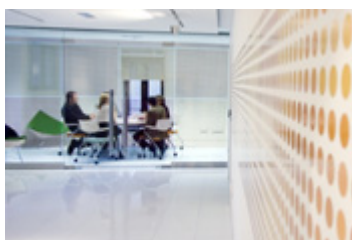


BBVA launches 'Open Talent' to foster creativity among entrepreneurs

BBVA has launched a new scheme intended to support the early stages of projects and businesses for the development of innovative, technology-based products and services. Selected projects will obtain support from BBVA as an organisation and as a stakeholder, as the scheme envisages the bank acquiring a stake in the capital of the companies in question, with investment of up to €100,000.



Meeting at the BBVA Innovation Centre

Open Talent is one of the most innovative schemes to be proposed in Spain. It is intended to promote projects and companies which are at the initial stages of growth. At a time when most companies are hard put to secure investors and liquidity, BBVA is getting in ahead of the market and presenting a programme to promote investment in technology-based companies.

This scheme is part of BBVA's strategy to support businesses and new initiatives. With a market share of 37.6%, BBVA is the market leader in the SME segment, which covers firms with a turnover of less than 50 million euros, and is the leading supplier for 13.4 of those firms. The trend is for this figure to increase still further.

BBVA recently announced a support plan for SMEs, retailers and freelancers totalling 5.5 billion euros in pre-authorised loans. In recent years it has also been more active than any other bank in channelling loans to SMEs through ICO credit lines, and is one of the banks that has now begun to provide access to the new lines available for 2009.

In *Open Talent*, BBVA will study all the projects submitted and, after an exhaustive selection process, will choose the one which it considers to have the potential to generate the most added value.

BBVA envisages investment of up to €100,000 depending on the needs of the project. The programme includes support from BBVA as a stakeholder and through help in disseminating the project.

BBVA is a pioneering bank in the presentation of business support schemes to help companies really make the most of all the benefits deriving from the efficient use of new technologies.

The many initiatives of this type include *Virtualdoc*, which permits companies who sign up for the service to obtain all-round management of information that they generate day by day.

Another example is *e-conta*, which provides on-line advice for companies, enabling them to handle administrative tasks more quickly and more efficiently.