



BEST PRACTICE GUARANTEE PROJECTS



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TecSense: innovative oxygen measuring technology

Company	TecSense
Type of business	Sensor systems (oxygen measuring)
Type of counter-guarantee	InnovFin SMEG
Financial intermediary	Austria Wirtschaftsservice Gesellschaft (aws)

TecSense designs and manufactures optical sensors that measure oxygen concentration in gases or liquids, guaranteeing accurate real-time results even in complex processes at laboratories or production plants.

“We have three product lines with a number of different sensors applicable across a variety of industries ranging from food production to electronics and medical research”, explains CEO and co-founder Johannes Krottmaier. “They are all based on the same physical principle: opto-chemical oxygen detection, in which a luminescent dye molecule is irradiated with light”, adds co-founder Volker Ribitsch. “Our sensors can interpret the result to determine the concentration of oxygen.”

“The application of our technology in the food industry has tremendous potential”, Johannes adds. “We can print the dye onto the film that is used to package food. When the dye sees light, it will react and tell us immediately if there is too much oxygen inside the packaging. Too much oxygen could allow harmful microorganisms to grow. This would reduce the product’s shelf-life. Rather than the traditional approach of random-testing and destroying samples, we have developed the only solution in the world that measures every package coming out of a production line, without touching or destroying anything.”

In the initial process of research and product development, TecSense benefited from two EU grants. “This helped us to bring the product from development to a prototype stage, making it almost production ready”, Johannes says.

Building on this work, in 2016, TecSense also received an EU-guaranteed loan through aws backed by EIF. “Without the EU support it would have been impossible to be where we are now, in terms of the size of the team and our technology. The financing allowed us to boost production volumes, and especially to develop our services for the food packaging industry”, Johannes explains.

Aspiring to be a world-leader in opto-chemical sensor systems, TecSense now plans to expand the use of this technology to the measurement of CO₂ levels as well as pH levels in liquids, relying heavily on further research. “We have to continually invest in R&D”, Johannes explains, “if we don’t innovate constantly, I doubt we will survive five years in this field”.

Bage Plastics: Supporting a closed loop economy

Company	Bage Plastics
Type of business	Recycling, Environment
Type of counter-guarantee	COSME LGF
Financial intermediary	Austria Wirtschaftsservice Gesellschaft (aws)

Tackling climate change and ensuring environmental sustainability are two public policy objectives that can be considered to have marked our times. Beyond public policy, however, integrating these objectives into a viable business plan is a challenge. Bage plastics do exactly that.

Established in 2014, bage plastics is an innovative company that specialises in recycling shredded fridge plastics and processing them into high-value plastic granules and compounds which can entirely replace primary raw materials in a wide variety of plastics products, such as plant containers, office trays, electrical equipment or new fridges.

This translates into reduced costs but also a production process that is more environmentally friendly and sustainable. As Ms. Luisa Bernardi, Head of Marketing, explains, “the company’s vision is that plastic recycling is acting on behalf of the environment. That’s why we see our mission in supporting a closed loop economy, by maximising recycling and recovery of materials and by minimising waste and reducing the environmental footprint.”

Bage plastics’ business is growing rapidly, ranking them among the largest European fridge recycling companies. Their two production sites in Upper Austria are already running at full capacity, working with plastic from around 1.5 million old fridges per year sourced from Austria, Germany, Italy and France, and a third one is being planned.

But the company’s young age and fast growth worked against them when they went to local banks to ask for a loan to finance the purchase of new machinery. “Despite our strong performance, the banks were not willing to take any risks. At the end of the day, they told us that a guarantee was a precondition for the loan” Ms. Bernardi explains. Bage plastics turned to aws, who offered to guarantee the loan with the backing of EIF and the EU. This unlocked the necessary financing and has since allowed the company to buy the new machinery they needed to keep up with the high demand.

<https://www.aws.at/en/> <https://bage-plastics.com/>

AUSTRIA



Black System Europe

Company	Black System Europe / Black System Austria
Type of business	Producing paper straws and other paper items
Type of counter-guarantee	National Guarantee Programme
Financial intermediary	NÖBEG

Based on the EU wide governmental regulation of banning one-way plastic items from 2021 on, B. Brandstaetter and F. Scheunemann created the idea of producing paper straws and other paper items. As the whole public discussion is not only about replacing plastic by paper, it is also about CO₂ emission and eco-friendly production and more and more about logistics. So, they decided to follow the decentralised network idea instead of one or two oversized, centralised production entities to cover their European sales.

The beginning and so the backbone of the production sites will be one factory in Austria and one in France which will also be used as testing site as well as R&D centre for new technologies. Around these two leading sites a network of 25 more production sites all over Europe is to be established.

All production sites will correspond to the guidelines applied by the food industry. Certification ISO 9001 and Food Safety System Certification (FSSC) 22000 (corresponds to BRC and HACCP) is ongoing. This includes automatic traceability of each production lot – from raw material to the customer. Having all this knowledge, the right partners for development and local production will bring Black System Europe and its local brands to a leading position among the European paper straw producer.

The full amount invested in one production site is about 1 Million Euro. This will finally lead to a production capacity of 750 million paper straws per year with 25 people employed, working in 2 shifts.

“The support of local financing institutes like NÖBEG, which was done on very short notice and extremely efficient helped us a lot, based on their network and their experience we managed this road fast and without losses.”, B. Brandstaetter says, “So, we can say that the financing guaranties for bank loans that we got, gave us the kick needed to bring the project on track and to speed it up.”

<https://www.noebeg.at/>

<https://black-system.eu/en/>

Compact Milling Systems: Strengthening local food production

Company	DykMill – Compact Milling Systems Austria
Type of business	Mill and grinding systems
Type of counter-guarantee	National Guarantee Programme
Financial intermediary	NÖBEG

Working in industrial flour mills in South Africa Mr. Peter Dyk, an educated mechanical engineer and grain miller, became aware of the fact, that one day in Austria big capacity flour mills will dominate the market and that a small mill, like his family owned company (DykMill), will not be able to succeed on the market with just ordinary flour. The only possibility to survive would be to specialise!

So, when he returned from overseas, he wanted to produce wholemeal flour in Austria, but with the common conventional roller-milling system, the germ bud got rancid and therefore the shelf life of the flour was very short. Together with an engineering company and the Research Institute for Nutritional Science research for another milling system was carried out. During this project, they found the solution in stabilising the enzymes by means of a mechanical bashing process, through which the shelf life of the flour remains for more than nine months. Finally the research process led to a new milling system by means of a pin-mill which was patented and made it possible to produce high quality extraction flour (= white flour).

The milling system is so simple and short, that it is installed in 20-foot container frames. Therefore an own company was founded, called Compact Milling Systems (CMS) Austria. These CMS-Mills can mill almost all grain types, are easy to operate and require much less infrastructure than conventional milling systems. With these decentralised CMS-Mills it is possible to reduce post harvest loss, to add local value, create independency on food supply, decrease food import, strengthen local production and create safe jobs. All effects that are particularly important in regions with weak infrastructure. The CMS-Mills are produced in Austria and are delivered turn-key ready to the customers around the globe.

Through a loan from the house bank backed by a guarantee of NÖBEG (NÖ Bürgschaften und Beteiligungen GmbH) Compact Milling Systems Austria was enabled to carry out the first order from Nigeria.

www.noebeg.at

www.cms-milling.com

www.dyk-mill.com

Javry: The coffee solution for your office

Company	Javry
Type of business	Importer and retailer of coffee
Type of counter-guarantee	
Financial intermediary	SOWALFIN

Coffee is essential to a very special category of the population: office workers. This is precisely the target chosen by the young Javry brand which, since 2015, has good arguments towards the competition.

Ethical, supportive and innovative, the Javry coffee is above all of high quality. According to its managers, this would be the fruit of their sustainable approach: a better paid farmer will cultivate a better product and in larger quantities. As in luxury craftsmanship, Javry has therefore moved closer to its producers and gets supplies directly from agricultural cooperatives. That is one, two, even three echelons lower than the other brands.

Whether the beans come from Guatemala, Costa Rica, Africa, India or Indonesia, they are always roasted in Belgium. This benefits the freshness of the product and adds a local approach to the business model of the company.

In short, these cafes are excellent, and the client companies are more and more numerous and faithful. Especially since the order and delivery system is as simple as that of Amazon. Web marketing and e-commerce are decisive in the business model.

To anticipate its development, Javry had to make certain investments that were financed by a bank credit of 140,000 € over 4 years. SOWALFIN guaranteed 75% of this credit and shared its risk at 50/50 with the EIF.

This mixture of youth, energy and daring has already won over 300 companies, for a retention rate close to 100%.

<http://www.sowalfin.be/> <https://javry.com/en>

Kloshar Bags

Company	Kloshar Bags
Type of business	Street Fashion Brand
Type of counter-guarantee	COSME LGF, EFSI
Financial intermediary	National Guarantee Fund (Bulgarian Development Bank)

An interest in music and art is the common element behind the successful bespoke street fashion brand, Kloshar Bags. The origins of the company, based in Sofia, Bulgaria, can be traced back to the day Deyan Milenkov decided to give his sister Natalyia a vinyl record bag as a present. Natalyia soon began making her own bags for herself and her friends, and Deyan eventually developed a Facebook page for Kloshar Bags.

The brand quickly gained fans in the world of social media, but with growth came the need for investment in materials and logistics. Deyan and Natalyia decided to leave their previous jobs and dedicate all their time and resources to the company and started to look for partners who could help them expand the business.

They found support in the form of a loan from the JOBS Microfinance Institution, backed by the Bulgarian National Guarantee Fund under the counter-guarantee of the EU's EFSI and COSME programmes. As Deyan explains, "We expected the process to be very slow and tedious, but it turned out we were wrong. Naturally, we had to complete various documents, but the most important thing was that the bank employees were with us 24/7."

The loan allowed Kloshar Bags to launch its own online shop and expand the team, exploring new markets around the world, from the United States to South Korea. As fans of vinyl, Kloshar Bags is beginning to develop the idea of keeping the vinyl records completely authentic and usable.

<http://www.ngf.bg/en>

<https://klosharbags.com/>

ALTPRO

Company	ALTPRO d.o.o.
Type of business	Producer of safety and signalling equipment
Type of counter-guarantee	
Financial intermediary	HAMAG-BICRO

ALTPRO was established in 1994 and has over 25 years of experience in research, development and production of safety and signalling equipment for rolling stock and infrastructure. Based on its „know-how“, ALTPRO products have been fully developed and produced in Croatia and have proved their competitiveness on the global market.



With its complete safety and signalling product range for rolling stock and infrastructure, ALTPRO is one of the few producers of such equipment in the world. Through a widespread net of distributors and representatives, ALTPRO products are present on the markets of more than 47 countries on 6 continents. ALTPRO has developed and is currently manufacturing 900 different systems and devices – all its safety products have been certified according to EU standards by independent assessment bodies such as TÜV Rheinland. The company employs more than 130 experts in the fields of research, development, engineering, production and maintenance.

HAMAG-BICRO has supported the company with 4 different guarantees from which one was for the purchase of business premises, interior design and purchase of equipment in Zagreb, Odra. The loan was approved by the development bank & HAMAG-BICRO guarantee including ALTPRO's own capital. Furthermore, the company invests approximately EUR 1 million per year in the development of new products. That is the only way to be successful on this competitive, global market.

The guarantee has helped the company to develop its own development-innovation centre. Thanks to this investment, income and number of employees could be increased to a level that is much higher than the business plan has predicted.

<http://www.investcroatia.hr/>

<http://www.altpro.hr/en>

RAY OF HOPE

Company	Radiochirurgia Zagreb (RAY OF HOPE d.o.o.)
Type of business	Hospital for diagnostics and tumor treatment
Type of counter-guarantee	
Financial intermediary	HAMAG-BICRO

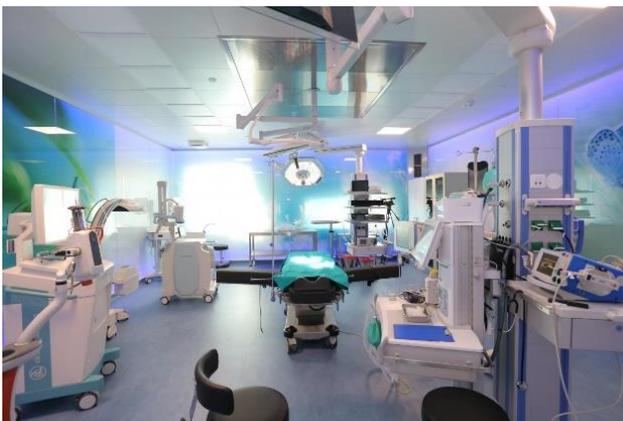
Radiochirurgia Zagreb is a private special hospital that is specialised in tumor diagnostics and treatment. The facility has the latest radiotherapy and radiosurgery equipment at its disposal. Their team consists of well renowned Croatian and international experts with several decades of experience in various tumor treatment techniques.

In 2017 the company has invested in new medical technology where the total amount of investment was EUR 6,3 million and Radiochirurgia had 20% of its own equity. The equipment was financed by financial leasing, and HAMAG-BICRO has issued a guarantee of 26% for the principal coverage (EUR 1,3 Mio).

Together with a leasing company, HAMAG-BICRO has supported Radiochirurgia Zagreb for the purchase of the high-tech medical equipment, for example Siemens MR Magnet Skyra, Siemens CT Somatom Edge, Siemens UZV Acuson S3000 or the Varian Edge full-body radiosurgery system. This investment helped the clinic to treat its patients with the most innovative technology that is used for lung, breast or colorectal tumors. Thanks to these, treatment duration has not only become shorter. Also the treatments are painless, non-invasive, without any blood and operate at maximum precision. Ray of Hope is the only clinic of its kind in South East Europe since such technology is only used in Germany, Switzerland and France, whereas treatment prices are much less expensive in Zagreb.

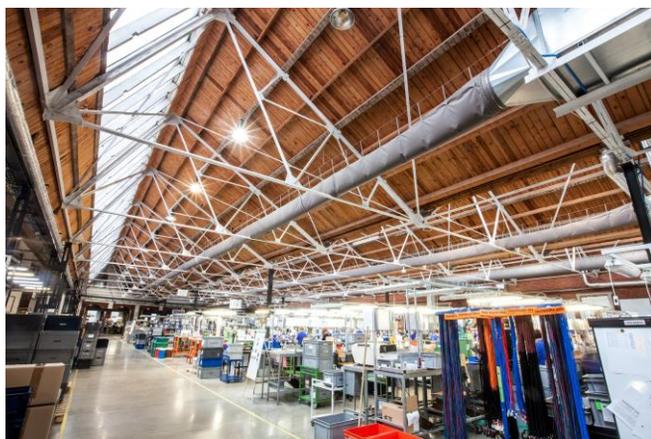
<http://www.investcroatia.hr/>

<https://radiochirurgiazagreb.com/en/home>



Hronovský

Company	Hronovský
Type of business	Supplier of cable harnesses
Type of counter-guarantee	National guarantee programmes
Financial intermediary	CMZRB



Hronovský company was established in 1990 as a workshop manufacturing turned rotary elements. Today, it is the leading supplier of cable harnesses and components for the automotive industry. It specializes in manufacturing components using CNC machining process and production of contact systems (e.g. steering column switches and other controllers used in the interiors of cars).

The company runs four manufacturing factories in Czechia and one in Bulgaria, employs more than 700 people and sells its production besides Europe also to China, Japan, USA, Mexico and Brazil.

At the beginning of Mr. Hronovský's business there was a dream to establish a prosperous mechanical workshop with modern machinery and ten employees. As the business developed, the dreams continuously changed and expanded with other segments. Since the start of his business, he realised that motivated employees and satisfied customers are essential to his success. He follows this principle up to now.

Today, he is the owner of the company with annual revenues of about CZK 1,150 million per year and employs more than 700 people. Among the largest customers, there are multinational groups Kostal, Magna and Witte, i.e. the largest world suppliers of automotive industry. "We are supplying our products all over the world, except Australia and Oceania", he highlights the directions of his company exports.

Hronovský has set himself a goal for the future - to manufacture a complete contact system comprising majority of components of own production, and larger scope of automation. "We can consider the extensive development of the company as finished. Now innovations and automation shall come. It means maintaining competitiveness both in products and production processes. Elimination of manual work of operators being risky as regards the quality and availability of human resources".

<https://www.cmzrb.cz/en/?rc>

<https://www.hronovsky.cz/>

RAPTECH

Company	RAPTECH
Type of business	Additive manufacturing on new CNC machines
Type of counter-guarantee	COSME LGF
Financial intermediary	CMZRB

The Raptech company was established in 2015, although its real activity started in autumn 2016. The company is active in additive manufacturing and the utilisation of laser technologies in production. It focuses on the production of various tools, fixtures, molds and dies for machinery industry, using at the same time laser technologies, e.g. for repairs and rebuilding of machine parts. Furthermore, the additive



manufacturing processes provide for conventional 3D-printing using polymers, as well as printing of sizable parts from metal powders.

“The way how we are doing it distinguishes us from our competitors,” Mr. Němeček turns our attention to the merits of his company. Thanks to that, the company has access to research projects involving many research organizations and institutions all over Europe.

In 2016, ČMZRB provided two guarantees to the RAPTECH company, namely for purchase of new technologies related to machining and toolmaking. For Mr. Němeček that was the best acceptable way to obtain funds in order to start his new business after leaving Matex PM and his partner. Guarantees given to the company are covered both from national and European resources. In this case by the “COSME” programme.

In his business, Mr. Němeček mainly intends to focus on activities with the high added value content. A dream of his is to build up his own modern production hall with laboratories meeting European standards.

<https://www.cmzrb.cz/en/?rc>

<https://www.raptech.cz/en/>

Muhu Leib

Company	Muhu Leib
Type of business	Bakeries
Type of counter-guarantee	COSME LGF, EFSI
Financial intermediary	KredEX

Martin Sepping's successful business project started with the idea of bringing the freshness and authenticity of warm, home-baked bread to the market. "Estonians really like to bake bread at home. What we do at the bakery is exactly the same thing – just with better technology." Martin set up Muhu Leib (leib means 'bread' in Estonian) on Muhu island in 2013, and with his dark rye bread soon flying off the shelves, expanded the business - first to Tallinn, and then throughout Estonia, establishing nine bakeries and employing 40 people by mid-2017.

To grow the business, Martin needed financial support to purchase ovens, cabinets, mixers and fridges. He turned to KredEx and obtained an EU-supported loan backed by EIF under COSME LGF and the Investment Plan for Europe, which aim to generate new investments by facilitating access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises. The loan, which came with favourable conditions and without any collateral requirements, enabled Martin to equip his new bakeries.

With volumes increasing and the business expanding fast, Martin is clear about the future: "Right now we want to make sure we are working as well as possible. We want to concentrate on getting our systems running efficiently now before we grow any further."

<https://www.kredex.ee/en>

<https://muhuleib.wordpress.com/muhu/>

Aarreranta

Company	Aarreranta
Type of business	Child Welfare Unit
Type of counter-guarantee	Start guarantee
Financial intermediary	Finnvera

Henna Raiski started her own business five years ago, as years in social and health care had brought her the necessary experience. She has a degree in social work and has worked extensively in child protection and adult social work.

“We started building Aarreranta because my friends, who were working in the same field, also had the dream to start their own service to support children”, Raiski tells. The trio began sketching out a business plan with the help of the Kuudestaan Association, which supports local business. A small unit for 7 children, focused on child welfare especially for under 15-year-olds, was built in Ähtäri in 2015.

Finnvera’s Start guarantee was introduced to the start-up entrepreneurs as the business plan and financing options were discussed with a consultant specializing in social enterprises. For Aarreranta, Finnvera's help was needed especially for running the day-to-day business when there were only a few children in the unit. The loan from the Start guarantee was used to cover upfront essential expenses such as salary payments and furnishing the unit. “We were especially helped by the fact that we were able to focus on providing help instead of thinking about money”, Raiski praises Finnvera’s Start guarantee.

According to Henna Raiski, Aarreranta's strengths include a homely and truly caring atmosphere. Children arriving to foster care from difficult conditions will receive support for growth when care is invested with high quality and time. As Aarreranta's operations deepen, the company strives to invest in quality: making the same employees stay longer and giving children a sense of permanence.

However, after a successful start-up, the need for another identical child welfare unit has already arisen and Aarreranta has already received a loan for the operation. “Hopefully, we will be running these two units with the same enthusiasm as this first one in the near future”, Raiski envisions.

Henna Raiski recommends a Start guarantee to other first-time start-ups because of the ease of service. The Start guarantee enabled Aarreranta to consider another child protection unit at all.

<https://www.finnvera.fi/eng/>

<http://aarreranta.com/>

Cullen Language Services

Company	Cullen Language Services
Type of business	Language School
Type of counter-guarantee	COSME LGF, EFSI
Financial intermediary	SIAGI

With customers ranging from Fortune 500 companies to local SMEs, Cullen Language Services is a company based in Lyon that specializes in teaching professional English for corporate clients.

“We have a number of language teaching solutions available”, explains John Cullen, the Irish founder and CEO, “but our main product is face to face training, working individually or in very small groups. We always try to ‘keep it real’, using real-life situations and customizing the service and tailoring the course to the professional needs of our clients”. Cullen Language Services also offers a special immersion course that takes the clients to Ireland for an experience that combines classroom sessions with visits and excursions around Dublin.

The company has recently experienced a period of growth, as it established itself in the market and gained a reputation for quality service. “With globalization, there’s a growing demand for English teaching that’s not covered by the education system” John says. In a period of 3 years, the company went from 20 000 to 30 000 training hours per year.

With this rapid growth, there was a significant strain on working capital and cash-flow, as complex processes and bureaucracy meant that Cullen often received payments with up to 12 months’ delay. In order to meet its needs, the company secured a loan through SIAGI, with EIF support under the EU’s Investment Plan for Europe. “Without the loan, things could have become very uncomfortable. We would have had to make painful cuts in our staff or struggled to find alternative solutions”, John says, “and in a crucial time for us, spending time worrying about financing would have meant less time to concentrate on developing the business”.

With the cash-flow issues resolved, Cullen Language Services is now focusing on managing and consolidating its growth while also preparing to adapt to a period of change that is expected in sector regulations.

<http://www.siagi.com/>

<https://www.cullen.fr/>

Parfums Godet

Company	Parfums Godet
Type of business	Perfumery
Type of counter-guarantee	COSME LGF, EFSI
Financial intermediary	SIAGI

"I was visiting my grandfather in Paris and came across his vast collection of old perfumes. I was simply blown away. It was amazing to smell these fragrances, still in their bottles since the beginning of last century" says Sonia Souza, great granddaughter of Julien-Joseph Godet, who founded Maison Godet in 1901.

Having worked in the field herself, Sonia had a clear idea in her mind. "In the 1970's the family business changed direction, shifting from perfumes to producing natural food flavoring" she explains, "but after my discovery, I was determined to go back to the roots. I had the perfumes analysed and set out to reproduce the same fragrances from the early 20th century."

Sonia developed a business plan and called a number of banks, thinking that "since it was a good idea everyone would be willing to finance me – it didn't work out like that at all." Sonia eventually secured a loan through SIAGI, backed by EIF under the Investment Plan for Europe. "It was a game changer" Sonia points out. "With this guarantee on the loan, I went from having no options to multiple financing offers. Otherwise, I don't think I would have been able to get the project off the ground."

The loan allowed Sonia to start up her business and realize her dream of resurrecting Maison Godet in a historical building in Saint-Paul de Vence, one of the most-visited destinations in France. "The location is no coincidence" she explains, "many artists used to come here and were close to my great grandfather. Here he made perfumes for muses of artists like Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso."

Today, Maison Godet aims to retain the authenticity of the original business of the 1920s, from the in-store decoration to the artisanal production process. Raw materials come from nearby Grasse, perfume capital of the world, while the glass vials and all the packaging are hand-made in France. "Behind every bottle there are four sets of hands" Sonia says.

With the business doing well, Sonia is already planning to recruit three persons to help with sales, public relations and logistics. She is also planning to open a new store in London, Paris or New York and is already cultivating her own rose and jasmine fields.

<http://www.siagi.com/>

<https://parfumsgodet.com/en/>

Clean Energy Comes from the Stable

Company	Bernd Reuther Agriculture
Type of business	Farm
Type of counter-guarantee	COSME (60% guarantee)
Financial intermediary	Bürgschaftsbank Baden-Württemberg

Farmers often do not enjoy the best reputation. Farmers are said not to care about animal protection and to excessively fertilise their grounds. Two out of many prejudices which are usually completely unfounded. Bernd Reuther is the best example of how farmers are working in harmony with nature. The 42-year-old owns a farm with 100 dairy cows and a total of 175 hectares of arable land and grassland.

After the qualified industrial electrician had taken over the parental company in 2003 as a subsidiary business, he continuously expanded it and looked for new ways to make it prepared for the future. In evening classes, he caught up on the agricultural education. “It has always been clear to me that I want to keep the business”, he says.

Eventually he quit his job and devoted himself completely to the farm. It is of importance to him that the animals are kept in a species-appropriated manner with open spaced barns and enough space. When it comes to his products, he pays attention to strict quality and hygiene controls. He delivers part of the milk to his sister’s dairy farm. She then sells the produced goods in her own farm shop or at village shops in the area. The products differ from the industrially produced mass products. “Some ingredients we use in minimum quantities or we completely avoid them because we want to produce an authentic and regional food product. Our way of working is craft-oriented, transparent and personal”, emphasises Reuther. “For us, much more important than the price is the quality and the taste”.

The father of three children is a true entrepreneur and thinks future and business oriented. Through a loan from his house bank and via a 60% guarantee for agriculture (COSME), he could build a biogas plant on his farm run on dung and manure.

The electricity obtained from it, about 75 kilowatts per hour, is integrated into the network of an energy supply company. “Why shouldn’t we make use of the manure and dung in a reasonable and more environmentally-friendly way?” thought Bernd Reuther, especially since this also has a positive and not insignificant side effect: “We have signed a 20-year contract which gives us an additional and most of all secure source of income”, he emphasises. “And I think it’s great that thanks to the guarantees for agriculture there is the possibility to support us farmers in our projects in a targeted way. I can only recommend this support to others.” Bernd Reuther gladly accepts the many challenges of farming because he loves working with the animals and nature.

Fosera Solarsystem: “Green” Electricity for the World

Company	Fosera Solarsystems GmbH & Co. KGaA
Type of business	Engineering based on solar energy systems
Type of counter-guarantee	InnovFin (70% guarantee)
Financial intermediary	Bürgschaftsbank Baden-Württemberg

While she was still a student, Catherine Adelman already set the course for her career as an entrepreneur, without wishing to do so. By projects at the University of Ulm she developed a solar island system and a business plan. Her professor was so enthusiastic about it that he encouraged her to make it a business model.

In 2011, Adelman founded the Fosera Solar systems GmbH & Co. KGaA and offers devices that operate based on solar batteries. It all started with lamps, but the product range quickly expanded. Next to the built in ultra-efficient LEDs, the technical peculiarity lies in the modern lithium battery technology. The solutions are manufactured according to the “modular system design” and can therefore be expanded according to energy needs and purchasing power of the customers.

The target markets of Fosera are mainly developing countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia. “In many - especially poorer - regions of the world renewable energy sources such as sun, wind and water frequently present the only way to provide the people with electricity”, underlines the young woman. “We would like to improve the quality of life of these people by means of our systems while at the same time protecting the environment”. Next to the headquarters in Illerkirchberg, production and after-sales facilities in Thailand and Ethiopia belong to the company. The systems are offered according to the pay-as-you-go principle, so the people of these countries can afford them. This means the customers pay them in small monthly rates.

Like any other founder of a start-up, also Adelman needed capital to realise her plans: After two years she got two investors on board. And in 2017, the company received an innovation financing by L-Bank, which is guaranteed via the InnovFin70 program of the Bürgschaftsbank Baden-Württemberg jointly with the EIF. With this financing, Catherine Adelman intends to launch even more powerful systems on the market. “I was especially pleased that the investors and banks not only classified my business idea as profitable, but also saw the meaning behind it. I have received a lot of support and useful advices from all sides”, says the economics engineer.

Catherine Adelman continues to work passionately towards her long-term goal: to be able to offer an energy service in developing countries at a level that is like the one in Germany with solar energy. For the sake of the people and of the environment.

<https://www.buergschaftsbank.de/>

<http://fosera.com/>



György Juhász

Company	György Juhász
Type of business	Farm
Type of counter-guarantee	COSME LGF, EFSI
Financial intermediary	Agrár-Vállalkozási Hitelgarancia Alapítvány (AVHGA)

The family farm of György Juhász was founded in 2002 and operates mainly around Szolnok, Tószeg and Tiszavárkony in Hungary. Sixteen years later, the business is still expanding: in 2017, the farm cultivated sunflowers, corn, coleseed, winter wheat and other cereal grains on almost 200 hectares of land.

György received help from the COSME and EFSI programmes through Agrár-Vállalkozási Hitelgarancia Alapítvány (AVHGA). The 2016 agreement signed between AVHGA and the European Investment Fund (EIF) allows more agricultural and rural micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to access financing than before, because the EIF provides AVHGA with a counter-guarantee backed under the EU's COSME and EFSI programmes." As AVHGA CEO András Herczegh explains: "The mission of AVHGA is to facilitate credit availability for SMEs that other financial institutions find too risky to finance."

The guarantee underpinning the AVHGA loan was essential for financing our project," says owner, private farmer, agriculture engineer and plant health specialist György Juhász. The HUF 12 million loan enabled the farm to use environmentally friendly, sustainable fertilisers in a more precise way, based on and adjusted to the special needs of the crops. The project, which should pay-off in three to four years, also helped involve the younger members of the family in the business.

<https://avhga.hu/en/>

Bubbles - expanding the self-service launderette

Company	BUBBLES International Zrt.
Type of business	Laundry Services
Type of counter-guarantee	COSME LGF, EFSI
Financial intermediary	Garantiqa Hitelgarancia Zrt.

The concept of self-service laundry was effectively unknown to the public in Hungary until the owner and founder of Bubbles, Gábor opened the first unit in the country as a pilot project in 2011. Encouraged by the positive reception, the owner teamed up with an investor to realize their ambitious plan of establishing a nationwide network.

Working in partnership from 2014, they managed to raise awareness of the brand in Hungary and increase the number of stores. Today, there are a total of 40 units across the country, but the plan is to bring this number close to 50 by the end of 2019.

After the opening of the first unit an investment in expansion was required to support the increasing business activity, and to meet market needs. Taking out an EU-guaranteed investment loan through Garantiqa, backed by the EIF under the Investment Plan for Europe enabled the firm to purchase industrial washing machines and dryers serving the core activity, but also to finance store furnishings and IT developments. “By expanding and opening stores in new regions, we also aim to boost turnover and performance through increasing brand awareness,” says the owner.

“Considering the fact that our company was unable to provide either a personal guarantee or real estate as collateral beyond the machinery funded from the investment loan, the EU guarantee was of great help in raising the required financing. It was the guarantee that ensured an acceptable low risk for the lender.”

“During the six months since the signing of the loan agreement, we have purchased the first sets of the machinery leased to our foreign subsidiary, and our first two foreign stores will be opened in a matter of weeks. Due to the difficulties of finding locations, drawing down the loan is a relatively slow process in our case. Our expansion will not stop with this development as we have specific development plans for the next 4-5 years.”

<https://garantiqa.hu/>

<https://bubbles.hu/home-en/>

Umbria Legno

Company	Umbria Legno
Type of business	Design, production and installation of structures
Type of counter-guarantee	COSME LGF, EFSI
Financial intermediary	Confidicoop Marche

“Wood is elegant matter. Wood is durable, economical and remains beautiful over time. It can make any space more welcoming and comfortable from a thermal point of view and offers natural acoustic insulation. It is a great gift of nature,” claims Leonardo Pittola, President of Umbria Legno. The company set up in May 2016, specialises in the design, eco-friendly manufacture and installation of wooden and lamellar structures, from canopies to roofs and garden furniture.

As a young start-up, Umbria Legno found it difficult to access financial support without any credit history - but needed funding in order to secure the necessary liquidity to pay suppliers up-front. The solution came through a bank loan with the help of Confidicoop Marche, which offered to guarantee the loan with the backing of EIF under the EU’s COSME and EFSI programmes. The loan enabled Umbria Legno to unlock the necessary finance and focus on developing the business.

With its cash flow problems behind it, the company is now going from strength to strength and has just signed a new deal with a Swiss company to install prefabricated wooden houses. Leonardo is very positive about the future: “In the course of our first year, business has been growing steadily. We have been able to hire two new colleagues and we look forward to increased business in the coming years.”

<http://www.confidicoopmarche.it/>

<https://www.umbrialegno.com/>

Agro Celina: “One-stop shop” collection centre ready to export

Company	Agro Celina
Type of business	Gherkins calibration line
Type of counter-guarantee	
Financial intermediary	KCGF (Kosovo Credit Guarantee Fund)

Agro Celina is collection centre founded in 2006 that operates mainly in the southern part of Kosovo. Its main goal is to collect fruits and vegetables produced in surrounding areas, as well as to classify and pack them properly in order to become more competitive in the local and international markets.

Currently the company is cooperating with more than 500 farmers from south-western part of Kosovo, 4 international companies, 7 local vegetable processors, 15 local Hypermarkets, 10 wholesale markets and around 50 retailers.

Agro Celina combined the potential of doing business while having positive social impact through collecting quality fresh fruits and vegetables from farmers and finding markets for them. Furthermore, they are acting as “one-stop shop” by providing different services to farmers, such as advising them or providing agriculture inputs.

From their beginning until now, they are continuously expanding their business by collecting fresh agriculture products, purchasing processing equipment and gaining know-how on how to establish a market driven collection centre. This approach enabled them to reach the production and collection capacity of more than 20 thousand tons of fruits and vegetables per year.

With a loan in amount of EUR 70,000 that was guaranteed by KCGF the company purchased the gherkins calibrator. This gave them the possibility of classifying Kybria variety of gherkins based on the market demands and EU standards.

“Initially we were classifying them for our clients based on the gherkins size, while for exporting we need to comply with EU standards by classifying them based on units/kg. The calibration line helped us reach these standards and we are happy with the investment we did”, says Mr. Fehim Rexhepi, Executive Director of the company.

The company, while being certified for internationally recognised food safety and quality standards, used the chance to export gherkins through Austrian company to several countries, such as: Switzerland, Italy, France and Austria.



Video examples

Company	Apply
Type of business	Artificial intelligence developer
Type of counter-guarantee	Altum guarantees (with ERDF resources)
Financial intermediary	Altum

Apply was founded in 2012 and exports its artificial intelligence software development services to the USA, Finland, the Netherlands and Malta.

To find out more about this modern company, follow the link and watch an interview with Agnis, the founder of Apply.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTuKnoD4oE&feature=youtu.be>

<https://applyit.lv/en/contact-us>

Company	Kinetics Nail Systems
Type of business	Creation of nail products for professionals
Type of counter-guarantee	Altum guarantees (with ERDF resources)
Financial intermediary	Altum

Kinetics was established in 2002 and has since then constantly grown and expanded their range of products.

For more information and insight about the professional beauty company, follow the link and watch an interview with Kinetics Nail Systems' CEO, Andžejs Stenclavs.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTuKnoD4oE&feature=youtu.be>

<https://kineticsbeauty.com/>

Company	Cross Timber Systems
Type of business	Cross laminated timber technology
Type of counter-guarantee	Altum guarantees (with ERDF resources)
Financial intermediary	Altum

Cross Timber Systems was founded in 2012. Their plant was opened in 2015 and it is 8000 m² of space. Their capacity is 25000 m³ per year. Next to Central Europe and Great Britain, their largest export market is Scandinavia

An interview with Andris Dlohi, the CEO of Cross Timber Systems, can be found under the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTuKnoD4oE&feature=youtu.be>

<http://www.crosstimbersystems.com/>

Uoga Uoga: Female hobby turning into business

Company	Uoga Uoga
Type of business	Natural Cosmetics Business
Type of counter-guarantee	2 guarantees up to 80% on working capital loans
Financial intermediary	INVEGA

Before Uoga Uoga trademark was created, Lena Sokolovska, one of its proprietors, was climbing the career ladder as a financial analyst. The lack of challenges made her change her ordinary rhythm of life. Sometime later, this decision allowed to come up with the idea of the natural cosmetic line Uoga Uoga (EN: Berry berry).

“Jovita and I used to work for the same company, and together we created the natural cosmetics

business. Even though we both went our separate ways, what has been created is untouchable,” said Sokolovska.

The demand in natural cosmetics has always been the priority. “I come from Latvia, so I know perfectly well that our mothers, both in Latvia and Lithuania, always used natural beauty treatments: masks and different oils. We all have that knowledge of making natural cosmetics and know the natural beauty tricks, however, Jovita and I decided to attend the course for making natural cosmetics – to learn how to make beauty products, soaps, etc. We started by making them for ourselves and our friends. At some point we felt bored, and within a few hours’ time we came up with the business plan and started the activities,” recalls Sokolovska.

According to one of the founders of Uoga Uoga, everything seemed uncomplicated at first, however, later it became apparent that having a business is not all that easy. Production of natural beauty products is supervised by a number of authorities, performance of this activity requires having a manufacturing facility, a hygiene certificate, descriptions of good manufacturing practice, safety reports and many other requirements. Nonetheless, the ladies got everything under control. Uoga Uoga launched its operations at the time when there were only a few producers of natural cosmetics in Lithuania, while the prices of exported organic beauty products were much higher and not affordable to everyone,” said the entrepreneur. According to Sokolovska, currently both the demand in cosmetics and interest in it is growing.

The employees of Uoga Uoga, who have been working at the company for more than 5 years, were able to acquire the company shares and make their contribution into its success they also shared in.



Elektrociklas: Inventing a bicycle in the 21st century

Company	Elektrociklas
Type of business	Bike Business
Type of counter-guarantee	80% guarantee
Financial intermediary	INVEGA

Karolis Atkočiūnas and Rokas Zabulionis, the cycling enthusiasts, started the e-bike business together with their families. According to the proprietors of ZBIKE trademark, this type of vehicle and its manufacturing technology is the first of its kind in the world – this bicycle allows the speed of up to 100 km/h. These environmentally friendly vehicles are preferred by both the extreme sport fans and parents choosing active leisure for their children. Zabulionis shared that ZBIKE is not a product of a spontaneous idea. As a child, he was observing his father’s work and ideas, and had an opportunity to contribute to them.

“I truly value my father’s experience in business and production, and his creativity; he was the one to come up with the idea to create ZBIKE e-bike. It did not take long to convert this idea into a reality. We started producing the carbon fibre and glass composite frames requiring utmost thoroughness and care”, emphasised one of the company founders.



Up until now, the men took all matters into their own hands: from the idea and drawings, to the manufacturing of an actual electronic bicycle soaring at a speed of nearly 100 km/h, which can run 220 km on one full battery charge.

Karolis Atkočiūnas found out about the e-bikes manufactured by Zabulionis and his father from his own dad and was very impressed by their work.

“The electric bicycle is a very powerful transport and sport vehicle. We have some unconventional ideas for its use and one specific secret project we have been concentrating our forces on. This required bringing both families together, which lead to creation of Elektrociklas company in December of last year”, said Atkočiūnas.

The launch of business was made possible with the funds of both families. They decided not to involve large investors in order to retain control over their business and its targets. ZBIKE is now offering several e-bike models designed both for traditional or speed and power cycling. Even though ZBIKE is not a well-known brand for most Lithuanians, these men are planning to change this situation by attending exhibitions and focusing on selection of target markets for this unique product.

Seven Refractories

Company	Seven refractories d.o.o.
Type of business	Production and Trade of Fireware Ceramics
Type of counter-guarantee	
Financial intermediary	Slovenian Enterprise Fund

Headquartered in Divača/Slovenia, Seven Refractories offers an extensive portfolio of advanced monolithic refractory materials worldwide, complemented by the project management skills of dedicated technical personnel and ISO 9001 as well as ISO 14001 certifications.

Their monolithic provide the first response to the most typical customer applications for a wide range of industries: they serve the iron and steel industry with products for blast and reheating furnaces, ladles, tundish and a range of environmentally friendly tadpole clays. For the cement industry, they supply a full assortment of products for burner lances, preheaters, calciners, riser ducts, smoke chambers, and kilns. In addition, their products and customer-specific solutions are utilised in aluminum plants, power generators, and reheat furnaces.

Their specialization in refractories is based on a solid foundation of an international management team with decades of experience in the industry. Two modern plants – one in Asia, one in Europe – follow highest production standards while ensuring the flexibility to meet customer demands.



With the guarantee of the Slovenian Enterprise Fund, the company received a bank loan with a subsidy of interest rate. The process is faster, cheaper and easier. Through the Slovene Enterprise Fund, the company received EUR 2.7 million in guarantees for securing bank loans, and in this way managed to make EUR 4.2 million worth of investments.

In the period 2011-2017, the company increased its revenues by 716% (revenue 2017: EUR 39.92 million). Their value added per employee increased by 139% (in the year 2017 it was 142,255 EUR, which is 272% more than the Slovene average (which is 38,143 EUR) and at the same time increased in the number of employees by 490% (65 employees in 2017).

Orodjarstvo Gorjak

Company	Orodjarstvo Gorjak
Type of business	Production of Industrial Tools
Type of counter-guarantee	COSME LGF
Financial intermediary	Slovenian Enterprise Fund



Orodjarstvo Gorjak (Toolmaking Gorjak) are a family-run company engaged in the manufacturing of all kinds of tools. The company dates back to 1980, when the manufacturing of simple tools required by the industry began. Nowadays, their innovative approach and 65 staff members enable them to meet various tool-making needs.

Orodjarstvo Gorjak d.o.o. has been engaged in the construction and manufacturing of high-end tools required by the automotive and other industries for over three decades. Their products embody high quality and reliability and constitute the main cornerstone of collaboration with their business partners.

Their team of technicians, craftsmen and tool-makers ensure that the tools are manufactured in a high-quality manner by means of our state-of-the-art machinery that can meet the requirements of the future already today. The close collaboration between the executive team and various departments as well as the support of a good IT system ensure a continuous overview of in-progress projects and the required manufacturing transparency.

The company is aware of the importance of preserving environment, and they spare no effort to make sure their production is as environmentally friendly as possible. Energy saving, investments in development and more energy efficient technological equipment are only some of the factors, they have met in order to acquire the standard ISO 14001:2015.

With the guarantee of the Slovenian Enterprise Fund, the company received a bank loan with a subsidy of interest rate. The process was faster, cheaper and easier. Through the Slovenian Enterprise Fund, it received EUR 1.3 million of guarantees for securing bank loans, and in this way managed to make EUR 2.8 million of investments.

Lemon Project

Company	Lemon Project
Type of business	Restaurant
Type of counter-guarantee	COSME (65% guarantee)
Financial intermediary	CESGAR, Iberaval

In September, when the festivities of San Antolin started, the company New Lemon Project realised the transfer of the Lemon Bar, which is located in the Paseo del Sal3n in Palencia.

The transfer could materialize, thanks to the Iberaval's intervention, an entity that always believed in the project and, consequently, put everything on its part so that the operation could be addressed under very competitive conditions and in a record time.



Iberaval is part of the Finance Public System and works closely with the Institute for Business Competitiveness (ICE) of Castilla y Leon. Its aim is to help SMEs, self-employed and entrepreneurs with concrete lines of action, that support access to working capital or investments.

The Lemon Bar is managed by Jose Antonio Grajal, who already ran it since the end of 2017 and additionally has a very extensive experience in the Palencia hostelry. His partner and friend Luis Bravo has a significant expertise in financial management and corporate finance consulting. "We believe that Iberaval is not only the benchmark for access to corporate credit in the region, but it's also one of the main supports, on which traditional banks look for help: to be able to guarantee the financing of any entrepreneurial initiative that requires third-party resources", says Bravo.

Today the bar is a benchmark in the Palencian hotel industry. Its collection of gins is known worldwide. Furthermore, the owners do not give up their efforts to improve and innovate. In addition to offering an excellent terrace service and being located in one of the most cutting-edge gastronomic areas of Castilla y Leon city, they organize live music performances and different tastings.

<https://www.iberaval.es/>

NutriPeople: Affordable local solutions against malnutrition

Company	Nutripeople
Type of business	Food producer processing food surpluses
Type of counter-guarantee	
Financial intermediary	CESGAR, Avalam

Nutripeople is a socially responsible company that was created in 2015 in Murcia (Spain). Nutripeople is a pioneer in the use of food surpluses in order to produce foods and nutritious solutions.

They have developed three products, taking fruit puree as a base and adding different proteins and vitamins with great utility to alleviate the chronic famine or the malnutrition. These foods can be the livelihood of millions of people and also serve to balance out the extra production of fruits and vegetables. Furthermore, they are packaged with a durability of 18 months without the need to refrigerate.

Because of the guarantees of Avalam, Nutripeople has opened a facility with a manufacturing capacity of 42 million containers a year. Therefore, they are able to provide very agile service in situations of natural disasters, emergencies, famines and malnutrition in general.

Nutripeople has already collaborated with non-governmental organizations such as 'Save the Children' or 'Feel Gambia'.

<https://www.iberaval.es/>

<https://www.nutripeopleproject.org/>



TURKEY



DATAMIND

Company	DATAMIND
Type of business	Technology and AI company
Type of counter-guarantee	
Financial intermediary	Credit Guarantee Fund (KGF)

The company DATAMIND operates under PD Anadolu Research Consultancy Training and Information Services which was established in 2008. The company serves in areas used by public institutions, private companies, educational institutions, hospitals. They provide services like data processing configuration, infrastructure development, fundamental analytical implementation, optional development of customary applications, big data infrastructure creation, development of advanced analytical model, artificial intelligence algorithms and machine learning algorithms.

DATAMIND is now able to realise two projects that they have been planning to do for a long period of time. For these projects, they have applied for TUBITAK and KOSGEB, both required letters of collateral to accept projects. For this purpose, the company applied at domestic private banks and state banks, but the company was not given letters of collateral by any of those. The team heard of Credit Guarantee Fund (KGF), that could help in this manner. Therefore, the company applied at KGF in Ankara. The collaboration with KGF was fruitful for DATAMIND, they received letters of collateral for both projects and could introduce their two projects.

KOSGEB approved a project dated on 26.06.2018, known as “Milli Bütünleşik Programı” (National Integrated Program) within the scope of “Stratejik Ürün Destek Programı” (Support Program For Strategic Goods), backed by the letters of collateral from the bank thanks to KGF’s guarantee. With this Project, various software products and high-cost technologies supplied from abroad are intended to be produced domestically. The short-term target group of the project are public institutions and organisations operating in Ankara.

Another project, known as “Bulut Bilişim Platformunda Öngörüselle Bakım ve Öngörüselle Kalite ile Akıllı Üretim” (Platform for Smart Production, Predictive Care and Predictive Quality in Cloud Computing) was approved by TUBITAK in 2019. It could be realised thanks to a 25% credit by TUBITAK, relating to letters of collateral given by KGF. With this guarantee, six people could be employed for the project.

“Thanks to the letters of collateral that received by KGF, we carry out our projects by receiving the necessary payment from KOSGEB and TUBITAK. If it wasn’t KGF, we wouldn’t be able to realise our dream projects. We would like to say, thank you KGF employees for their attention and working at diligent.”, DATAMIND states.

<https://www.kgf.com.tr/index.php/en/>

<https://datamind.com.tr/en/>

TURKEY

MEDPA BIOTECHNOLOGY

Company	MEDPA BIOTECHNOLOGY
Type of business	Biotechnology devices production
Type of counter-guarantee	COSME
Financial intermediary	Credit Guarantee Fund (KGF)

When MEDPA Biotechnology Limited was established in 2004, it was one of the first companies in its field in Turkey. In 2019, it focuses on domestic production of devices, that have been unable to be produced in Turkey, so far.

They wanted to introduce a complete blood cell count device which is used for fault diagnosis. Namely it is used for example in cases of infection, anemia, leukemia and is used as an assessment of general health conditions in hospitals and polyclinics. This device was supplied from abroad so far.

Battal Mayan, chairman of the executive board at MEDPA Biotechnology Ltd., has been targeting to produce a similar device in Turkey for years. The company has been the best in the field of complete blood cell count for 15 years, and now aims to produce their own product AR-GE. They plan to carry out production in August 2020.

Thanks to KGF's COSME guarantee, the company was provided access to financing. After 300.000TL were supplied, the company managed to carry out its work. Since their product has been approved by the Ministry of Industry, it has permission to get 7.500.000TL of support. The founding team fully focused on the development of this device, which is currently not being produced in Turkey. In the quickly developing field of biotechnology, the company will soon be able to represent its country, thanks to KGF backed COSME loans.

<https://www.kgf.com.tr/index.php/en/>

<https://www.medpabiyoteknoloji.com.tr/en/index.html>

Euro Recycling Brokers

Company	Euro Recycling Brokers Ltd
Type of business	Sustainable waste disposal company
Type of counter-guarantee	Government backed guarantee
Financial intermediary	British Business Bank

Euro Recycling Brokers Ltd is a waste broker that provides sustainable and environmentally friendly waste management solutions to their clients, primarily arranging for the collection and disposal of various waste streams. As a team of waste specialists, they encompass over 30 years' experience. In addition to this they also facilitate site, plant and liability insurances, staff training and plant/recycling equipment finance solutions.

Since being established in 2015, Euro Recycling has experienced rapid year on year growth. In order to accelerate the business even further, the team required new funding for working capital and to expand their existing workforce and realise their growth ambitions.



After being referred to ABN AMRO Commercial Finance, the team secured a creative funding solution to meet their growth requirements, comprised of £1.35m Receivables Finance and a £150k revolving loan facility under the British Business Bank's Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG) programme.

Launched in January 2009, the EFG programme provides its accredited lenders with a Government-backed guarantee for 75% of the outstanding balance of eligible facilities, potentially enabling a 'no' credit decision from a lender to become a 'yes'. EFG enables funders to provide facilities of between £1,000 and £1.2 million to smaller businesses that are viable but unable to obtain finance from their lender due to having insufficient security to meet the lender's normal credit requirements.

In October 2018, the British Business Bank announced that Blackpool-based Euro Recycling was the recipient of the 30,000th Enterprise Finance Guarantee-backed facility. To date the EFG programme has supported smaller UK businesses with c.36,000 facilities, totalling more than £3.2 billion.

Ben Essien, Financial Director at Euro Recycling said: "The team at ABN AMRO was able to provide us with a flexible funding solution and the additional headroom provided by the EFG will support us in achieving continued growth. We were particularly impressed with ABN's transparency throughout the on-boarding process and look forward to working with them as our preferred partner for growth."

<https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/> <https://www.eurorecyclingbrokers.co.uk/>