

Notice of implementation of the High Growth and Innovative SME Facility under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (2007-2013)

(Text with EEA relevance)

(2007/C 302/09)

This notice is addressed to specialised investment vehicles providing equity or quasi-equity for innovative SMEs with high growth potential in their early or expansion stages ('Financial Intermediaries').

It outlines a financial instrument, the High Growth and Innovative SME Facility (GIF), which aims to facilitate access to finance for SMEs in their early and expansion stage phases. The aim of GIF is:

- (a) to contribute to the establishment and financing of SMEs and the reduction of the equity and risk capital market gap, which prevents SMEs from exploiting their growth potential, with a view to improving the European venture capital market; and
- (b) to support innovative SMEs with high growth potential, in particular those undertaking research, development and other innovation.

GIF is operated by the European Investment Fund (EIF) on behalf of the European Commission under Decision 1639/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 on a Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (2007-2013) ('CIP').

This programme is open to the Member States of the European Union and those Member States of the European Free Trade Association ('EFTA') which are members of the European Economic Area ('EEA'), accession countries and candidate countries benefiting from a relevant pre-accession strategy, countries of the Western Balkans in accordance with the relevant framework agreements and any other country included in the list of Participating Countries as published from time to time in the Official Journal.

The total indicative budgetary appropriations for the financial instruments under CIP amount to EUR 1 100 million for the period 2007-2013, of which about half is foreseen for GIF.

The following two windows are available under the Facility:

1. GIF1, which covers early stage (seed and start-up) investments. GIF1 invests in specialised venture capital funds such as early stage funds, funds operating regionally, funds focused on specific sectors, technologies or research and technological development and funds linked to incubators. There may also be co-investment in funds and investment vehicles promoted by business angels;
2. GIF2, which covers expansion stage investments, by investing in specialised risk capital funds, which in turn shall provide quasi-equity or equity for innovative SMEs with high growth potential in their expansion phase avoiding buy-out or replacement capital for asset stripping.

Prospective Financial Intermediaries can obtain detailed information on the Facility from:

European Investment Fund
43, avenue J. F. Kennedy
L-2968 Luxembourg
E-mail: cip.venturecapital@eif.org
or from the EIF's website at: www.eif.org

A list of all funds with whom the EIF has signed a contract will be published on the EIF's website.

Proposals for EU investments under GIF will be examined by the EIF on a continuous basis, within the constraints of the available Community budget allocations. The EIF will endeavour to achieve an overall geographic balance for the financial instruments under the CIP.
