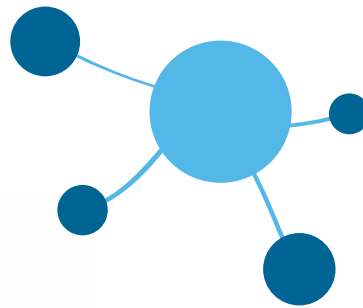




Business Support on Your Doorstep

SMEs step up a gear
with the Enterprise
Europe Network

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Opening doors for European SMEs

The Enterprise Europe Network has been bringing new opportunities to European SMEs for six years. Join millions of companies who have already benefited from its range of services.



"The Network is a network of excellence and so are the professionals who make it work."

Joanna Drake, Director and Deputy SME Envoy,
DG Enterprise & Industry, European Commission



Growing from strength to strength

Since its launch in 2008 the Network has expanded its operations to include more than 50 countries, covering key markets outside the EU along with all Member States.

Partner organisations are ready to help small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the EU along with America, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia and neighbouring European countries.

From Toulouse to Tokyo and throughout Europe, all Network Partners have one thing in common: a will to help you succeed and the Network's skills on hand to help you do so. So far the Network has:

- Attracted more than **1 million** people to events
- Brought more than **90 000** companies to international brokerage events and company missions
- Answered **600 000** questions on EU issues
- Helped more than **11 000** companies to sign business, technology or research partnerships

"These results along with positive feedback from the European Parliament and Member States show that the Network is performing extremely well and gathering momentum,"

Patrick Lambert, Director, Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, which manages Network operations on behalf of the European Commission.





Europe is waiting for your business

The Enterprise Europe Network has been connecting SMEs in different countries for six years. Experience and contacts, combined with a unique business database containing 23 000 company profiles, is at the service of companies. Whether it is organising matchmaking events across Europe, identifying likely partners or helping you prepare for that all-important first meeting, the Network's expertise is at your fingertips.

Turning old tyres to good use

Jacek Orzeł, of Orzeł SA tyre manufacturers, met Polish regulations on used tyre disposal by sending his clients' old tyres off to be burned at cement factories. But he knew there had to be a greener and more cost effective solution. The question was, how to go about finding it?

Orzeł, whose business is based in the eastern city of Lublin, turned to the Enterprise Europe Network for help. Based at the Lublin University of Technology, Network consultant Paweł Chrapowicki entered Orzeł's request into the Network's technology transfer and business cooperation database – the world's largest with more than 23 000 company profiles.

It didn't take long for the Network's branch based at Austria's FFG National Research Support Institute to find Orzeł a contact. WIL AG, a Viennese firm building turn-key recycling plants all over the world, was keen to get in touch.

The companies signed a deal and now WIL AG is helping Orzeł set up a recycling line in Poland. Later, WIL AG will sell the recycled rubber to its European clients, which include makers of safety mats and sports arenas.

“ Not only will we benefit from WIL's technological know-how, but they will also provide a market for the used tyres. ”

Jacek Orzeł, of Orzeł SA tyre manufacturers.



Helping you get the funding you need

If you think EU funding or investment capital could help your business, the Enterprise Europe Network can help investigate your options.

What funding is out there?

The Enterprise Europe Network can help you find the funding your company needs in order to grow. The funds can come from a variety of sources:

- Venture capital and loans
- Public grants
- Public tenders

The Network will advise you on the most adequate type of funding according to your needs. To facilitate your access to finance, we will help you find a source of EU-backed finance in your country or region, whether you are looking for a loan or for equity finance. Furthermore, to help you develop and grow, we will assist you in the preparation of your business plan and put you in touch with investors, business angels, venture capital firms and banks.

Aid from European public funds is a good way to top up private financing. Our experts can talk you through how to go about applying and direct you to only do so for funds that are relevant, saving you time and money. Grants can cover training, R&D, innovation, consulting services and other useful elements.

Your local Network member can tell you about what's available and help you deal with the paper work.

All this free expertise is at your fingertips to ensure that you get the best shot at the available funds when you need them most.

Eureka! Getting funded to the tune of €1.35 million

When the Enterprise Europe Network put Spanish telecoms specialist Sensing & Control Systems and Omnisense from the UK together, they sparked a winning team. The EU's Eureka Eurostars programme recognised the value of the powerful positioning technology the partnership will be piloting, putting up €1.35 million in funding.

Omnisense approached EEIDB Ltd, the Network's East of England office, "We provided a classic matchmaking service, and when we put the request into the system we got three sound expressions of interest back," says technology adviser Andrew Goldsbrough.

The best response came from Sensing and Control Systems in Barcelona, identified by Network Partner ACC10. Sensing and Control produce real-world sensing and web software; Omnisense had the hardware needed. It was a perfect match.

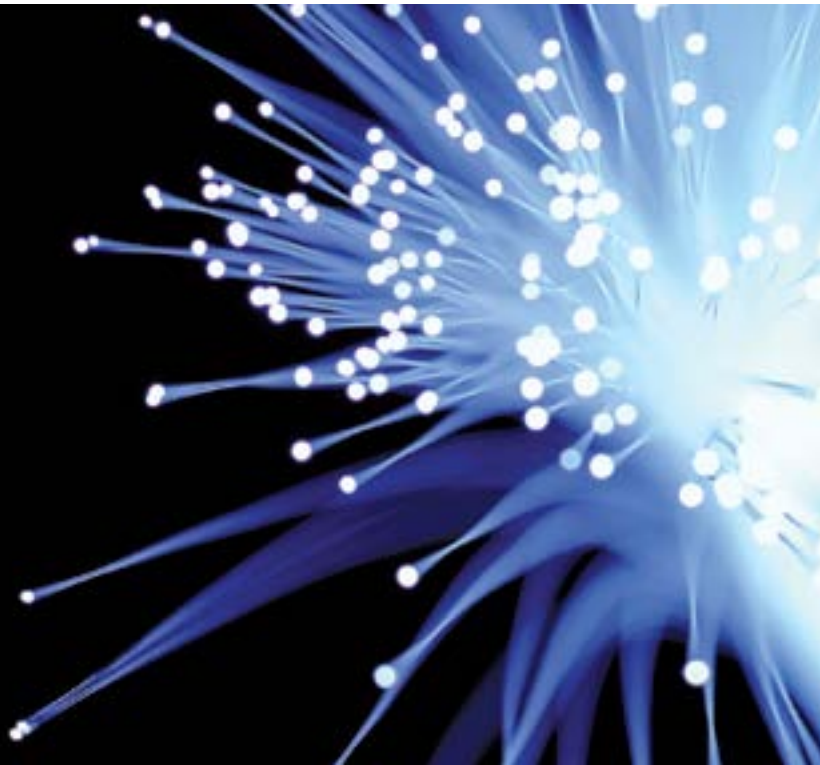
Thanks to Eurostars funding, the partnership is creating a highly accurate Global Positioning System that can be used indoors with standard web browsers across multiple smartphone platforms. Ports, airports and commercial buildings all stand to benefit.



Delivering tomorrow's technologies today

From electronic door keys to a way of helping people control their diabetes, the Enterprise Europe Network's database of technology profiles has 13 000 profiles looking for, or offering, the latest innovations and ideas. You can sign up for specialist emails to keep you up to date with just the offers that will interest you, and contact your local Network partner for an individual search.

So whether you need a certain technology to complete your innovation or have come up with a cutting-edge process and are looking for a market, look no further – the Enterprise Europe Network provides a free service, bringing research and commercial applications together.



“Especially during these hard times, companies like ours have to innovate.”

George Korres,
founder,
Korres Natural Products



The beauty of research

Researchers at the University of Navarra pioneered a technology to put food proteins into capsule form so that they can be absorbed more easily by the body. For help finding commercial applications, the team turned to the Enterprise Europe Network branch based at the University of Navarra's technology transfer department.

Network technology transfer manager Alex Hansen put the scientists in touch with Korres Natural Products, an Athens-based client of Despina Yancopoulou from PRAXI / HELP-FORWARD Network, member of the Enterprise Europe Network - Hellas. The well-known beauty firm was seeking partners who could provide innovative substance delivery technology using natural ingredients. After signing an agreement, the researchers are studying how to make new and improved skincare products using the capsule technology.

Accessing EU funding opportunities under Horizon 2020

Horizon 2020, the EU's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, has a budget of €80 billion running from 2014-2020 and at least €8.65 billion is set aside for small and medium-sized businesses. The Enterprise Europe Network helps researchers and companies to tap into that.

What help can I get?

We can help you to:

- assess your technology to identify your potential, needs and funding opportunities;
- formulate project ideas;
- find partners;
- increase your proposal-writing and project management skills;
- reach cooperation agreements.

Mushrooming business thanks to research funding

We eat a lot of mushrooms in the EU – 1.2 million tonnes a year to be precise. But picking them is back-breaking, labour intensive work. Automated picking is the way forward, but how can a machine tell if the mushroom is ripe?

Research funding to the tune of more than €1 million will help two SMEs set up the Champi-ON initiative to develop a robotic picker that knows what to harvest and what to leave for another day.

Although on the face of it, Cypriot firm Geolmaging, with its background in cartography, satellite navigation and related fields along with medical imaging, doesn't seem an immediate candidate for a mushroom picker project. But when the Enterprise Europe Network teamed it up with a Spanish mushroom picker manufacturer, a partnership blossomed.

Stratos Styliandis, who founded Geolmaging in 2002, says the new research collaboration will allow his firm to expand its partnership network and eventually bring a new product to market.



"The Enterprise Europe Network is a vital source of new ideas and leads."

Stratos Styliandis, founder of Geolmaging



Let there be light

Artificial daylight could give us the 'lift' we get from being out in sunshine, with applications for schools and hospitals along with underground shopping centres and indoor entertainment facilities.

Light in Light, an Italian company developing artificial sunlight, needed funding to push the boundaries of existing research and went to Enterprise Europe Network member APRE, the Rome-based Agency for the Promotion of European research, for help. APRE helped the firm assemble the right group of partners and advised them on the best ways to access EU funds. The result for Light in Light was a resounding success: the consortium was awarded EU research funding of €1.2 million.

"We can help with your application. Preparing the 'impact' chapter where the expected results from the research project need to be described in detail is not easy."

Christin Pfeiffer,
APRE Network consultant



Navigating through EU laws and standards

European law and regulations can be confusing. Let us guide you through the maze of EU legislation – break down the barriers and strip out the jargon for you. Your local Enterprise Europe Network office can help you understand what legal requirements you face and talk you through what steps you can take to help you fulfill them.

Helping you make sense of complex laws

In order to ensure its citizens are protected, the EU legislates in a variety of domains. Such laws can be complex and many companies find it tricky to work out what the implications are for them. One example is the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) Regulation that places greater responsibility on industry and importers to manage the risk from chemicals and provide safety information.

Advice from the Network can save your company time and money by helping you comply with a wide range of laws and regulations.



“The Enterprise Europe Network has helped us reach new environmentally-aware customers across borders.”

Ken Sjöo,
owner of Swedish company
Kenpo Sandwich

Lost in legal paperwork? The Network can help

Swedish entrepreneur Ken Sjöo's company Kenpo Sandwich produces sandwich panels for the building industry.

He approached his local Network branch, based in Swerea IVF, to find out more about EU legislation in the sector after being contacted by Danish architects and builders. They needed an Environmental Product Declaration to check the impact of his panels before selecting materials for their project.

Swerea's Network experts assessed Kenpo's needs and collected information for a Climate Declaration, using an ISO standard lifecycle assessment. The Declaration shows the emissions of greenhouse gases, presenting just the climate-related data from the Environmental Product Declaration, which has a wider scope.

As a result, Sjöo's company is about to sign a business deal with the Danish firm. In addition, the company now has a clearer idea of the direction its product should take to reduce its environmental impact.

Talking to the policy makers

If you feel EU regulations are holding your business back, or are wondering whom to turn to if you feel you are being shut out of EU markets, then it's time to contact the Network.

Your local Enterprise Europe Network branch will not only be able to give you practical advice, it will also make sure your experience of how legislation works on the ground gets back to policy makers. Your feedback will help them fine-tune and refine laws to work for you.

The Network gives the EU's SMEs a voice in the corridors of power by bringing them together in public consultations, finding out their views and presenting these to the relevant people. And if you can't make a consultation in person, you can still put forward your thoughts through the online versions.

Standards that apply to everyone

The Enterprise Europe Network sets out to ensure a level playing field for SMEs and is interested in knowing how they are experiencing the implementation of directives on the ground.

If there are differences in the ways these are implemented, the Network encourages them to ask why it is that they face a certain barrier in one EU country and not in another.

“We really urge our clients to come forward with any anomalies they come across as they are instrumental in changing policy on the ground.”

Lutgart Spaepen,
Enterprise Flanders

Lutgart Spaepen, who leads the Network in Flanders, Belgium, based in Brussels' Agentschap Ondernemen (Enterprise Flanders) explains: “We will inquire and look into their experience and see if it is an example of protectionism or, in fact, a legitimate situation.”

Make your voice heard and influence policies

Consultations are one key way the Enterprise Europe Network gets a feel for how SMEs are feeling about legislation. Spaepen recently held a consultation workshop for SMEs likely to be touched by the European Commission's Digital Agenda. “The first step to work out, with the Commission, was who to invite – we needed enough relevant stakeholders to achieve a critical mass,” she explains. The team also established the key discussion points such as the relationship between IT and the greening of the economy and the impact of IT on SMEs.

Eighty participants shared their views, and a member of the Network was on hand in each discussion group to record their thoughts and concerns. Their comments went into a report written up after the event, sent out to the participants for their feedback. When everyone was happy with it, the report was then sent to the Commission. “I'm sure the findings will be integrated into policy,” Spaepen says.

In Spaepen's experience, SMEs are usually keen to come along to workshops and feedback following the sessions is always positive. They usually say that this is the first time they have been asked to offer their opinion and put forward their experience. “I definitely see the Network as a means to show SMEs that Europe is reflecting on how to match policy to their needs, for example on issues such as access to finance.”



Sharing ideas and protecting your rights

Protecting your intellectual property and patenting any new technologies you have developed is a vital step if you want to make the most out of your firm's ideas and technology.

The Enterprise Europe Network can put you in contact with specialist organisations and lawyers. Helping small businesses use intellectual property rights to protect themselves as they move towards promoting their concepts is one of our central goals. We can also help you find new markets and export opportunities.

If you are sitting on an idea that you think would benefit from protection, contact your local branch. Many hold seminars and workshops on the subject of intellectual property covering issues such as whether or not to patent, licensing and open innovation and the possibility of financial support.



“With the Enterprise Europe Network as a worthy co-captain, we are at the beginning of an exciting voyage.”

Antonio Kondis,
Icarus Sailing Media co funder

Plain sailing with the Network's help

Jason Georgaris, co-founder of Icarus Sailing Media, nicely sums up a common problem faced by many creative SMEs: “You can't start signing contracts without knowing your legal rights.” This was the dilemma his sports management, marketing and media business had to overcome as it took off and demand for its Olympic sailing media increased.

As a team of engineers, he and his partner Antonios Kondis, along with their six employees, developed the 3D animations, GPS tracking technology, special on board cameras and areal footage that made Icarus' sports films so compelling. But neither Georgaris nor Kondis knew how to go about protecting their intellectual property.

So they went to Katerina Leoussi, Network coordinator at ACSMI, the local branch of the Enterprise Europe Network in Athens. She recognised the potential of their innovation and briefed the company on how to legally protect their IPR and make their investments pay off.

Leoussi also helped them secure EU funding to expand their sales and marketing team and to buy new equipment. The SME is sailing into success, having already made a name for itself as the only provider of quality sailing media content to clients such as the BBC and Bloomberg television.

Pooling expertise in industry sectors



The Enterprise Europe Network's Sector Groups bring experts in industry sectors together to provide specialised help to small businesses.

Sector Groups (SGs) enhance cooperation on specific subject matters and service areas of the Network. They aim at coordinating the means available through the Network to provide services to an industry sector. In practice, SGs organise sectoral trade fairs and brokerage events, support SMEs from a specific sector to reach partnership agreements between companies and exchange good practices for the benefit both of the Network and SMEs. The activities of a SG also include helping SMEs to internationalise during company missions and to provide tailor-made information on EU legislation and funding opportunities within a specific sector or across sectors.

The Groups are made up of highly competent and dedicated specialists who help SMEs exploit commercial, technological and research opportunities in their sector.

“Big companies such as Philips are approached daily by people saying they have discovered the next big thing. When the Enterprise Europe Network contacts them they know that there is real value in the proposition and are far more likely to sit up and listen.”

Rim Stroeks, Former Enterprise Europe Network consultant and former Chair of the Micro- & Nanotechnology Sector Group based at Syntens in the Netherlands

Pioneering technology to clean up Italian waterways

A German-developed biofilm technology will be helping to make Italy's waterways cleaner, thanks to the help received from the Enterprise Europe Network's Environment Sector Group. When Levapor worked out how to use biofilm to clean up the pollutants discharged into industrial wastewater, it knew it was onto something special. So the company contacted the part of the Environment Sector Group based at Zenit, Germany.

The Network invited Levapor to come along to the Aquatech exhibition in Amsterdam where the Dutch Network Partner, based at the NL Agency, was hosting a matchmaking event. It was here that Levapor met up with Elion, a small Italian firm looking to expand its services.

“Both companies will benefit from the arrangement,” says Imre Pacsik, Levapor's founder and managing director.

“We have been able to enter the Italian market with a local partner we trust and respect, while Elion can now offer its own clients a fully integrated and better service.”

Imre Pacsik, Levapor's founder and managing director

Network partner Italian National agency for new technologies (ENEA) Rome, helped the partnership with Elion along. Monica Misceo, an expert at ENEA, explains events such as Aquatech offer entrepreneurs a unique networking opportunity.

“Face-to-face contact is the best way for business leaders to get to know each other,” Misceo says. “We at the Network understand that, and strive to bring the right people together. The results speak for themselves.”

“At the Network's Sector Group on environment, we work across Europe to help innovative small companies compete in this exciting, growing sector.”

Sabrina Wodrich,
Environment Sector specialist
and Network consultant
with Zenit, Germany

Network's Sector Groups

- Agrofood
- Automotive, Transport and Logistics
- BioChemTech
- Creative industries
- Environment
- Healthcare
- ICT Industry and Services
- Intelligent Energy
- Maritime Industry and Services
- Materials
- Nano- and Microtechnologies
- Services and Retail
- Aeronautics and Space
- Sustainable Construction
- Textile and Fashion
- Tourism and Cultural Heritage
- Woman Entrepreneurship

Going global: the Network boosts your chances beyond the EU

European companies can reach new and lucrative markets across the globe. From China to Chile the Network can put you in touch with potential partners outside the EU and smooth your path to success.

Find out more:

Visit the Network's website to discover where contact points are located:
een.ec.europa.eu

Network in China in action

The Enterprise Europe Network is active in 27 countries outside the EU. They are based in many key emerging markets, including China.

Network expert Amelia Li, based in the EU Project Innovation Centre in Chengdu, explains that she is busier than ever. "More EU companies are looking for potential partners in China and more Chinese companies actively approach European markets."

Building a virtual playground

Polar Heroes, as the make-believe universe is called, contains more than 50 games and adventures where children aged from four to eight can create their own hero boy and super girl and brush up on several learning skills like maths and reading while helping their game characters improve.

The edutainment adventure is the creation of Finnish entrepreneur and education specialist Juha Väisänen, who founded SME Fantastec Oy in 2009.

In order to find a partner to develop the game, Väisänen turned to the Enterprise Europe Network, based in the northern city of Oulu at Technopolis Oyj. "With 3,000 experts in more than 50 countries, we can make targeted partner searches worldwide," notes Network project manager Milja Rautiainen.

The Network put Fantastec in touch with Remode Studios, a Plymouth, England-based interactive production and game development SME and a client of innovation expert Jim Payton with Enterprise Europe Network South West.

After hooking up via Skype, the companies agreed to work together. "Thanks to the Network, we found our first European partner," says Remode Studios CEO Ella Romanos, whose firm has already doubled its staff amid the increased workload.

The companies released Polar Heroes in 2012 in English, with versions planned in German, French and Chinese. "It's a global market with huge potential," notes Fantastec's Väisänen.



A trustworthy service, just a click away



With the reputation it has established since it was set up in 2008, and the experience it has gained, the Enterprise Europe Network is ideally placed to promote entrepreneurship, create favourable business environments for SMEs and help Europe's business better exploit innovation and research results.

"We've been around long enough now to be trusted", says Ken Gordon, one of the Network's 3,000 experts and based in Scottish Enterprise. It's this trust that the Network intends to build on as it looks into the future.

Improving all the time

The Network is constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of companies. Future priorities include helping more companies to access finance, finding new ways to get research out of labs and into the market, taking a look at the innovation cycle and closer cooperation between clusters and incubators to maximise efficiency and results.

Small and medium-sized enterprises continue to offer the largest potential for future job creation, but only 13% of European SMEs are active outside the EU's borders. With branches in 26 countries outside the European Union, the Network will build on its contacts in key markets to help firms to start exporting and trading across borders.



Enterprise Europe Network taking you to the next level

So if you want to get your business

off the ground,

out of a rut,

into another country,

or onto another continent,

then the Network's website will give you the contact details of the partner nearest you.

Find out more

een.ec.europa.eu



“ I have been a musician all my life so the business world was like black magic to me, until the Enterprise Europe Network came along and showed me the ropes. ”

Andrzej Miciuła,
a professional Polish percussionist and now an official dealer for two top European instrument manufacturers. He was helped by Network partner organisation Lublin Development Foundation

**Contact the Network:**

galacteaplus@galacteaplus.es

Follow @EEN_EU on Twitter

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