

Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme 2007-2013

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Introduction and Programme Budget

The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) for 2007-2013 is one of a series of flagship assistance programmes that has been implemented by the European Union in order to **achieve the ambitious goals set forth by the Lisbon Strategy** during the new programme period.

These goals are the foundation for the programme's primary mission as defined in the following decision:

"The framework programme **shall contribute to the competitiveness and innovative capacity of the Community** as an advanced knowledge society, with sustainable development based on robust economic growth and a highly competitive social market economy with a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment."

The programme focuses on the **needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)**, for whom, after structural funds, it is the European Union's most significant support instrument. The intervention provided by this programme also supplements other primary EU policies, such as support for research and technical development (Seventh Framework Programme) and lifelong learning programmes (i.e., Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig, and others).

BOX:

Definition of mikro, small and medium enterprises

Category	Employees	Turnover or Balance sheet	
Mikro-enterprise	< 10	≤ 2 millions €	≤ 2 millions €
Small-enterprise	< 50	≤ 10 millions €	≤ 10 millions €
Medium-enterprise	< 250	≤ 50 millions €	≤ 43 millions €

Source: Recommendation 2003/361/ES

The framework programme has the following objectives:

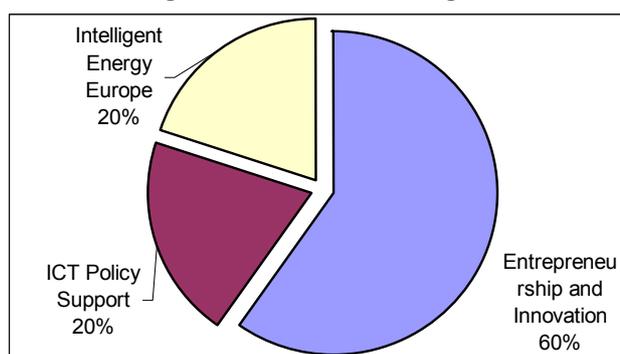
- increase the competitiveness** of enterprises, especially those that are small and medium-sized;
- support innovations** of all types, including eco-innovations;
- speed-up the development** of a sustainable, competitive, innovative **information society** accessible to all; and
- support energy efficiency** and new **renewable energy sources** within all sectors, including transportation;

The programme is subdivided into three main sub-programmes on the basis of these goals, specifically:

- the **Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP)**
- the **Information Communications Technologies support programme (ICT)**
- the **Intelligent Energy Europe programme (IEE)**

The financial coverage that will be provided for the implementation of the entire framework programme has been set at **EUR 3,621,300,000**. The amounts that will be made available each year will be established by the budget authorities within the limits established for the overall financial framework.

Indicative Budget of the Framework Programme



Source: European Commission

Indicative Budget Overview for 2007 - 2013

Programme	EUR mil.
Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme	2 166
<i>of which eco-innovation</i>	430
ICT Policy Support Programme	728
Intelligent Energy Europe Programme	727
TOTAL	3 621

Participants from the following can participate in the framework programme:

- a) members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), who are members of the European Economic Community (EEC) – **aside from the EU-27, Norway, Liechtenstein, and Iceland**;
- b) **accessing and candidate countries** to whom pre-accession strategies apply;
- c) **Western Balkan countries**¹; and
- d) **Third Countries**, as provided by applicable agreements and procedures.

Complete coordination of the programme and participation within it, including strategic management and overall integrated implementation, is overseen by the **European Commission**, which has established the following committees to assist with individual programmes:

- Management Committee for the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIPC);
- Management Committee for the Information Communications Technologies Support Programme (ICTC); and
- Management Committee for the Intelligent Energy Europe programme (IEEC).

The full definition of the CIP is provided by **European Parliament and Council Decision No. 1639/2006/EC**, of 24 October 2006, which introduces the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme for the 2007-2013 timeframe. The entire text of the framework programme is available here:

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/cs/oj/2006/l_310/l_31020061109cs00150040.pdf

Individual Sections of the Framework Programme

Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme

The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme is the largest section within the CIP framework and has been allocated 60% (EUR 2,166,000,000) of the total budget. It concentrates on intervention activities that were originally included partially within the **Multi-Annual Programme for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship** on the one side and the **LIFE environmental programme** on the other. The programme also ties onto the innovative activities that were a part of the Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technical Development.

As the programme name implies, its primary purpose is to **support enterprises** (namely those that are small and medium-sized), **entrepreneurship**, **innovation** (including eco-innovations), and **industrial competitiveness**.

Through the use of the European Investment Fund, the programme assists small and medium-sized enterprises in becoming more innovative by simplifying access to resources by: (i) **sharing risk**, (ii) **investing in the Risk Capital Fund** for SMEs, (iii) **providing guarantees**, and other similar tasks. Non-financial tools provided by the programme allow enterprises to take advantage of entrepreneurship-supporting information through the Euro Info Centre (EIC) and Innovation Relay Centre (IRC), or via the organisation of an entrepreneurial network that shares the most successful examples from actual practice, etc.

Programme Activities

The programme consists of six primary areas:

i) Financial resources for starting up a business and supporting SME growth and innovative investments:

Intervention activities in this area include:

- increasing the volume invested in risk capital funds and investment tools supported by business angels;
- increasing the potential of debt instruments used for financing small and medium-sized enterprises; and
- improving the financial environment for small and medium-sized enterprises and their preparation for investments;

¹ In accordance with the agreements that have been concluded between these countries and the EC in relation to participation in these community programmes.

ii) A favourable environment for SME cooperation, especially across borders:

Intervention activities in this area include:

- strengthening the services offered to support SMEs;
- contributing to measures that assist and motivate SMEs towards cross-border participation with other enterprises and participants in the area of innovation, including involving SMEs in the area of European and international normalisation processes; and
- supporting and facilitating international business cooperation, including at regional levels and also via an SME network that supports the coordination and development of their economic and industrial activities;

iii) All forms of innovation within enterprises:

Intervention activities in this area include:

- supporting innovations that are specific to certain branches, clusters, innovation networks, and partnerships for innovation established between the public and private sectors (PPP); promoting cooperation with relevant international organizations; and managing the innovation process;
- supporting nationwide and regional programmes for innovations in the economic area;
- supporting the introduction of new innovative technologies and concepts as well as the innovative use of existing technologies and concepts;
- supporting services for the supranational transfer of knowledge and technologies and services that provide protection for intellectual and industrial ownership rights;
- performing research into and development of new types of innovative services; and
- supporting technology and knowledge through data archival and transfer;

iv) Eco-innovations:

Intervention activities in this area include:

- supporting the introduction of environmental technologies and ecological innovations;
- providing joint investments in risk capital funds, which provide equity to, amongst others, companies that invest in eco-innovations;
- supporting networks and clusters of eco-innovations and partnerships between the public and private sectors in the areas of ecological innovations, the development of innovative business services, and the simplification or support of eco-innovations; and
- supporting new and integrated accesses pertaining to eco-innovations in areas such as environmental management and the design of eco-friendly products, processes, and services, taking into account their entire lifecycle;

v) Entrepreneurial and innovative culture:

Intervention activities in this area include:

- encouraging entrepreneurship, capabilities, and culture in the area of doing business, utilizing risk and the benefits related to doing business, especially in the case of women and young people;
- encouraging an entrepreneurial environment that is open to innovations as well as company growth and development;
- supporting the development of policies and cooperation between participants, including international cooperation at the managerial level of nationwide and regional programmes, specifically with the goal of supporting the accessibility and flexibility of programmes and measures for small and medium-sized enterprises; and
- encouraging the establishment and conversion of enterprises;

vi) Economic and administrative reform in relation to entrepreneurship and innovations:

Intervention activities in this area include:

- collecting data, performing evaluations, and monitoring performance and the development and coordination of appropriate policies;
- contributing to the definition and support of competitive strategies connected with specific branches of industry and services; and

- supporting mutual learning for the purpose of attaining excellence within nationwide, regional, and local administrative authorities.

Financial Instruments

The financial instruments offered by the programme should simplify access to financial resources for small and medium-sized enterprises during certain phases of their lifecycle:

- preparatory stages;
- start-up stages;
- development stages; and
- at the time an enterprise is converted or transferred.

SME investments into technological development, innovations (including eco-innovations), technology transfer, cross-border expansion of business activities, etc. all fall within the framework of the applicable financial instruments.

a) GIF – High Growth and Innovative SME Facility:

GIF administration is overseen by the European Investment Fund (EIF) on behalf of the Commission and includes the following tasks:

- contributing to the establishment and financing of SMEs and towards decreasing the lack of equity and risk capital currently available on the market – a situation that prevents SMEs from taking advantage of growth potential, with the ultimate goal of developing the overall European risk capital market; and
- supporting innovative SMEs that have high growth potential, especially enterprises that are involved in research, development, and other innovative activities.

The GIF mechanism consists of two instruments:

- **GIF1** focuses on investments during the earliest phases (preparatory and start-up stages). It makes investments into specialised risk capital funds, such as early stage funds; regional funds; funds for a specific sector, technology, or research and technical development; as well as incubator funds that subsequently provide capital to small and medium-sized enterprises. It can also co-invest in funds and investment instruments supported by business angels;
- **GIF2** is to be used for financing investments during the development stage and will invest in specialised risk capital funds, which will subsequently be provided to innovative SMEs that have high growth potential during the development of their own equity or quasi-equity. Investments provided through GIF2 are protected against the purchase or financial transfer of capital that is made with the intention of completing a speculative sale of a portion of an enterprise's assets.

Within the framework of the GIF mechanism, it is possible to **invest in intermediary** entities, even within the framework of eventual cooperation with nationwide or regional programmes that support retail investment companies.

In addition to financial resources received from the GIF mechanism, the majority of capital invested in the fund is provided by investors, who perform their activities under conditions that correspond to the principles of **investing under market conditions**.

b) SMEG - SME Guarantee Facility:

SMEG administration is also overseen by the European Investment Fund (EIF) on behalf of the Commission and includes the following tasks:

- providing counter guarantees and joint guarantees for ensuring the measures that are implemented within the programmes in individual countries; and
- providing direct guarantees to other appropriate financing intermediaries.

SMEG consists of four separate tools:

- **financing through loans or credit** – this will decrease the difficulties faced especially by small and medium-sized enterprises in their attempts to access financial resources, either as a result of the fact that investments in certain knowledge-based activities, such as technical development, innovation, and technology transfer, are considered to be of a higher risk or due to insufficient security;

- **financing micro-loans** – this will support financial institutions and encourage them to play a larger role in providing smaller scope loans – something that generally results in fairly higher expenses for debtors with insufficient security. In addition to guarantees and counter guarantees, the financing intermediaries can also receive subsidies for partially covering the higher expenses associated with financing micro-loans;
- **providing guarantees for investments into own equity or quasi-equity for SMEs** – this includes investments that provide capital either during the preparatory phases or the start-up phases of an enterprise, i.e., mezzanine financing, in order to decrease the difficulties small and medium-sized enterprises face due to their small financial strength and difficulties related to the conversion or transfer of an enterprise; and
- **providing security for SME portfolio receivables** – this will activate additional debt financing for SMEs on the basis of appropriate provisions on risk sharing with the applicable institutions. Support for these transactions is dependent on where the issuing institution will consider providing a significant portion of the liquidity resulting from the activated capital towards providing additional credit to the SME sector.

c) CBS - Capacity Building Scheme

CBS will operate in cooperation with international financial institutions, including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, the EIF, and the European Council Development Bank.

CBS incorporates the following tasks:

- increasing the investment and technical professionalism of the fund and other financing intermediaries who invest in innovative SMEs or those that show growth potential; and
- motivating the provision of loans to small and medium-sized enterprises by strengthening the procedures used for approving loans to SMEs.

CBS consist of activities that provide seed capital and promote partnerships:

Seed capital activities – grants will be provided for the purpose of providing risk capital to innovative SMEs and other SMEs with growth potential through providing resources from the fund during the preparatory and start-up phases of an enterprise or similar organisation. Support can also be provided for supporting the long-term recruitment of additional employees with specific expertise in the areas of investment and technology;

Partnership activities – grants will be provided to financing intermediaries in order to cover the expenses related to technical assistance provided for improving loan approval procedures for the debt financing of small and medium-sized enterprises, with the goal of promoting the provision of financial resources to this sector in countries where a low level of bank intermediation exists.² The credit lines and risk sharing provided by international financing institutions to partner banks and financial institutions will be supplemented. A significant portion of resources will be applied towards improving their abilities to evaluate the business viability of projects that are significantly oriented towards eco-innovations.

Other Support Tools

a) Support services for the benefit of entrepreneurship and innovation:

With regard to the experiences and skills acquired within the framework of existing European support networks for enterprises, it is possible to provide financial support to partners participating in these networks, namely with the goal of providing:

- information, feedback, and services leading towards business cooperation and internalisation;
- services for innovation, technology transfer, and skill transfer; and
- services that support the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises within the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development.

b) Pilot projects and market replication projects pertaining to innovations and eco-innovations:

Within the overall framework, support will also be provided for projects implemented in relation to the first use or market replication of technologies, products, or practices connected with innovations or eco-innovations that are of significance

² “Low level of bank intermediation” is understood to be a significantly below-average ratio of domestic loans to GDP as compared to the EU as a whole. It is based on applicable data provided by the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

for the EU and which have been successfully demonstrated but that, due to remaining risk factors, have not yet successfully penetrated the market. These projects are also intended for supporting the wider use of such technologies, products, or practices within the framework of participating countries and facilitating their introduction on the market.

c) Analysis, development, policy coordination, and twinning:

In order to support analyses, development, and policy coordination with the participating countries, the following measure can be used:

- studies, data collection, research, and publications, which are founded on official statistics to the highest degree possible;
- twinning and professional consultations, including consultations provided by experts from public institutions and professionals sent by small and medium-sized enterprises and other participating parties. conferences. and other similar events;
- increasing awareness, building networks, and other related activities; and
- referential comparisons of nationwide and regional productivity and performance of proven procedures, including their dissemination and implementation.

d) Other supporting measures for the programme:

These include:

- analysing and monitoring competitiveness and branch-related issues, including the Commission's annual reports on the competitiveness of European industry;
- evaluating the impact of measures implemented by the Community, especially measures that are of high significance for the competitiveness of enterprises, and publishing the results in order to determine the areas wherein it is necessary to simplify existing regulations or prepare new legislative measures in order to make innovation activities more attractive;
- assessing specific perspectives and specific implementation measures in relation to the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme; and
- disseminating information that is relevant in relation to the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme.

Information Communications Technologies (ICT) Policy Support Programme

The second segment of the CIP framework programme – the programme that provides policy support for information and communications technologies (known as ICT) – loosely ties onto the preceding programmes of **e-TEN**, **Modinis**, and **e-Content** and focuses on fulfilling the new, integrated strategy for the European information society up through 2010.

The programme's main purpose is to stimulate new markets of electronic networks, digital content, and technology, as well as to discover solutions to obstacles that prevent the **faster use of electronic services within the EU**. The programme also supports the modernisation of services offered to the public sector with the ultimate goal of increasing work productivity and the quality of services offered. A budget of EUR 728,000,000 has been designated for this programme for the entire seven year period.

Programme Activities

This programme has three primary activity areas:

i) Common European information space and strengthening the internal market for products and services from the ICT sector

Intervention activities within this area are focused on:

- removing obstacles that limit access to services founded on information and communications technologies and establishing appropriate framework conditions for the quick, appropriate, and effective convergence of digital communication technologies and services (including interoperability) and the use of open standards and perspectives for security and confidence;

- improving the conditions for the development of digitally distributed contents, taking multilingualism and cultural diversity into consideration; and
- monitoring the European information society through data collection and analyses of the development, accessibility and use of digital communications services, including expansion of the Internet, access to broadband connections and their implementation, as well as the development of contents and services;

ii) Innovations through the wider acceptance of information and communications technologies and investments in them

Intervention activities in this area are focused on:

- supporting innovations in procedures, services and products, which are made possible through the use of information and communications technologies, especially in the SME and public service sectors, while taking essential requirements for the requisite capabilities into consideration;
- facilitating cooperation between the public and private sectors, as well as supporting partnerships in order to speed-up innovations of information and communications technologies and investments in them; and
- supporting and increasing awareness of the possibilities and benefits that information and communication technologies, as well as new applications that use them, can bring to citizens and enterprises, including strengthening the confidence in new ICT developments and openness towards them; and facilitating discussions at the European level with regard to new trends and developments in information and communications technologies;

iii) An information society accessible to all, more economical and efficient services in the public interest, and an improved quality of life

Intervention activities in this area are focused on:

- expanding the accessibility of information and communications technologies, including digitally disseminated content and digital literacy;
- strengthening confidence in the use of information and communication technologies and providing support for them, whereby special attention will be focused on privacy issues; and
- improving the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of electronic services in areas of public interest; promoting the participation that information and communications technologies allow, including interoperable European-wide and cross-border services, creating individual basic areas of common interest, and sharing proven procedures.

Programme Implementation

The programme for supporting information and communications technologies can be implemented on the basis of the following:

- projects,
- activities pertaining to proven procedures; and
- thematic networks.

Projects, activities pertaining to proven procedures, and thematic networks will focus on **stimulating the administration and best possible use of solutions based on innovative information and communications technologies**, especially in the areas of services and general public interest and services for SMEs. Community support will also facilitate the coordination and implementation of activities that will aid the development of an information society across all of the EU member states:

a) Projects, including auxiliary projects, pilot projects, and market replication projects:

The projects will focus on supporting innovation, technology transfer, and the dissemination of new technologies that are developed to the point whereby they can be introduced on the market. The Community can provide grants that supplement the budgets for these projects;

b) Activities pertaining to proven procedures for disseminating knowledge and sharing experiences throughout the entire Community:

Activities pertaining to proven procedures will be implemented in clusters related to specific topics and interconnected by thematic networks. The amount the Community contributes to these activities can be up to the cost of the direct expenses that are considered as being required or appropriate for achieving specific goals;

c) Thematic networks that unite the participating parties within the framework of a specific goal in order to facilitate the coordination and transfer of knowledge

Thematic networks can be linked to activities pertaining to **proven procedures**. Support for thematic activities will provide compensation for any eligible expenses outlaid for the coordination and implementation of the networks. Community contributions can also be used to pay for additional eligible expenses that arise as a result of implementing these measures.

A financial plan must be included with an application for Community support for projects, activities pertaining to proven procedures, and thematic networks. These plans must specify all of the financing requirements for a project, including the amount of financial support that is being requested of the Community as well as requirements for support from other sources. Applicants for other forms of Community support, such as services or studies, might subsequently be requested to provide information on the financial plan.

Intelligent Energy – Europe Programme

The first Intelligent Energy – Europe programme was implemented during the 2003-2006 timeframe with a budget of EUR 220,000,000. The second programme that has been defined for the 2007-2013 period is a part of a wider framework programme for competitiveness and innovation for the specified period and has an indicative budget of EUR 727,000,000.

The primary purpose of the programme is to **support the wider use of new and renewable energy sources, increase energy efficiency**, diversify energy sources, and create a uniform energy regulatory framework within the EU. The programme also aims at ensuring safe and sustainable energy for Europe and, at the same time, strengthening Europe's competitiveness.

The programmes should **increase the level of investments made into new and more productive technologies** and help to bridge the gap between the successful demonstration of innovative technologies and their efficient introduction on the market in a broad scope.

Programme Activities

The programme is subdivided into four main activity areas:

i) SAVE – support of energy efficiency and the rational use of energy resources:

Intervention activities in this area include:

- improving energy efficiency and the rational use of energy, especially in construction and industry, with the exception of activities implemented within STEER (refer to point c); and
- supporting the preparation of legislative measures and their implementation;

ii) ALTENER – support for new and renewable energy resources and support for energy diversification:

Intervention activities in this area include:

- supporting new and renewable energy resources for both centralised as well as decentralised production of electricity, heat, and cooling, thus also supporting the diversification of energy resources, with the exception of activities implemented within STEER (refer to point c);
- connecting new and renewable energy resources within local environments and energy systems; and
- supporting the preparation of legislative measures and their implementation;

iii) STEER – support for energy efficiency and the use of new and renewable energy resources within the transportation industry:

Intervention activities in this area include:

- supporting initiatives pertaining to all energy perspectives in relation to transportation and fuel diversification;
- supporting renewable fuels and energy efficiency within the transportation industry; and
- supporting the preparation of legislative measures and their implementation;

iv) Integrative initiatives:

Activities that link individual areas (SAVE, ALTENER, STEER) include:

- including energy efficiency and renewable energy sources within various business sectors; and
- linking various measures, tools, and participants within the framework of one activity or project.

Programme Implementation

The Intelligent Energy – Europe programme can be implemented by means of:

- projects for support and dissemination; and
- market replication projects.

a) Projects for support and dissemination:

Supported projects include:

- performing strategic studies on the basis of shared analyses and regular monitoring of market development and energy trends for the purpose of:
 - i. preparing future legislative measures or reviews of existing legal regulations, including those pertaining to the functionality of the internal energy market;
 - ii. implementing mid-term and long-term strategies in the area of energy with the goal of supporting sustainable development;
 - iii. preparing long-term voluntary obligations on the part of economic entities within the industrial sector and other participating parties; and
 - iv. developing standards and systems for labelling and certification;
- creating, expanding, or reorganising structures and tools for energy development, including local and regional energy administration agencies, and developing the corresponding financial products and market instruments;
- supporting sustainable energy systems and equipment, with the goal of speeding up their penetration of the market and stimulating investment, thus facilitating the conversion from demonstrating to implementing more efficient technologies on the market; awareness raising campaigns and establishing institutional capacities are also included;
- developing informational, educational, and training structures; using results, providing support, and disseminating know-how and proven procedures that include all consumers; disseminating the results of activities and projects; cooperating with member state through operational networks; and
- monitoring the implementation and impact of legislative and supporting measures that the Community puts into practice.

b) Market replication projects:

The programme will support projects that are related to the market replication of innovative techniques, procedures, products, or practices that are important for the Community and which have been successfully demonstrated from the technical perspective. These projects are intended to provide support for the use of these techniques, procedures, products, or practices within the framework of participating countries and thus facilitating their introduction on the market.

Annual Work Programmes

Individual programmes within the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme are implemented through annual work programmes. For each year of the seven-year programme period of 2007 through 2013, the European Commission will publish and **define in detail the specific intervention areas that are to be implemented or established for the year in question**. Of course, the annual work programmes must correspond to the activity areas of the individual programme activities.

The annual work programmes for each of the three CIP sub-programmes will define:

- a) implementing measures;
- b) priorities;
- c) qualitative and quantitative goals;
- d) appropriate evaluation criteria along with qualitative and quantitative efficiency indicators for analysing results, thus contributing to the fulfilment of specialised programmes as well as the overall framework programme;
- e) time schedule;
- f) rules for participation; and
- g) selection criteria and evaluation measures.

In order to implement measures where they are most effective,³, the annual work programmes also establish the manner in which the programmes are announced – generally in the form of a **call for the submittal of proposals** or a **call for tenders**.

Of the three sub-programmes, the one with the highest allocated budget is the **Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme**. On 8 March 2007, the European Commission approved a decision declaring the work programme for 2007.

This work programme relies on **twenty-three implementation measures**. From the perspective of budget, the most significant is the one titled “**SME Financial Instruments**”, which has been allocated EUR 142,100,000 for this year. The goals for this measure have been defined under the title of “Financial Measures for SME Start-Up, Growth, and Innovation Investments” and it is meant to simplify the access small and medium-sized enterprises have to finances. The measure will be implemented by means of financial resources from the European Investment Fund and consists of the following:

- **GIF** – Growth and Innovative SME Facility, which will increase the range of equity that is available to innovative SMEs during early business phases (GIF1) and during expansion phases (GIF2);
- **SMEG** – SME Guarantee Facility, which provides counter guarantees and joint guarantees for the purpose of securing the programme measures implemented within the participating countries or direct guarantees to commercial financial intermediaries with the goal of increasing debt financing within the SME segment; and
- **CBS** – Capacity Building Scheme, which supports the capacity of commercial financial institutions with the goal of increasing the financing available to SMEs.

The second largest measure within the annual work programme of the **Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme** is concerned with establishing an information network and providing “**Services to Support Entrepreneurship and Innovation**”. It is intended especially for innovative SMEs and has been allocated a budget of EUR 73,800,000 for 2007. The measure for operating the “**Euro Info Centre Network**”, which has a budget of EUR 12,800,000 available to it for 2007, is intended as a complementary measure.

From the perspective of budget, the “**Community Programme for Relieving Regulatory Administrative Burdens**” measure is also of significance. With a budget of EUR 17,000,000 to work with through 2008 (of which EUR 6,700,000 is intended for 2007), it involves the preparation of extensive studies that will quantify the administrative burdens that entrepreneurs face as a result of national and European legislation and will propose programmes and policies to decrease these burdens.

An overview of all of the implementing measures for this annual programme is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/cip/docs/eip_wp2007.pdf

Other supportive measures for 2007 have also been announced within the framework of the **Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme**:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/cip/docs/eip_wp2007_measures.pdf.

These include measure that have been specifically designed for preparing studies, performing analyses and organising conferences and meetings with experts with the goal of strengthening the dissemination of business information amongst SMEs.

³ Some of the measures will be implemented in the form of conferences, seminars, or meeting with experts, which will be organised directly by the European Commission and its various bodies.

Conclusions

The community's Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme is one of the **EU's most important tools for supporting small and medium-sized enterprises**, especially those that are devoted to being innovative. Its goal is not to "compete" with structure funds, which, from the financial perspective, still remain as the most significant source of support that the European Union provides to the small and medium-sized enterprise sector, but rather to act as an appropriate supplement.

The majority of measures included within this programme are not designated directly for small and medium-sized enterprises. They are intended more for **intermediary organisations** (banks, other financial institutions, meeting and conference organisers, expert study providers, information centre operators, etc.), whose services are an important prerequisite for the overall development of the small and medium-sized enterprise segment.

Maybe this is one of the reasons why this support programme, which has been allocated a budget in excess of EUR 3,600,000,000 for the 2007-2013 period, has not yet attained as much popularity amongst members of the target group as it deserves from the perspective of its usefulness.