



COSME

EUROPE'S PROGRAMME FOR SMEs

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Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of Europe's economy, providing 85 % of all new jobs. The European Commission aims to promote entrepreneurship and improve the business environment for SMEs, to allow them to realise their full potential in today's global economy.

ACCESS TO FINANCE



One of **COSME**'s main objectives is to provide enhanced **access to finance** for SMEs in different phases of their lifecycle: creation, expansion or business transfer. In order to achieve this objective, the EU will mobilise loans and equity investments for SMEs.

- Through the **Loan Guarantee Facility**, the programme will provide guarantees and counter-guarantees to financial institutions (e.g. guarantee societies, banks, leasing companies) so they can provide more loan and lease finance to SMEs. It is expected that COSME will enable between 220 000 and 330 000 SMEs to obtain financing for a total value of between €14 and €21 billion.
- Through the **Equity Facility for Growth**, the programme will provide risk capital to equity funds investing in SMEs mainly in the expansion and growth-stage phases. The Facility should help between 360 and 560 firms to receive equity investment with an overall volume invested ranging from € 2.6 to € 4 billion.

ACCESS TO MARKETS



COSME provides support to European enterprises so that they can **benefit from the EU's single market** and make the most of opportunities offered by markets **outside the EU**.

COSME funds the **Enterprise Europe Network (EEN)** consisting of over 600 offices in more than 50 countries helping SMEs find business and technology partners, understand EU legislation and access EU financing.

COSME also funds web tools specifically designed for enterprises development such as **Your Europe Business Portal** or the **SME Internationalisation Portal**. The first provides practical online information for entrepreneurs who want to become active in another Member State. The latter puts the emphasis on support measures for companies which want to develop their business outside Europe.

COSME finances the ASEAN, China and MERCOSUR **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) SME Helpdesks** that offer advice and support to European SMEs facing difficulties in IPR issues, standards or public procurement rules in those geographical areas.

The programme also provides financial assistance to the **EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation**, to promote all forms of industrial, trade and investment cooperation by disseminating information on how to access the Japanese market, facilitating exchanges of experience and know-how between EU and Japanese businesses.

COSME is the EU programme for the **Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs**, running from 2014 to 2020, with a budget of €2.3 billion. COSME will support SMEs in the following areas:

- Facilitating access to finance
- Supporting internationalisation and access to markets
- Creating an environment favourable to competitiveness
- Encouraging an entrepreneurial culture

COSME is a programme implementing the **Small Business Act (SBA)** which reflects the Commission's political will to recognise the central role of SMEs in the EU economy.

CREATING BETTER FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS FOR COMPETITIVENESS



COSME supports actions to improve the **framework conditions** in which enterprises operate, in particular SMEs, by reducing unnecessary administrative and regulatory burdens. Such actions may include measuring the impact of relevant Union law on SMEs, developing smart and business friendly regulation for them and reinforcing the use of the "Think Small First" principle for policy-making at national and regional level.

COSME supports the emergence of **competitive industries** with market potential, by helping SMEs to take-up new business models and integrate into new value chains. The programme complements the actions of Member States in areas with high growth potential such as the tourism sector.

COSME promotes the development of **worldclass clusters** in the EU, fostering cluster excellence and internationalisation with an emphasis on cross-sectoral cooperation, notably in support of emerging industries. The programme also aims at accelerating the digitalisation of the business community and promoting e-skills and e-leadership.

ENCOURAGING ENTREPRENEURSHIP



COSME backs the implementation of the **Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan** through a wide range of activities. These include mobility exchanges, research, best practices diffusion and pilot projects in areas such as entrepreneurship education, mentoring or the development of guidance and support services for new and potential entrepreneurs, including young, women and senior entrepreneurs.

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is for instance a cross-border exchange scheme which aims to help new and aspiring entrepreneurs acquire relevant skills to run and grow a business by working with an experienced entrepreneur in another country for one to six months. It increases their know-how and fosters cross-border transfer of knowledge and experience between entrepreneurs.

COSME especially focuses on **digital entrepreneurship** to help European businesses drive their digital transformation and fully benefit from the unprecedented new opportunities created in the digital era, which are crucial for their competitiveness and growth.

