



## Discussion paper - Italy

### Milan Chamber of Commerce: NIBI

#### Key Facts

**SBA 10 Sub-dimension: 10.1.1-1.3**

**Country:**

Italy

**Results & Impact:**

- Over 5.000 SMEs trained
- From local to national
- Over 50 strategic partners
- State of the art e-learning platform

#### A. Policy Level

Accounting for up to 95% of active businesses in the country, MSMEs are the foundation of Italian economy. The 2008-2009 global financial crisis proved to have a vast detrimental impact on Italian SMEs. As a result, national government had to develop strong and incisive policies to support its SMEs base to regain strength, and internationalisation has been one of the key strategic elements. From the Law 33/2008, to the Law 99/2009, to the adoption of the Small Business Act (SBA) as national law in May 2010, and throughout the various implementation and upgrading modifications and decrees, SME internationalisation has become top government priority.

The 3-years (2008-2011) strategy to support MSME internationalisation launched by the Ministry of Economic Development (Ministero dello Sviluppo Economico), specifically addressed issues related to A. Markets; B. Sectors; C. Support systems and related coordination. Overall, internationalisation government policies were focussing on the following macro-areas of intervention:

- Increase competitiveness
- Stimulate entrepreneurship
- Simplify procedures and limit bureaucracy
- Financial support and access to finance

#### B. Programme Level

At programs' implementation level, the Ministry of Economic Development relies on several different bodies and organisations to translate government policies, via programs, into actions. Main actors in the above translation activity are ICE (Istituto Nazionale per il Commercio Estero), SPRINT (Sportelli Nazionali per l'Internazionalizzazione delle Imprese), SIMEST (Società Italiana per le Imprese all'Estero), Regions, SACE (Servizi Assicurativi del Commercio Estero), CRUI (Conferenza Rettori Università Italiane), Sector / Industry Associations, Chambers. With specific regards to Chambers of





Commerce, they were and are among those organisations operating the closest to MSMEs in Italy, translating effectively programs into actions and creating impact "on the field", providing direct benefit to the MSMEs base.

## C. Action Level

Among Italian Chambers, the Chambers of Commerce of Milan has been considerably effective in translating government programs into actions. Despite the complexities, bureaucracy and administrative obstacles typical of the Italian system, Milan Chamber of Commerce has always been proactive in supporting its MSMEs' base to go international. In this context, Milan Chamber of Commerce has placed great emphasis on human capital development as indispensable mean to increase MSMEs competitiveness, hence to stimulate innovation and growth.

In 2009, NIBI (Nuovo Istituto di Business Internazionale - <http://www.nibi-milano.it/>) was created by the Milan Chamber of Commerce and Promos, a public agency dedicated to support SME internationalisation. Main objective of the NIBI project was, and is, to provide professional education and training on international business. NIBI started its activity as qualified supplier of targeted education and training to support international growth of the MSMEs local / regional base. However, shortly after its inception it started attracting MSME employees and owner-managers from all over the country. Over the years, NIBI has been refining the training and support package they offer to the national SMEs base, bringing together under the same roof SMEs, private sector trainers and experts, achieving increasingly positive results and trainees' satisfaction. In the last 9 years, NIBI

- Supported over 5000 managers and professionals coming from MSMEs all over Italy.
- Developed a state of the art e-learning platform.
- Over 50 strategic partners to add value to SMEs service offering.
- Regular curricula update and addition of topics of relevance to MSME's internationalisation.
- Quality achievements: UNI EN ISO 9001:2008, Accredia/Certquality, ASFOR, European Training Foundation.

## D. Key Success Factors

- Real understanding of MSME's needs and challenges.
- Carefully selected training experts and attention to quality of content and delivery.
- Support continues also after the training, ensuring a better impact of the training overall.
- Well developed training cycle, i.e. Needs Assessment, Design, Delivery, and Evaluation.
- Development of an effective and user-friendly online learning platform.
- Regular constructive interactions with local government authorities to make sure that training is in line with government priorities on SME internationalisation, as well as in order to feedback to public sector stakeholders any useful insight from the MSME's base.
- Strategic importance is recognised to Learning & Development, hence inclusion of selected university faculties within program implementation.

