Retis is launching the 2012 “Young Entrepreneurs Initiative” (YEi) competition for innovative entrepreneurs interested in creating their ventures in France. Selected entrepreneurs will receive customized support from YEi and its transatlantic partners. Not only they will access the YEi’s broad network of prestigious incubators, mentors, and investors but also benefit from a one-week mission to France to meet their potential partners.

Any individual residing in the United States, regardless of age, nationality or professional situation, whose project encompasses the creation of an innovative company in France, may participate in this call for proposals.


The YEi competition was launched in 2005 by the Embassy of France to the United States (Office for Science and Technology - Boston section). In 2010, the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs selected a new parent: Retis, the French innovation network that groups together incubators, sciences parks and competitiveness clusters. YEi’s partners are the Office for Science and Technology of the French Consulate in Boston, the French American Chamber of Commerce of New England (FACCNE), and the French Foreign Trade Counselors in Boston (CCEF).

About YEi - The Young Entrepreneurs Initiative (YEi) is a French American accelerator platform dedicated to support transatlantic entrepreneurs. This non-profit program helps its laureates strengthen their startup projects from the U.S., and consolidate their plans for France by providing key resources and partners, at a very early stage. YEi works in concert with various mentoring organizations and affiliated service providers. Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

About the French area of innovation - France is a strategic country to start a venture and access the European market. Innovation has become a top priority over the last several years. Among other reforms, France has developed the most attractive research and development tax credit in Europe. Moreover, France disposes of strong advantages regarding labor skills, infrastructures, and industries. According to UNCTAD, France was the third world destination for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in 2009.

About the YEi Laureates - Over the first five years, YEi has attracted 174 candidates and selected 46 laureates. Half of them have either already setup an activity in France or are in the process of doing so. The vast majority of them maintain a presence in the US, especially for marketing purposes. The 2010 YEi candidates were mostly from the life sciences (35%) and information technology (32%) industries. Antoine Cottin, a 2010 YEi laureate, explains his experience: “Dienva is a French-based company specializing in remotely sensed analysis that supports project design and development. Today Dienva has been created. YEi’s support has privileged Dienva to be in contact with critical economical French actors. Thanks to these contacts, Dienva is on the edge to start its activity, only a year after winning YEi.”

For further information

- YEI 2012 Flyer (pdf)
- More information on the competition and application: http://www.yeifrance.com/program/yei-competition

- www.yeifrance.org