



Zifn Region In Brussels
Region of Opportunities

**Special Report
on External Cooperation**

**CENTRAL ASIA
AND ASIA SWITCH
PROGRAMS 2007-2010**

**English version
January 2008**

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Note

Overview of EU-Asia relations

EU-Asia relations are expanding rapidly, and the EU is seeking an increasingly close relationship with Asia, going beyond traditional cooperation, to economic integration and deepening of political cooperation.

Home to some two thirds of humanity, Asia is characterized by a tremendous diversity in terms of political, economic, security and social systems. Asia has recently surpassed NAFTA to become Europe's main trading partner, accounting for a third of Europe's total trade flows. Moreover, European direct investments in Asia amounts to a third of European investment abroad, and is growing.

To meet the development challenges that lie ahead and further deepen EU-Asia relations, the European Commission has adopted 18 individual country strategies and a regional strategy, covering cooperation with Asia for the period 2007-2013, for which an amount of some € 5.2 billion has been earmarked.

Essential features



Total budget:	€90 million
Budget 2008:	€4.4 million
Co-financing quota:	85%
Project duration:	12-24 months
Target beneficiaries:	EU and local SMEs

Introduction

The Central Asia Invest Program promotes the sustainable development of SMEs and the private sector through institution building actions for Business Intermediary Organizations.

These actors play a key role in the reform process towards a market economy, contributing to civil society development and to the creation of new employment opportunities and income. By improving their capacity to assist small business and to create bridges between the governments and the private sector, they will contribute to the eradication of poverty and to the gradual democratic and economic transition of these countries.

Complementary to this aim, the program also supports the development of relationships between European and Central Asian Business Intermediary Organisations, with a view to the integration of the Central Asian markets in the world economy.

Objectives

The overall purpose of the Programme is to promote the sustainable economic development of Central Asia Countries by encouraging the development of local Small and Medium Enterprises.

In addressing this overall objective, the Programme has the following specific objectives at a regional level:

1. To reinforce Institutional skills and competences of Central Asian Business Intermediary Organisations
2. To promote closer linkages between Business Intermediary Organisations in the EU and Central Asian countries and contribute to regional economic integration

Participants

In order to be eligible for a grant from the Program, applicants must:

- a) be legal persons
- b) be non profit making
- c) be business intermediaries representing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and promoting trade and investment between Europe and Central Asia.

(>>>)

Essential features



Total budget:	€90 million
Budget 2008:	€25 million
Co-financing quota:	80-90%
Project duration:	24-48 months
Target beneficiaries:	EU and local SMEs

Introduction

The SWITCH Programme has been designed to respond to the need for cleaner and more energy efficient industry in Asia. It targets small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) due to their key role in development, especially through providing local employment, their high contribution to air and water pollution, and their difficulties in making the transition to a more environmentally mode of operation.

Partnership projects will be funded by SWITCH to help this sector in both production and consumption technologies and processes. The programme emphasises outreach and making ideas and experience as widely available as possible SWITCH Programme

Participants

Applicants to SWITCH must be non-profit-making organisations such as networks, chambers of commerce, industry associations, and local governments that support SMEs.

Applicants should be from either the European Union or eligible countries in Asia and apply in company with at least one partner coming from one of the eligible Asian countries.

The eligible projects should target SMEs and have one or more of the following aims:

- Substantially contribute to overall pollution (especially water or CO2 emissions) and/or are resource intensive
- Have sufficient potential for improvement and multiplication
- Form a substantial share of the economy

SWITCH Asia has a regional character, but focuses on a customised approach for each specific country. Whenever relevant and functional, cross-border and multi-country approaches and collaboration will be encouraged.

In general, the major beneficiaries are:

- Intermediary (business) organisations and networks (e.g. chambers of commerce and industry associations)



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