



Internationalisation



INTRODUCTION

SMEs enter the international arena in a variety of ways. Internationalisation is not limited to export activities; it can refer to trade, the creation of border clusters, cross-border cooperation, the formation of alliances or subsidiaries, branches and joint ventures abroad.

SMEs may be grouped into three categories, depending on their Internationalisation profiles: Importing as the only form of Internationalisation, Exporting as one form of Internationalisation, or a combination of several forms of Internationalisation (branches and joint ventures abroad). In that last case international operations are more complex than the relatively simple activities of import or export.

The three groups of internationalized SMEs may represent different strategic approaches to Internationalisation. In some cases, they can represent different stages of a continuous process of Internationalisation. Imports remain the most important part of SMEs' international activities, followed by export activities, while very limited is the part of SMEs that are involved on a direct collaboration with foreign SMEs and have branches, affiliates or joint ventures abroad.

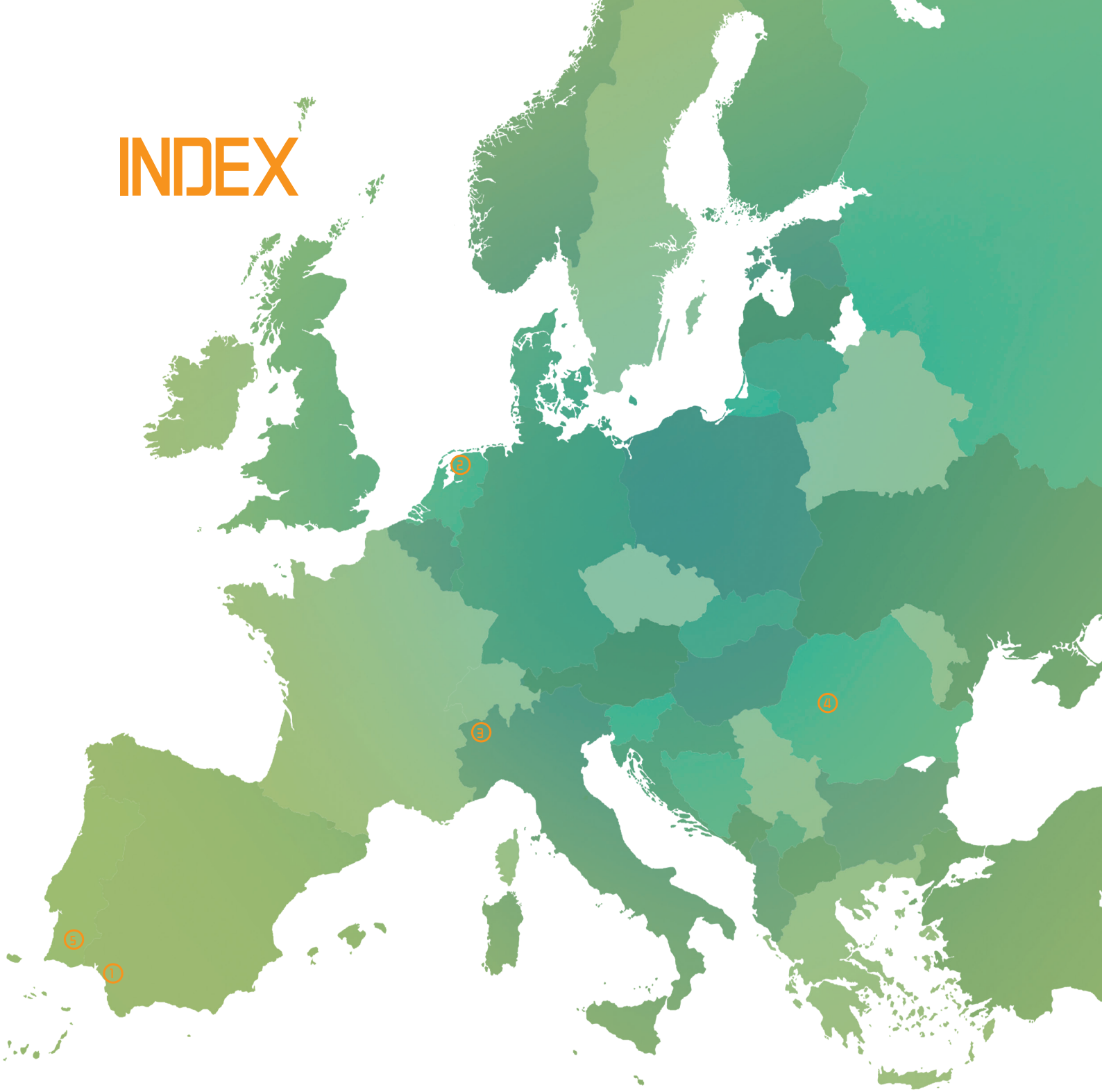
The size of the domestic market is a very decisive factor for Internationalisation. For SMEs with specialized production or large-scale production, the demand on the domestic market is insufficient to build a solid business further when SMEs are specialized. Industry, wholesale and transport / telecommunications, have a higher propensity to export contrary to retail sector.

Support of the Internationalisation of SMEs can take several forms. Examples of financial support are: International development contract (to finance the international development);

- Export credits;
- Banking guarantees on export markets (issue guarantees for export orders);
- Insurance prospecting (against the risk of commercial failure and a financial support);
- Export tax credit (to encourage SMEs towards international exploration);
- Investment insurance (reduce the risk of political and economic events);
- Insurance on exchange rate trading;



INDEX



INTERNATIONALISATION

1. PIPE TRAINING ON FOREIGN TRADE
2. EXPORT ATLAS
3. CROSS BORDER LIVING LABS
4. BUSINESS & INNOVATION SUPPORT NETWORK
5. FAME SUPPORT FUND



PIPE TRAINING ON FOREIGN TRADE

1. SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICE

Overview and aims

A two year programme to create an export culture and increase the number of export SMEs, PIPE is aimed at training Spanish SMEs who want to increase trade opportunities through export. Backed up with a detailed methodology, the programme works to implement a cultural change and export mindset right across all areas and departments of the company. Delivered in three stages, critical elements of the support package include:

- Up to two years plus of comprehensive ongoing support with access to a wide range of services and high level expert support across all stages of exporting.
- Collaboration with the agencies and professionals involved in the export process, mitigating any specific issues that may arise.
- Financial support.

Key resources

Key Partners

Collaboration between government and business has been one of the most important aspects of the programme. National Partners include the **Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade (ICEX)** and the **High Council of Chambers (CSC)** representing 88 Chambers of Commerce. Regional and Local Partners include the **Andalucian Agency of Foreign Trade** and in this case, the **Official Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping of Seville**.

Funding & SME Contribution

With an original budget of €3M, funding comes from a range of sources; FEDER (Chambers of Commerce) 49%, ICEX (National Export Agency) 11% and EXENDA (the Regional Agency) 10%. SME contribution to programme costs has increased from 20% to 30%. Eligible expenses include research, promotional materials, promotional opportunities; travel, fairs and advertising, trademarks and patents in addition to expert technical support. Companies pay the total value of their package in advance, claiming grants as they progress through the programme. A co-financing package set up with financial institutions enable SMEs to access the funds required.

Eligibility criteria

The programme is aimed at any SME who wants to start or increase their trade opportunities through export*, regardless of their business profile, number of employees and previous exporting knowledge and experience.

*Companies already exporting > 30% of their total sales are ineligible for programme support unless their export trade is dependent on one country, (perceived as a weakness and risk to their business).

Terms and conditions

Eligible Companies must also have a strong management commitment to exporting their goods or services and have solid business activity and a healthy financial status.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

The 24 month programme provides technical expertise and support in three phases:

Step 1

Diagnosis of the company's competitive position and its export potential assisted by specialist Tutor support who also checks the company's financial health and commitment to exporting their goods and services.

Timescale: 2-4 weeks

Step 2

Design of an Export Plan, supported by experienced consultants and technical specialists. **Timescale:** 3-4 months

Step 3

Implementation of the Plan, supported by consultants and a substantial package of expert support. Companies are also offered the option of a Junior Export Manager to help them implement their Export strategy. **Timescale:** 20-21 months

Supported by IT systems and tools, programme manuals and training guides the national support network of up to 1,500 staff involved includes:

PIPE tutors, specifically selected for their experience and expertise trained to undertake the initial company diagnosis.

PIPE Promoters: accredited external consultants expert in their field

PIPE Collaborators: multilingual professionals trained in foreign trade.



Additional services provided by PIPE include access to the PIPE Club & PIPE Monitoring Programme as well as other services provided by the Chamber of Commerce.

Key Stats Results to Date (Seville)

KEY MEASURE	2010	2011
Applications Submitted	70	68
Applications Accepted	42	18
Funding Granted to SMEs	700K	*
Funding Invested by SMEs	14000K	*
SMEs now exporting	50	50
Jobs Created	20	24

* Data currently unavailable

Applications to join the programme can be made on-line or through different institutions. The time taken for approval depends on the number of applications under review, with a maximum delay of 5 months for approval.

3. KEY LEARNING POINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

PIPE is the first state programme specifically aimed at Spanish SMEs wanting to increase trade opportunities through export and has increased the number of Spanish SMEs involved in exporting. The national programme has helped 7,000 companies export their goods and services, contributing 17% of Spain's exports. 87% of the programme participants are now exporting, bringing an increase in growth, income and jobs.

- The independent operating arrangements of each autonomous Spanish community have made co-ordination of financial support difficult. This and the range of sources involved; ERDF, ICEX, Regional and Local Government have made it difficult to realise the financial support needed quickly.
- The reduction in FEDER funding and knock on effect on programme budgets may be a risk for the future of the programme.

Key learning points

Some companies needed more time to move to the export phase of their plan; they were not ready or were not yet exporting on completion of the programme. Extended support now made available as a result (i.e. the PIPE Follow-Up Programme), helps participating companies beyond the two years originally allocated.

Key success factors

- For the first time, collaboration of all the national and regional agencies involved.
- The ability of SMEs to access independent i.e. external expertise and advice from specialist consultants. SME access to financial support covering 70% of the costs involved. This covers most of the expenses incurred by companies in exporting.

Transferability

PIPE is a comprehensive programme with a detailed systems methodology which includes the programme itself, recruitment, selection and training of tutors and consultants, through to IT systems and the technical knowledge and expertise needed. All these features and the programme itself are considered easily transferable to other regions.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Project website:

www.portalpipe.com

DIFASS You Tube Channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDmuVACLAV8>

CONTACT

Originator Pablo Morales
 Website <http://camaradesevilla.com>
 E mail pablo.morales@camaradesevilla.com
 Tel +34 955 110922



1. SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICE

Overview and aims

With support from Dutch export agencies, the Netherlands already has a successful export drive. Set up in 2005 to complement existing activity, the Export Atlas programme focussed on SMEs operating in the Agriculture, Food, Environment and Water processing sector, providing them with a unique 'clustering' opportunity to export into Eastern European countries not targeted in previous initiatives and viewed as having trade potential. On their own, smaller SMEs with export potential do not have the critical mass to set up independent export networks, resulting in missed opportunities, sales and growth potential from growing Eastern European markets. Clustered with other companies they do achieve this critical mass.

Lacking both the knowledge of export markets and how to go about exporting, the programme provided an opportunity for 25 smaller SMEs to utilise their export potential and overcome barriers to export.

Key resources

Key Partners

Business Development Friesland (BDF) The programme lead, BDF operates within a large international network of companies, intermediaries, local governments and knowledge institutes, developing initiatives aimed at expanding trade opportunities; putting SMEs in contact with the right contact across the world.

Provinsje Fryslan – the regional authority representing economic interests in the province.

Funding & SME Contribution.

The Atlas programme generated a total investment of €2M with €1.35M raised from Banks, Sponsors and Accountants and around 40% of the investment (€650,000) funded by participating SMEs. Participating SMEs could also access grants from the fund for external research in addition to the technical support provided by the programme.

Eligibility criteria

Participating companies were required to be:

- Registered with the Chamber of Commerce and founded at least 5 years beforehand;
- Have a legally established Head office in one of the northern Provinces of the Netherlands; Fryslân, Groningen or Drenthe
- Active in the agrofood, water technology or energy sector
- Have limited experience of exporting and the desire to increase their export activities.

Terms and conditions

The main condition was evidence of the company's commitment to the programme; that they understood the programme would take a lot of effort and a lot of their time and they were prepared to spend time, energy and some budget to gain the benefits.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

Focusing export efforts on target markets in countries considered to have the most Agri-Food potential; the Ukraine, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Croatia and the Baltic States, participating SMEs had access to four key areas of technical expertise and support throughout the three year programme:

Access to a knowledge network of 8 'on the ground' Atlas Business Ambassadors in East European countries, people originating from the region, now residing and working with their own business in the target countries. Representing and acting as eyes and ears for the 25 SMEs involved in the programme.

Experienced exporters selected from regional i.e. internal knowledge networks, providing help and coaching on a range of practical issues from help with improving their internal sales process through to their activity on the international market.

Access to external consultancy services and experts in addition to Friesland BD support.

The opportunity to meet and develop their network and export business interests with likeminded companies. Membership of the World Trade Centre Network.



Key Stats Results to Date

The overall target was improvement of export opportunities in Eastern European countries

KEY MEASURE	2011
-------------	------

Applications Submitted	100
Applications Accepted	25* (max nos allowed)
Funding Granted to SMEs	€10,000 (max per SME) €250,000 in total
Funding Invested by SMEs	Co-investment of € 15.000 per SME.
Additional income generated (first 3 years)	€13M
Additional income generated (after 3 years) to date	€2M per year
Jobs Created	65 Direct/38 Indirect Jobs

Export Atlas has now attracted interest from other SMEs who have now joined the scheme. Generating an additional export turnover of €2M all 25 companies participating in the Atlas project are continuing their export programme, 18 of them exporting to Eastern Europe countries originally targeted.

Although local export coaches were not used as much as expected the key success factors were:

The permanent presence of people (Atlas Business Ambassadors) from the Friesland region in the target countries provides SMEs with a trusted point of contact person, easy to communicate with and who fulfilled the role of local agent for the Dutch companies involved.

The opportunity for joint presentations of SMEs at exhibition fairs in Latvia, Romania, Ukraine, Serbia etc. viewed as a very positive experience for SMEs. Collaborating together provided them with the ability and organisational capacity to occupy a large exhibition space and speak to a lot of potential clients.

3. KEY LEARNING POINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The quality of the Business Agents in target countries is very important. The most important aspect of the programme was building trust by selecting good agents and representatives fluent in the language, in the right location, familiar with the local ways of doing business. They need to have the right contacts/networks and act as your ambassadors.

Legacy benefits arising from the project included:

- An established network of Atlas Business Ambassadors.
- Ongoing contact and development of business opportunities between Atlas Business Agents and 25 SMEs completing the programme who have remained in touch beyond the end of the programme.
- Greater improvement in cooperation between local SMEs as a result of the joint efforts of all the representatives involved in the project.

The opening of three offices 'Fryslân House' in Amsterdam, Riga Latvia & New York shared by Friesian companies exporting to Latvia, Russia and America. Originally set up with public funds, running and staff costs are shared by the companies involved and offices manned by a permanent member of staff/agent providing a cost effective and sustainable international presence, with facilities to work and host clients etc.

Transferability

The principles and methodology set up for Export Atlas and Fryslân House have proven to be sustainable beyond the initial set up stage. The system of having agents from regions that live and work in the target country and represent a group of exporting SMEs could be replicated and implemented in other regions.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Export Atlas project: www.exportatlas.nl
Fryslân House, Riga: www.fryslanhouse.nl
DIFASS You Tube Channel:
<http://youtu.be/Wldxcx6lkXk>

CONTACT

Originator Lennard Drogendijk
Website <http://www.bdfriesland.nl/>
E mail l.drogendijk@bdfriesland.nl
Tel +31 58 845 80 45



3

CROSS BORDER LIVING LABS

1. SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICE

Overview and aims

To create and develop a culture of partnership between innovative companies located on the Alpine borders. Responding to a tender aimed at 'driving innovation to ensure sustainable, high-quality public services in Europe' the 'cross border living lab' was set up in March 2012 to:

- Develop a culture of partnership between innovative companies located on the Italian/French borders to improve their innovation capacity, productivity and international competitiveness.
- Encourage the prototyping and testing of innovative products and services not yet existing on the market in economic and socially strategic sectors.

Living Labs are an ecosystem of open innovation based on the development of partnership between enterprises, research centre's, universities, public sector and end-users. Their main purpose is to promote and sustain the active role of users, through live testing of innovative products and services responding to emerging market needs.

The programme aims to:

- **Support** the innovative enterprises in the phase of prototyping and industrialisation of new products and services.
- **Reduce** the risks and time to market for the introduction of innovative solutions in the market.
- **Provide** the regional and local public authorities with innovative technologies able to satisfy societal needs.
- **Encourage** and support experimentation, testing and validation of new products and services in real life conditions.

Key resources

Key Partners

- **Region Aosta Valley** - partner of the Alcotra Innovation Interreg project and regional public authority hosting the Living Lab;
- **Regions of Piedmont and Liguria** in Italy, Rhône-Alpes and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur in France - regional public authorities and partners of the Alcotra Innovation Interreg project.
- **Universities and research centres** collaborating with private companies on R&D / market testing. [The Aosta Valley Lab has now also joined the European Network of Living Labs]

Funding & SME Contribution

€1.2M - EU Interreg Programme. Eligible SMEs were invited to tender for R & D projects with SMEs receiving an average of 80%, to a maximum of €137,500 of the investment needed.

Eligibility criteria

Innovative SMEs with R & D activities in the target sectors specified in the tender; smart energies (alternative energy sources, energy efficiency) and intelligent mobility (car, transport and logistics sectors, territorial monitoring).

Terms and conditions

SMEs must have the capacity to complete all elements of the programme within 12 months (Six months for the first phase of R&D and prototyping and a further six months for the second phase of end-user live testing in cross border 'Living Lab' conditions).



2. IMPLEMENTATION

Taking place from March 2012 until December 2013 the programme involves four phases of activity:

Initial Phase Mapping

Step 1 Problem Solving/Dialogue for solution of problem

Timescale 2 months

Step 2 R&D and Prototyping

Timescale 6 months

Step 3 End user live testing in cross border 'Living Lab' conditions

Timescale 6 months

The products and services developed by the enterprises involved in the project must meet precise public administration requirements and involve individual end users or groups of end users during the test phase across several regions of the French/Italian cross-border territory. Five SMEs signed contracts in October. Two smart energy projects; eco-innovative hydrogen storage system and smart metering on energy consumption and three intelligent mobility projects; monitoring system for safety and traffic and two mobile smartphone applications for integrated travel planning and bike sharing.

KEY MEASURE	2012
-------------	------

Applications Submitted	9
Applications Accepted	5
Funding Granted to SMEs	750K
SME Investment in R&D and prototyping	Approx.€1M
Jobs Created	

*to be assessed on completion

3. KEY LEARNING POINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Early indicators/successes.

Although the programme is its initial pilot phase the project is on track. Empirical evidence to date suggests that it is an innovative methodology of financing R & D services and satisfying public needs.

Legacy Benefits

- Long term aims i.e. sustainable benefits for the enterprises involved are expected to include improvements in their innovation capacity, productivity and international competitiveness.

Key learning points.

- With no former practice to draw on and the first Italian pre-commercial public procurement programme of its type, the project uncovered totally new problems and issues including the management of Intellectual Property issues.

Transferability

The partner considers that the programme is a business model that can be replicated in other regions and countries with similar 'smart specialisation' strategy.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Pre-commercial Public Procurement Tender:

http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/download_en/com_2007_799.pdf

The European Network of Living Labs:

www.openlivinglabs.eu

Interreg Project Alcotra Innovation official website:

www.alcotra-innovazione.eu

DIFASS You Tube Channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3H0FpFMKWco>

CONTACT

Originator	Francesco Fionda (Regione VDA)
Website	www.alcotra-innovazione.eu
E mail	f.fionda@regione.vda.it
Tel	+39165274741



1. SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICE

Overview and aims

A seven year programme, the BIS Net Transylvania Network was set up to increase competitiveness and innovation capacity of the Centru and Nord Vest Region, by providing efficient integrated business and innovation support services enabling a 'no wrong door' facility for SMEs approaching the wide range of agencies involved for help and advice. The programme is aimed at:

- Enhancing the competitiveness and increasing support for the development of SMEs and large companies in the two Regions involved, in synergy with all relevant public and private, national, regional and local stakeholders.
- Increasing the capacity and competitiveness of European businesses and innovation enterprises.
- Increasing the participation of Romanian SMEs in the Community Framework Programme for Research & Technology Development.

Key resources

Key Partners

Regional Development Agency Centru form part of a consortium of 7 partners all working alongside a variety of national and regional stakeholders: Regional Development Agency Nord-Vest, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca (UTC-N) Transylvania University of Brasov and National Institute of Research & Development of Optoelectronics-INOE 2000, Technology Transfer Center (CENTI), The National R&D Institute for Electrical Engineering ICPE-CA- ECOMAT Business and Technological Incubator and Transylvania Bank-Banca Transylvania

Regional Stakeholders: Chambers of Commerce in the Region, Business Support Organisations, Universities, Local and Regional Authorities.

National Stakeholders: National Authority for Scientific Research, FP7 National Contact Points, Romexpo Exhibition Center.

Funding & SME Contribution

Key Funding Body: 60% of the Network's funds are financed by the EC Competitiveness and Innovation

Framework Programme with co-financing from both public and private partner resources (€464K) providing a combined budget of €2.76M. SMEs have free, unlimited access to business support services provided by the network.

Eligibility criteria

The programme is open to any type of SME; Target beneficiaries include all types of SMEs, microenterprises and research centres. Although focusing on SMEs, large companies are also eligible for support with no upper limit of employees or turnover.

Terms and conditions

Applicants must be from the geographical area covered by BISNet Transylvania: Regions Centru and Nord-Vest.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

Running from 2008-2014, 60 people have been involved in delivering the programme. Using a combination of events, training, 1 to 1 contact and marcoms activity, implementation has included:

- Raising awareness and dissemination of Network services; EU innovation and research related policies, financing opportunities, legislation, standards, public consultations.
- Advice on EU legislation, standards, accessing finance and direct contacts etc.
- Dissemination and support for accessing research and innovation funding.
- Assessing the potential of technology businesses, needs and funding opportunities; Technology and innovation transfer; IPR and protecting/exploiting ideas.
- Help to formulate project ideas and if required support to find the right partners.
- Proposal-writing and project management skills. Assistance for closing cooperation agreements.
- Support for business export and brokerage services; help to find new foreign markets, and new business partners.
- Regional dissemination of existing regional business opportunities and foreign business opportunities.

Key Stats

Results to date for both regions participating in the programme include:



KEY MEASURE

2008 - 2011



INCREASED AWARENESS OF EUROPEAN ENTERPRISE NETWORK (EEN) SERVICES; (INNOVATION & RESEARCH, FINANCING, BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES ETC.)

Companies benefitting from information services 101,564
Business representatives attending training & dissemination events 5,335

Companies benefitting from tailored information services 916

INCREASED AWARENESS OF REGIONAL SUPPORT; (ACCESS TO FINANCE, IPR)

Companies benefitting from regional support services 757

IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONALISATION SUPPORT-/BROKERAGE SERVICES

Companies participating in brokerage events/company missions 220

Bilateral meetings arising from brokerage events/on-site visits to other, normally transnational, companies and trade missions to exhibitions etc. 669

Partnership proposals (i.e. business cooperation/technology offers, technology requests etc.) 276

What worked well?

Set up and communication with the business support network representatives recommending and offering network services, especially during the first implementation period. The promotion campaign, raising awareness of the EEN and the services offered.

Good cooperation with other regional stakeholders offering SME support. The involvement of company representatives in developing trade missions and brokerage events, facilitating contacts with companies abroad. Creation of partnership proposals and generation of new contacts between regional companies and potential overseas partners.

What didn't work so well?

Initially sceptical of the concept of both free services and services available from a European Network, it took a lot of promotion and dissemination to convince companies of the benefits. Unfamiliar with participation and benefits from brokerage opportunities and events, companies needed a lot of convincing to get involved in international activity/trade. Companies opting out as a result of difficult methodology i.e. administration and paperwork. The reluctance of SMES to take up the services during difficult economic conditions. Time needed for the 7 partners to embed the new approach, the diverse/wide range of services offered and the work methodology involved.

3. KEY LEARNING POINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Appreciation of the initiative has grown as clients get more involved, feedback indicates that clients are very satisfied with services provided through the network.

Transferability

Key threats for the future and transferability identified to date include:

- Low participation of companies arising from difficult economic circumstances i.e. recession
- Political instability
- Lack of confidence in public bodies
- Lack of policies/inappropriate policies for SMEs support
- Integrity of partnership proposals produced inside the Network

Transferable practices include:

- The efficiency and effectiveness of the approach
- Access and membership of the EEN offering SMEs free business and innovation support services.
- Coordination of services providing a platform to develop new programs for supporting the SMEs
- The strong commitment to collaboration and a joined up offer from regional and national stakeholders involved

FURTHER INFORMATION

DIFASS You Tube Channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FAQGvIBjoA>

Regional Development Agency Centru Web:

www.adrcentru.ro

European Enterprise Network:

<http://portal.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu/>

CONTACT

Originator	Emil Toma
Website	www.bisnet-transylvania.ro
E mail	emil.toma@adrcentru.ro
Tel	+40 358 401 276



5

FAME SUPPORT FUND

1. SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICE

Overview and aims

BEJA GLOBAL is the focus of significant investment in infrastructure and economic development initiatives aimed at stimulating economic growth. The programme is based on integrating local policies and agencies to attract and support start-ups, micro firms and SMEs. It aims to attract entrepreneurial projects, particularly those most likely to export goods or services from the Beja region.

BEJA FAME is a financial instrument aimed at supporting new businesses in innovative sectors with lead partners; Beja City Council and a National Mutual Guarantee Association providing loans at a preferential interest rate in comparison to those available from other institutions. Key benefits of the programme range from extended repayment terms, on-going support in addition to subsidised interest rates.

Key resources

Key Partners

Camera Municipal de Beja - Lead Partner
ADRAL Regional Development Agency (Agência de Desenvolvimento Regional do Alentejo)
Banco Espírito Santo (BES) - Commercial Bank
IAPMEI - government business support agency
LISGARANTE Sociedade de Garantia Mútua - Mutual Guarantee Scheme.

Funding & SME Contribution.

The Banco Espírito Santo (BES) provides 80% of the loan and the municipality the remaining 20%. Eligible companies can borrow up to 100% of the investment needed up to a maximum value of €45,000 per project. Partner administrative costs are estimated at 7% of investment costs. SMEs have up to 6 years repay loans and up to one year grace period before repayments begin.

Eligibility criteria

To benefit from the Mutual Guarantee System, companies need to meet the EU definition for an SME. Funding is aimed at micro and small enterprises operating in industry, commerce, tourism and tertiary sectors, priority is given to innovative projects, particularly high tech companies and companies most likely to export their products and services meeting the terms and conditions below.

Terms and conditions

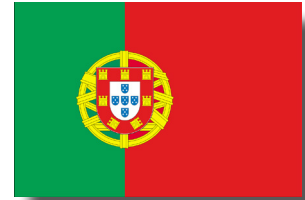
The programme supports entrepreneurial projects which fulfil several conditions. Businesses need to:

- Be duly licensed and a start-up operating in the Beja region
- To demonstrate economic viability and be innovative, (helping to differentiate the region/city).
- Be a viable proposition and be eligible for, and adhere to, the mutual guarantee scheme

2. IMPLEMENTATION

The success of the BEJA FAME programme is attributed to its simplicity, with SMEs benefiting from a mutual guarantee and a tailored package of support, rather than a specific programme.

The formation of a partnership involving the municipality and a Mutual Guarantee Association provides lending at a preferential interest rate in relation to the conditions of the market, helping SMEs reduce costs and minimise entrepreneurial risks. The mutual guarantee is a commercial fund, providing the Bank with a financial guarantee from the BEJA Municipality, enabling eligible businesses from sectors targeted by the BEJA region, to access credit.



Key Stats Results to Date

KEY MEASURE	2011
Applications Submitted	15
Applications Accepted	10
Funding Granted to SMEs	€0,5 M
Funding Invested by SMEs	€ 0,3 M
New enterprises started	10
Jobs Created	40

The application process is considered medium in terms of difficulty with decisions taking up to 3 months.

3. KEY LEARNING POINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Legacy benefits arising from the project include jobs created and contribution to economic growth. The simplicity of the programme, ease of access to finance and the mutual guarantee scheme have been the most successful aspects of the programme; with the least successful aspect its limitation to small firms. Removal of Bank funds currently contributed to the overall funding mix is the key threat to the programme.

Transferability

Beja is reinventing itself as a “service city”, increasingly oriented towards the knowledge and sustainability economy. The regions strategy of driving up growth by collaborating with all the stakeholders involved to develop its infrastructure, attract inward investment, focus on new technologies as well as encouraging and supporting SMEs through a mutual guarantee scheme is a similar approach adopted by other European cities and transferable to other regions.

FURTHER INFORMATION

DIFASS You Tube Channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7Zg532xzxo>

Camera Municipal de Beja:

<http://www.cm-beja.pt>

ADRAL Regional Development Agenc:

<http://www.adral.pt/>

Banco Espírito Santo (BES):

<http://www.bes.pt/>

IAPMEI Instituto de Apoio às Pequenas e Médias Empresas e ao Investimento:

<http://www.iapmei.pt/>

LISGARANTE Mutual Guarantee Scheme:

<http://www.garantiamutua.com/>

CONTACT

Originator	Marcos Antonio Nogueira
Website	www.bejaglobal.net
E mail	marcos.nogueira@bejaglobal.net
Tel	+351 210 937 907





Project Partners

