

European SMEs Use Funds to Share Knowledge and Stimulate Growth



In January 2006, Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner Telegrafia successfully applied to the Leonardo Da Vinci programme for €18,000 (U.S.\$22,823). Using the funds the consortium will do an analysis of the teleworking market. The project involves an analysis of the market through questionnaires, field research, data analysis, and defining potential needs such as training and new IT infrastructures.

Changes are taking place in the development of the Slovak Republic economy as it attempts to increase its employment levels and develop its human resource skills.

One of the ways companies are trying to combat unemployment in Slovakia is by investing in teleworkers—employees that work from home with the aid of mobile communications. Working remotely offers significant benefits to employers, employees, the self-employed, and entrepreneurs.

Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner Telegrafia is a leader in the IT market in Slovakia. The 130-strong team specialises in engineering services in the field of radio-communication technology and ICT outsourcing. Telegrafia wanted to expand its highly skilled workforce and help develop the competitiveness of its local economy. It was interested in employing teleworkers but did not know enough about this newly evolved type of workforce.

Iveta Orbánová, Project manager Telegrafia says: “Companies adopting teleworking methods achieve significant reductions in total office occupancy. Work can be carried out wherever the appropriate skills are available in a time- and cost-effective way. If working from home employees can avoid travel time and the interruptions of an office environment. We wanted to invest in teleworkers but did not have enough of the necessary human resource knowledge needed to recruit and employ them.”

Telegrafia teamed up with the local and regional government (LRG) and employment office in Slovakia. The partners created a research and development project to establish the needs of teleworkers and how best to use this new kind of employee. The LRG and employment office hoped their involvement in the Leonardo project would help to lower the unemployment rate in this region.

Štefan Marčák, Sales manager, says: “The main goal of this project is to share and exchange experience, knowledge, and skills in the field of human resources and human resource development in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Using this knowledge we hope to create more workplaces and increase employment rates in our region.”

Following the advice of a European Union Grants Advisor (EUGA) consultant, Telegrafia successfully applied to the Leonardo Da Vinci programme for €18,000 (U.S.\$22,823). Using the funds, the consortium will roll out the teleworking pilot project between June 2006 and June 2008. The project involves an analysis of the market through questionnaires, field research, data analysis, and defining potential needs such as training and new IT infrastructures.

The Leonardo Da Vinci vocational training action programme’s main goal is to respond to the demand for new skills and help cope with the problem of unemployment in Europe. It supports innovative initiatives for promoting business knowledge throughout Europe.

EUGA Fast Facts

Microsoft® believes that technology can play a key role in economic and social growth. It is working in partnership with technology companies, banks, consulting agencies, and other organisations to help more SMEs obtain government funding through its European Union Grants Advisor (EUGA) programme. Through this programme, SMEs and local and regional governments increase their awareness and understanding of EU funds as well as take advantage of a facilitated application process should they wish to apply for funds that they are eligible for.

Lisbon Agenda – Fast Facts

In March 2000, the European Council (EC) set a goal for the European Union (EU) to prepare its transition to a knowledge-based economy and society. This initiative known as the Lisbon Agenda, promotes better policies for the information society, and research and development, and encourages structural reform for competitiveness and innovation. The EU recognises that a powerful way to achieve this is to fund IT awareness and training schemes, research and development, and support new business start-up

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