

(Project Information, January 2007)

Within the scope of its financial support programme, Action No. 6, the European Commission, Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General, has approved the **eccop.net** project with the following focus:

“Cooperation and Cluster-Building among SMEs – Pilot Project for European Business Cooperation Events and Clustering Activities in Border Regions between New and Old Member States of the EU.”

The grant agreement which was drawn up between the EU Commission and the Wirtschaftsförderung Sachsen GmbH (WFS) as the lead partner was signed on December 20, 2006.

The project title **eccop.net** is the acronym for “European **C**lustering and **C**ooperation **net**.”

The objectives of the **eccop.net** project are:

- Holding high quality cooperative meetings within the context of traditional and newly emerging interregional events
- Strengthening regional, binational, and international networks and/or clusters
- Integrating regional and national decision makers to assure a successful outcome
- Utilizing the synergy of current and scheduled projects and programmes
- Safeguarding the project results for sustained use

The **eccop.net** target groups are:

- SMEs as well as SME networks from various fields of environmental technology focusing specifically on renewable energies
- In particular, special modules including machine and plant construction, ecological building, eco-efficiency
- The intermediary environment surrounding SMEs (transfer points, chambers, etc.) profits indirectly

The target regions are two well established interregional core areas from the 3-CIP and REVITAE projects. Thus, **eccop.net** links 12 partners (and in turn their partners) from Saxony, Brandenburg, Estonia, Poland, and the Czech Republic as well as Austria, Slovenia, and Italy. This assures the continuity and sustainability of interregional branch oriented cooperative efforts within such EU projects as, for example, DISTRICT.

The project period is 18 months. The project's budget amounts to about € 935,000.00 of which 70 % is supported.

We are also anticipating that this project will result in very close cooperation among all participants from the business and scientific community as well as the government and the administration of the Free State of Saxony which will create synergies, strengthen the competitiveness of SMEs, and make a measurable contribution to securing and expanding the business venue Saxony. Please contact the EU Department of the WFS to coordinate joint activities.

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