

**PROJECT PROPOSAL  
FOR A  
EBO NETWORK RESOURCE CENTRE**

**Prepared for the European Institutions**

**By  
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July 2010**

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

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*... Growth and jobs are at the heart of the EC's agenda for Europe. They are a core criterion by which citizens will judge whether Europe is delivering results in their daily lives ....*

"Growth and jobs" are identified as the decisive factors within the renewed **Lisbon Strategy of 2005** for the EU achieving its full potential and purpose. Recognition by the EC that the way forward in achieving its aspirations means increasing Europe's Competitiveness, not only within the internal market, but further extending to External Relations with added focus on Trade Policy.

The need for a wide-spread, integrated and progressive approach in Europe's external trade relations has thus resulted in the fruition of a strategy that we have come to know as "**Global Europe and Europe 2020**". The fundamental requisites identified within the Global Europe Strategy is the need for apt domestic policies that mirror the external competitive challenge whilst retaining Europe's openness to trade and investment combined with the need for the enhanced access to open and fair, transparent and effective rules in all markets. The mix of the right single competitive market, backed by openness and social justice within the internal market policy, will enable improved and enhanced access to external markets.

Complementing the Global Europe Strategy, the Lisbon Treaty has additionally recognised the EU's future prosperity being enabled with EU's focused ability to develop and nurture the innovation of the **European Small Medium Sector (SME)**. Importance is given to the needs of the SMEs within the Lisbon Treaty and the progressive work has thus resulted in the fruition of the **Small Business Act** and the need for swift adoption.

This Paper emphasises the complimentary initiative that the well-established EBO network organisation could provide to the EC's external relations strategy in terms of trade and economic relations with Third Countries to promote EC's higher principle of open markets, access to third markets and more exports and FDI, contributing to the growth and "**Internationalisation of SMEs**" in third markets; this, to the mutual advantage of all partners.

## 2. THE EBO NETWORK ORGANISATION

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### 2.1. The EBO Network Organisation

The EBO Worldwide Network established in the year 2001, stands as the sole network representing EU-wide business interest within Third Countries. The ever expanding network

which consists of 24 EBOs in 5 continents is a direct representation of the EU private sector in Third Countries.

## **2.2. EBO Network and External relations**

Each EBO has established strong relations with the following organisations:

- EU Member States representations in Third Countries
- Delegations of the EC
- European businesses
- International organisations, such as the WTO and the OECD
- Local businesses
- Local governments and public representations
- National (MS) and European business multipliers

## **2.3. Services of the EBO Network Organisation and its Members**

EBO Network activities, events, and services play an integral role in creating a commercial bridge between the EU and Third Countries.

- Lobbying & Representation
- Market Access Assistance.
- Business Missions/ Trade Fairs & Introductions
- Capacity Building of private sector in Third Countries
- Media & Public Relations
- Co-operation with Governments

## **3. ENVISAGED STRATEGY FOR THE PROPOSED EBO NETWORK RESOURCE CENTRE (EBO RC)**

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The proposed strategy will apply for a five-year period, under the aegis of the EBO Network. It will operate on a revenue-earning basis, charging for its services, thus ensuring a sustained commercial relevance to its clients in a competitive environment. The initial 5 years will be funded by the European Institutions. At the end of the period it is planned that the revenue generated will cover at least 30% of operational costs of the Centre. Subject to the results of an independent evaluation, to be carried out after 30 months, the European Institutions may agree to a further period of support.

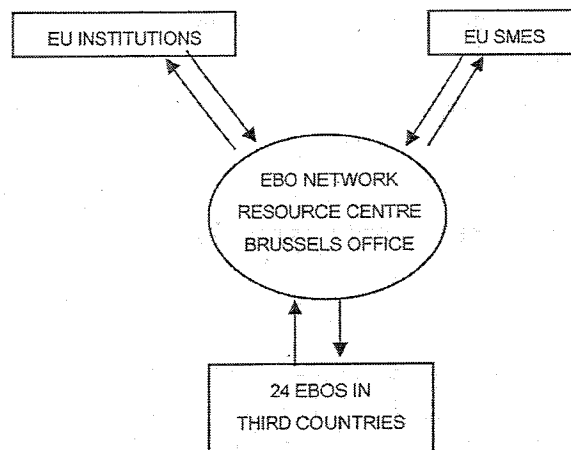
### 3.1. Priorities of the Proposed Strategy

The priorities will be in line with the European Institutions' strategy for enhancing external relations under the **Global Europe Strategy and Europe 2020**.

- **Increase market access** of EU SMEs in Third Countries by providing direct access to market information and actively **contribute to the reduction of trade barriers** in Third Countries.
- **Provide all member states' SMEs an equal opportunity** in entering third markets, with added focus to supporting SMEs from EU member states having less or no diplomatic and business representation in Third Countries.
- Be the **one stop resource access point** for EU SMEs for trade & investment related needs in third markets.
- Provide **European Institutions with access to first hand market information** on Third Countries from an EU business perspective.
- Assist European Institutions in their interaction with third country business actors.

### 3.2. Proposed structure and management of the initiative

It is proposed that the EBO network will set up two arms as support entities to carry out the proposed functions.



- EBO Network Resource Centre, Brussels Office
  - 1 – Executive Director
  - 1 – Officer – EU Institution co-ordination
  - 1 – Officer – SME Business co-ordination
  - 1 – Finance & Administration officer
  - 2 – Administrative Assistants.

- Local EBOs offices, Third Countries
  - Regional markets: ASEAN – 1 Officer identified from key market staff  
 RUSSIA & CIS – 1 Officer identified from key market staff  
 AMERICAS – 1 Officer identified from other market staff  
 SAARC – 1 Officer identified from other market staff  
 NORTH EAST ASIA – 1 Officer identified from other market staff
  - Single markets: Each EBO will retain 1 staff from existing system to co-ordinate EBO Network Resource Centre operations.

#### **4. PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR THE EBO RESOURCE CENTRE**

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The services to be provided by the EBO RC to meet its objectives will include, but not be restricted to, those detailed below. Other services will be developed as the demand for such new services arises.

- Create a sustainable EBO Resource Centre in Europe; as the focal point for European Institutions, EC, European Associations and European Entrepreneurs to have easy access to third country market information and access for proposed SME Internationalisation.
- Create a network outside Europe with existing Organisations outside Europe promoting European Trade & Investment Interest; for access to third market access.
- Establish partnerships with European organisations involved in promoting "Internationalisation of SME's" for maximum outreach of European entrepreneurs.
- Target awareness campaigns across 27 Member States to increase awareness of the EU's SME International Policy and the opportunities throughout Europe.
- Development of an official website utilised as e-platform and knowledge-sharing base.
- Publishing of a quarterly newsletter providing information on current proceeding of the European Institutions on country specific progress targeted at SME Internationalisation.
- Research and dissemination of information on all EU Member State SME Support opportunities.

- Country specific resource pool managed by EBO RC for assisting SMEs gain access to support opportunities, managed through identified European partners in EU member states.
- Publication of Third Country Position papers annually – compilation of 24 (EBO)country Trade barrier progress report.
- Establishment of an online help desk for trade barrier consultation and support in 24 (EBO)countries, mainly through MAT and EBO Network teams in Third Countries.
- Increased Third Country Trade & Investment access through sector specific market information reports (*Country Profiles, Market Studies, Product Studies and Sectoral Reports*)
- Increased intelligence gathering and dissemination on Third Country Trade & Investment policies affecting European entrepreneurs. Including third country FTAs with non-EU partners and potential capitalisation by EU entrepreneurs.
- Establishment of Partner search desk in 24 Third Countries to assist European SMEs to identify trading partners.
- Establishment of EU Investor Help Desk in 24 Third Countries to assist European SMEs in all areas of investment facilitation in Third Countries. A full range of legal services at all stages of investment project implementation. Ranging from:
  - Creating corporate entity
  - Producing corporate documents
  - Human Resource identification
  - Pre & Post investment legal support
  - Pre & Post tax consultancy support.
  - Pre-setting up project office space availability
  - Identification & Acquisition of selected site
- Facilitation of Product IPR protection opportunities via Third Country partners in 24 EBO Network Countries

- Organisation of 5 key annual public events "EU Business Summit" focused on SME Internationalisation, access to third markets, market access issues and B2B opportunities. 3 initiatives in Brussels and 2 initiatives in Third Countries.
- Support to EU Member states via EBO RC and 24 EBO Network partners in organising EU Member State specific trade delegations to / from Third Countries – country / regional based
- Information & facilitation of participation in events within 24 EBO Network countries; mainly focused on trade fairs, exhibitions and training programmes.
- Compilation and publication of European investment guides pertaining to key markets outside Europe.
- Facilitation of Access to EU financial support measures for Third Country investment proposals
- EU SME access to third country Public procurement opportunities through:
  - Research, compilation and dissemination of information on all Third Country public procurement opportunities for EU based organisations
  - Facilitation of Partner Search for PPP access if required
  - Facilitation of access to European & Third Country credit facilities for PPP if required
- Support & co-ordination of Third Country visits through 24 EBO members of the EBO Network
- Equal access opportunities to EU Member states by facilitation of country helpdesk in selected markets via the EBO Network; mainly targeted at smaller countries within the EU.
- Facilitation of market information on Third Country access in accordance to European Institution requirements. (EP, EC)

- Support & co-ordination for European Institutions on Third Country visits through the EBO Network focused on Third Country Trade & Investment initiatives, including access to European investors in Third Countries.
- Enabling the Voice of Europe affecting European Entrepreneurs outside Europe within the process of EU's public consultation on elaborating and applying EU legislation, or evaluation of forthcoming legislation & business support to European Entrepreneurs focused or affecting EU Internationalisation.
- Facilitation of internship to potential Young Entrepreneurs in third markets through third country network partners for promotion of EU entrepreneurship and internationalisation

The above listing constitutes the basis for Annual Work Plans.

## 5. PROPOSED BUDGET

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The budget proposed for the action is valued at EUR 6.8 Mio to be utilised and carried out within a 5 year period. Accordingly, cost estimations per annum would amount to EUR 1.3 Mio. This initiative, which encompasses a period of 5 years, enables lateral reach to 24 countries outside Europe (with inclusion of key markets from ASEAN and SAARC regions), through one coordinating office based in Europe. It further conforms to the EU policies of sustainability and fair competition and would not compete with private support offered in Third Countries for the same services.

- Annexure i : Indicative budget for actions
- Annexure ii : Indicative Income from actions
- Annexure iii : Budget Explanation
- Annexure iv : List of 24 EBO Network countries

## 6. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSION

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The EBO Network, with its unique European features, firmly believes in a macro perspective the services proposed would fall within, and enhance and contribute to the ECs framework of External Relations and Market Access in Third Countries.



In comparison to other projects, the envisaged endeavour is highly cost-effective and, if properly implemented, sustainable.

In conclusion, the Network is of the strong opinion that the above initiative will significantly accomplish the aim of contributing to furthering the Global Europe Policy by strengthening the competitiveness, visibility and presence of Europe in Third Countries, thereby enhancing the EUs' economic prosperity as well as of its partners.