



Business Support on Your Doorstep

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EU & SERVICES BULLETIN

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EU NEWS

European answer to the financial crisis: enhancing access to financing for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

The European Commission's major response to the developing global financial crisis, the Economic Recovery Plan, sets out action at European level to increase investments in infrastructure and key sectors such as cars, construction and green technologies. SMEs are the priority target group.

The Commission proposes that €30 billion, coming from European Investment Bank (EIB), would be devoted to enhance access to financing for SMEs. This sum will be distributed as loans to SMEs through commercial banks in the Member States from now until 2011. The new lending formula called "EIB loans for SMEs" has been elaborated to simplify all arrangements and increase a benefit of SMEs.

The European Investment Fund will also bring forward the implementation of the financial instruments within the EU's Competitiveness and Innovation Programme, and a separate micro-credit fund for very small enterprises. The EIB will also add €1 billion a year to its lending package for mid-sized corporations, another key sector of the EU's economy.

The Recovery Plans includes some specific measures to simplify the rules, speed up the decision-making on state aid for SMEs, reduce the administrative burdens on SMEs, promote their cash flow and support entrepreneurship.

Press release

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/1993&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

European Economic Recovery Plan

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/publication13504_en.pdf

EIB loans for SMEs

<http://www.eib.org/about/news/eib-loan-for-smes.htm?lang=-en>

European Neighbourhood Policy: what's in it for European companies?

Enterprise Europe Network's clients can benefit from some of the EU external actions. Although European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) was initiated to strengthen the prosperity, stability and security in EU neighbor countries, it offers also some clear advantages and opportunities for European business.

The ENP was launched to avoid the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbors. Its main objective is the mutual interest of the EU and its neighbours in promoting democratic reforms, market economy and sustainable development (including reforms in sectors such as trade, competition, energy and transport, environment, etc).

To achieve these common goals approximately €12 billion were allocated for the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). The beneficiaries of this financial assistance are countries within the EU's immediate neighborhood by land or sea – Algeria,



Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine and Russia* –.

Deeper economic integration with ENP partners is a key objective. This should go beyond free trade in goods and services to include also “behind the border” issues: addressing non-tariff barriers and progressively achieving comprehensive convergence in trade and regulatory areas, such as IPR. This new business environment will enable European companies to find reliable partners in these markets.

European businesses can play an important role in helping to share EU standards and values in these areas, as well as in disseminating the experience they gained during the recent transition processes in many of the new Member States.

The priorities for EU financial assistance under the ENPI are identified together with the countries concerned as well as with other relevant actors. The priorities are listed in three documents, namely the Country Strategy Papers, which cover 7 years, the National Indicative Programs, which cover 3 years and the detailed annual programs. All these documents are very useful in guiding the programming of financial assistance.

Tenders under EU assistance programs are awarded in line with standard procurement rules and are open to companies from the EU Member States, candidate and potential candidate countries as well as to companies from ENP partners themselves. They cover a large range of goods and services.

Most of tenders exceed 1 million € and consequently they require a high guarantee. For this reason, small and medium businesses are strongly encouraged to create consortia or joint-venture in order to participate in the calls.

For more information concerning the ENP or the ENPI please refer to

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/welcome_en.htm

All tenders are available on EuropeAid website

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/funding/index_en.htm

A Practical Guide to contract procedures for EU external actions is available on-line and explains basic terms of reference

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/practical_guide/documents/2008new_prag_final_en.pdf

Information Packages for applicants to FP7 Cooperation Programme

Some guides have been lately published in order to support all applicants to FP7 grants, specifically to the Cooperation Programme in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (call identifier FP7-ICT-2009-C).


Applicants to Coordination Actions may find their information package here:

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7DetailsCallPage&call_id=189#infopack

Applicants to Support Actions may find their information package here:

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7DetailsCallPage&call_id=189#infopack

* Under the Strategic Partnership with Russia



Applicants to Collaborative Projects – Small and Medium Scale focused Research Projects (STREP) can find their information package here:

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7DetailsCallPage&call_id=189#infopack

Operational Agreement between the Enterprise Europe Network and the European Space Agency (ESA)

DG Enterprise & Industry has recently signed an operational agreement with the ESA. The main goal is to involve the Enterprise Europe Network's Sector Groups in the ESA's Technology Transfer Programme.

The next 20th January 2009 a first meeting between the Enterprise Europe Network's Sector Groups and the ESA will take place at ESA/ESTEC premises in Noordwijk - the Netherlands.

All information as well as the presentations related to this meeting will be published in the Network's intranet page of the Sector Groups. The EACI will provide more detailed information about the progress of this collaboration.

MEETINGS, FAIRS & EVENTS

ESA and E-Synergy event for growing technology companies

The ESA and E-Synergy are organizing a workshop addressed to all technology entrepreneurs in order to support their participation in the next Investment Readiness Programme. The workshop sessions aim to help growing technology companies understand the investor perspective as well as to give them a thorough grounding in a range of issues, including strategic planning, sales and marketing techniques, intellectual property licensing, corporate finance and legal agreements.

At the end of the workshop, which paves the way for the coming ESA investment forum (6th and 7th April 2009), the attendees will have the opportunity to present their own company to real investors. The Investment Readiness Programme is strongly sponsored and companies are asked to pay a contribution of only €200 towards the total cost of around €8.000.


E-Synergy is an independent venture capital firm focusing on early stage investments. In addition to the management of the Investment Readiness Programme together with the ESA, E-Synergy runs also the Business Angel Network Angelnet.

Investment Readiness Programme
Where: ESA/ESTEC, Noordwijk – the Netherlands
When: 10th to 12th February 2009

Webpage

http://www.e-synergy.com/index.asp?irprogram_next.asp

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PUBLICATIONS

Market Access Newsletter

The last December issue of the Market Access Newsletter focuses on Council's conclusions on market access, adopted on the 8th of December. It also reports the successful Market Access Conference, which took place under the French presidency in Paris. Other interesting articles concern the promotion activities for the Market Access Strategy in 2008 and a detailed analysis of a success story from Mexico.

Market Access Newsletter (15 – 19 December 2008)

http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2008/december/tradoc_141847.pdf

All previous editions are available on DG Trade webpage

http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/sectoral/mk_access/newsletter_en.htm

EuroChile's newsletter

EuroChile is a private organization, which was founded in 1992 by the State of Chile and the European Union (EU), which is also partner of the Enterprise Europe Network. The mission of this organization is to reinforce the business, commercial and technological relations between the Chilean entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurs of the Member States of the EU. The first newsletter of 2009 has been just published and includes, among others, an article on the Annual Conference as well as some good on business cooperation opportunities.

Link to the Newsletter

<http://www.eurochile.cl/prontus/newsue/site/port/20081201112117/portada.html>

EuroChile webpage


http://www.eurochile.cl/index_i.html

MISCELLANEOUS

Video contest to promote European entrepreneurship

The majority of people in Europe have never had the idea to set up their own business. But many of them would like to be their own bosses.

The European Commission is looking for videos that explore one of the following subjects: "The entrepreneurial spirit", "Innovative Entrepreneurship", "Responsible Entrepreneurship".



It pays back! For the best video in each of the three categories the European Commission will award a prize of € 3,000, the second best video will be awarded € 2,000, the third best € 1,000.

The deadline for video proposals is the 31st March 2009.

For more information consult DG ENTR webpage

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policy/entrepreneurship/video-award/index_en.htm

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