security in terms of energy supply. Innovation is a key driver to help diversify their economies, spurring competitiveness and green growth opportunities.

Each OCT's government has appointed an **Innovation Manager** to drive change through innovation by:

- Assessing the opportunities for implementing innovation driven economic growth;
- Developing locally relevant innovation strategies;
- Elaborating and implementing the pilot projects.

Supported by the dedicated **OCTA project "Territorial strategies for innovation"**^{*}, the 20 Innovation Managers will benefit from technical assistance and trainings. The **Kick-off Innovation for Sustainable Islands' Growth training seminar** in Brussels will allow these key managers to meet with OCTA, European Commission and other OCT representatives, and:

- Exchange experiences, best practices, and issues to implement efficient innovation strategies for the economic development of the OCTs;
- Approach guidelines and methodological roadmaps for innovation strategies;
- Discover the Innovation network tools and future training sessions;
- Be inspired by European best innovation practices (case studies and on-site visits).

***About OCTA Innovation project (www.octa-innovation.eu)**

With the support of the European Commission, OCTA - Overseas Countries and Territories Association - initiated the "Territorial strategies for innovation" project. An overall budget of € 5 million is allocated for both technical assistance and implementation of pilot projects in the OCTs. Twenty-two OCTs are members of the association, located in Brussels (see the institutional site : www.octassociation.org).

The technical assistance contract was awarded to the consortium Eurecna (Italy) and Egis (France) for a four-year period (from April 2014 – March 2018). A team of experts is supporting the OCT governments, both from Brussels and in the OCTs.