



# Professional development for business advisors

## ✘ *What is the I<sup>3</sup> Project?*

I<sup>3</sup> is an innovative project as it is the first comprehensive **online training approach** which is aimed directly at the **managers and staff of incubators, BICs** (Business Innovation Centres) and **business advisors** and which specifically addresses the specialized support requirements of high growth SMEs. The project is based on the premise that by improving the competencies of the managers and staff of incubators, BICs and other business advisors, the quality of services provided to SMEs can be enhanced and hence the growth of these SMEs can be greatly supported.

## ✘ *Where did the Idea for this Project Originate?*

The Lisbon European Council identified innovation and knowledge diffusion as crucial determinants of Europe's future wealth creation and competitiveness. **Incubators** and **EC BICs** are recognized as key players in this development process.

However, evidence indicates that European incubators are not yet as effective as their international counterparts. Innovation statistics, specifically the number of patent applications in high-tech classes, also reveal **Europe's potential for improvement**.

The I<sup>3</sup> initiative responds to this innovation deficit by improving the core competencies of business advisers and BIC and Incubator personnel in **responding to the specific and specialized requirements of high growth SMEs**.

## ✘ *Who is this New Training Approach directed at?*

- Business advisers
- Personnel of incubators and BICs
- Firms assisted by incubators and BICS

## ✘ *How can I get involved?*

The I<sup>3</sup> project commenced in January 2003 and will continue until December 2004. If you are interested in the training and resource tools being developed in this project, we welcome your involvement in a number of ways:

- Provide information on your requirements (whether you represent incubator personnel or start-up companies)
- Test the training and resource tool prototypes and provide feedback
- Participate in training, information and dissemination events

## ✘ *More*

- **E-Learning:** Using new multimedia technologies and the internet improves the quality of learning and ensures that the skills available meet the needs of business and employers. Companies want ongoing education which creates, develops and extends the enterprise's knowledge and know that they should become learning organisations as a way to attract and retain talent. E-learning can help them do this.
- **Equal opportunity :** The training program will give due consideration to implementing sound equal opportunities and social inclusion policies in the management of business incubator centres.

## *Partners I<sup>3</sup> :*

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