COUNTRY FICHE - PORTUGAL

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CONTENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Creating an appropriate environment for businesses to flourish is a central element in public policy for promoting entrepreneurship in Europe. Dramatic changes have taken place in the nature and the provision of business support services since their recognition as an increasingly important feature of economic policy. In some Member States of the European Union this has led to a proliferation of services. The European Charter for small businesses adopted by Member States in Santa Maria da Feira on 19/20 June 2000 calls for the creation of top class small business support easy to access and to understand and relevant to small businesses' needs. In order to find out whether existing services answer the specific needs of the smallest businesses, DG Enterprise of the European Commission has contracted the Austrian Institute for Small Business Research (IfGH) to carry out the present study on *'Support Services for Micro, Small and Sole Proprietor's Businesses'*, in the period from December 2000 to June 2002 in co-operation with members of the European Network for SME Research (ENSR) and other partner institutions from all Member States of the European Union and Norway.

The purpose of this study is threefold:

- to provide a comprehensive, descriptive and analytical overview of existing national and local support services, or integrated systems of such services, tailored to the needs of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses (supply side analysis);
- to analyse the needs of European micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses with regard to the organisation, promotion, content and delivery of support services (demand side analysis);
- to provide comprehensive elements for the improvement of the supply of support services available to micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in the Member States of the European Union and Norway.

DEFINITION AND METHODOLOGY APPLIED

This study applies a purposely narrow definition of the term 'support services' for the analysis of the market for support services. To this regard a support service subject to analysis in the scope of this study has to fulfil the following criteria:

- it originates in a public policy initiative,
- it is targeted at micro, small or sole proprietor's businesses either by its explicit intention or by its practical use,
- it is offered at non-commercial conditions
- a substantial part of the service is of non-financial kind.

Based on this definition, 335 support services ranging from the provision of information, advice and consultancy to SME-specific training services, have been identified and analysed, which naturally only represent a fraction of all external support available to micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Europe. The information for the analysis of the *supply side* has been gathered by the co-operating research institutes in each of the Member States of the European Union and Norway according to a standardised guideline and has been compiled in an electronic database ('IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database').

Findings related to the *demand side* stem from an extensive literature review and an in-depth empirical analysis of the smallest enterprises' needs and experiences concerning the use of support services. In particular, a harmonised telephone survey on the basis of a standardised closed questionnaire was carried out in October 2001. The total sample includes more than 1,200 enterprises located in the European Union and in Norway, which allows for a detailed assessment of the needs of different types of enterprises concerning size class, sector and phase of development. At country-level, the findings are based on the statistical analysis of about 75 interviews with micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in each country. Thus, variations from EU average values at country level have to be interpreted cautiously due to the comparatively lower sample size. However, given the methodologically profound and statistically reliable background of the analysis conducted at European level, results at country level should give a good indication of the situation in each country.

MAIN FINDINGS

Participation of small businesses in support services is low

The participation rate in support services among European micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses is quite low. Only 20 % of the smallest enterprises in the European Union and Norway have utilised support services during the past five years. This share further declines with decreasing size of an enterprise, ranging from a participation rate of 15 % for sole proprietors to 35 % for small enterprises (10 - 49 employees).

Women, highly educated and growth oriented entrepreneurs make the most use of support services

Participation of enterprises in support services differs according to specific characteristics of the owner or manager of an enterprise. Female entrepreneurs, for example, seem to be more willing to make use of support services than their male counterparts. Whereas 27 % of the enterprises owned by a woman have utilised support services within the last five years, this share of enterprises amounts to only 17 % where a man owns the enterprise. Also entrepreneurs with a secondary or university education use support services more often than entrepreneurs with elementary education. Furthermore, the decision of whether to use support services or not seems to be strongly correlated with employment growth as indicated by participation rates amounting to above 30 % among enterprises that have increased their number of employees by more than 10 % during the last three years.

There is a need for an outside view on small businesses' needs

The majority of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses that have not utilised any support service within the past five years states that this was because they did not feel any need for external support. This seems to be particularly the case for sole proprietors, among which the share of enterprises not feeling any need for external help amounts to almost 60 %. This attitude might be explained by the experience that many small enterprises, because of their heavy involvement in day-to-day business, may lose the sense of perspective when assessing their own needs. This pattern seems to underline that an external identification of needs is a crucial element when offering support to small businesses.

There is a lack of awareness of support services among small businesses

More than three-quarters of enterprises lack information on the existence and availability of support for their respective enterprise. Thus, the relatively low participation in support services among European micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses might also be connected to the low level of information on support services offered. Creating awareness of the existence and availability of support services among entrepreneurs is therefore considered one of the major challenges of support policy in future.

Small businesses prefer direct contact with service providers

Entrepreneurs from small businesses would generally prefer being directly contacted by service providers or even personally visited. However, these (rather cost-intensive) promotional tools are hardly applied by providers. Support services are mainly promoted via the Internet (providers' web-pages) and in newspapers, journals and magazines or are presented at trade fairs, exhibitions and seminars.

Small enterprises may think global, but act local

Enterprises would prefer looking for support services either at local or at regional level. This effectively matches the way support services are currently organised in the European Union and Norway. Contact points of support services are decentralised and can be accessed either at regional or even at local level. However, it seems important that public authorities implement a more strategic approach to the support they provide and ensure that it is well co-ordinated with other service provision, particularly at the regional level. New stand-alone initiatives should be avoided, in order not to confuse the client and to facilitate the process of awareness creation.

The demand for specific types of services differs by the location of an enterprise

The need of enterprises for support services varies by different types of regions. The share of enterprises demanding different types of support services in Objective 1 regions, for instance, is higher than elsewhere. Whereas 75 % of the enterprises located in Objective 1 regions express a need for financial services, for example, this share amounts to only 52 % for enterprises not located in disadvantaged areas. Similarly, there is a clearly stronger demand for one-stop-shops in rural areas (with less than 50.000 inhabitants) than in urban areas. Therefore, public authorities need to ensure that enterprises can get convenient access to all the support services they need, irrespective of the geographical location of an enterprise.

Small businesses need more tailor-made support and more targeted services

The majority of enterprises express a strong demand for tailor-made support which takes account of their specific size class, phase of development or field of activity. Most of the support services offered to micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in the Member States of the European Union and Norway, however, are targeted at SMEs in general and are hardly subject to a separate business support policy. Also services are usually targeted at all phases of the business life-cycle alike, with a particular focus only put on enterprises in the start-up and early phase of development.

Small businesses are not too satisfied with the level of understanding shown by service providers

Although the vast majority of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in the European Union and Norway that have made use of support services within the last five years seem quite satisfied with their latest experience, comparatively low levels of satisfaction are achieved with regard to the understanding of the business by the provider and the effect the service had on the enterprise. In this respect public authorities responsible for support service provision should ensure that support organisations have access to the necessary human and material resources they need to provide top class services. It is of high importance that organisations employ staff with the skills and competencies as well as with the practical experience needed to understand small businesses and to deliver the full range of services they need.

CONCLUSIONS

Creating awareness of support services is an important aim for support policy in future

A large proportion of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses is deterred from participation in support services due to poor awareness of this kind of support. Consequently, creating awareness of support services among micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses seems to be the most important challenge for European support service providers in future. Consistent and effective promotion of support services needs to be undertaken among well-targeted audiences of enterprises and potential entrepreneurs in order to increase the take up by small businesses.

Support services should be specifically targeted at small enterprises needs

The majority of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses would prefer to use support services that are specifically targeted at enterprises of their respective size and state of development. Thus, business support should take account of the differing needs of different types of small enterprises by providing distinct packages of services for the different target groups. Also, coherent support services need to be assured, so that enterprises can easily access a package of services covering all main management functions. In order to ensure that enterprises receive the support they need, service providers should develop procedures and terms of reference that determine which is the best advice available for the client.

Client-orientation has to be a fundamental principle of support service provision

Quality assurance systems need to be routinely implemented, with reference to formal definitions of service standards, where appropriate. Furthermore, regular evaluations of the effectiveness and efficiency of support services have to become an integral part of the culture of support service provision. Service providers and policy makers should continuously use evaluation tools in order to improve the quality, design and cost effectiveness of support services.

COUNTRY FICHE – PORTUGAL

1. INTRODUCTION

The following report is one of sixteen country fiches produced on behalf of the European Commission in the course of a research study on *'Support Services for Micro, Small and Sole Proprietor's Businesses'*. The purpose of the country fiches is to provide an in-depth analysis of both, the supply side of the (public) market for support services (see section 2) as well as of the needs of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses with respect to external support (see section 3) for each member state of the European Union plus Norway. With respect to the information provided for Portugal the Austrian Institute for Small Business Research (IfGH) co-operated with Tecninvest in Lisbon.

The first part of each country fiche is dedicated to the analysis of the *supply side* of the market for support services targeted at micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses. In this regard, information on the organisational structure of the service providers and the main characteristics of the services offered to micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses has been gathered on a decentralised basis; i. e. co-operating research institutes in each of the Member States of the European Union plus Norway have thoroughly analysed the supply of support services in their respective countries according to a standardised guideline and reported their findings to the IfGH, which then compiled the resulting information for each of the sixteen countries in an electronic database ('IfGH Support Services Database'). The main findings for Portugal are presented in section 2 of this report both illustrated in Graphs (quantitative information) as well as enriched with extensive qualitative information.

The second part of each country fiche is dedicated to the analysis of the *demand side* of the market for support services targeted at micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses. About 75 enterprises in each country of the European Union plus Norway have been interviewed on their needs and experience with respect to support services and external support in general, resulting in a total sample of 1,200 enterprises. In particular, a harmonised telephone survey on the basis of a standardised closed questionnaire has been carried out in October 2001. For this purpose, stratified random samples of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses have been drawn in each member state of the European Union and Norway and after survey completion, sample weighting to unify estimates was performed. Hence, findings presented in the report are based on data weighted by enterprises' size class and sector and are thus representing the structure of the whole population of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in each country. All in all enterprises of seven different sectors (namely manufacturing and construction, wholesale and retail trade, transport and communication, banking and finance, business services, repair and other services, and tourism) and three different size classes (namely small enterprises (10-49 employees), micro enterprises (1-9 employees) and sole proprietors) have been interviewed and accordingly weighted. The main findings for Portugal are presented in section 3 of this report.

The last part of each of the country fiches is finally dedicated to drawing the main conclusions from the research undertaken in the course of the project.

2. SUPPLY OF SUPPORT SERVICES

The purpose of this section of the report is to systematically analyse the supply side of the market for support services targeted at *micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses* in Portugal, by presenting, among others, information on the organisational structure of the service providers, target groups of services offered, types of services offered, as well as information on the promotion, quality and the objectives of services provided to micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses.

In order to provide for a detailed and comprehensive assessment of the specific characteristics of the services offered, a comparatively strict definition has been applied to the term 'support services' in this part of the analysis: A support service that qualified for being selected for further assessment had to fulfil the following criteria:

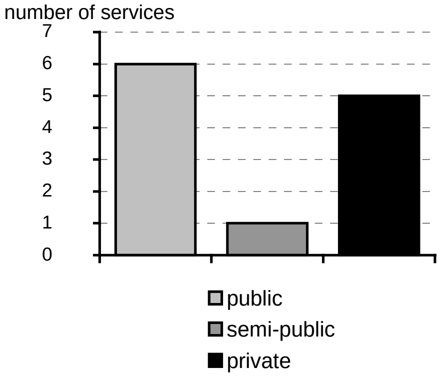
- The service originates in a public policy initiative and the provider of the service is public or, if private, is acting in line with agreed public policies (provider based criteria).
- The service is targeted at micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses either by its explicit intention or by its practical use and is targeted directly at enterprises and entrepreneurs (user based criteria).
- The service is offered at non-commercial conditions. It involves the provision of information, advice or training, or includes business services that are provided on a non-commercial basis. A substantial part of the service is of non-financial kind (content based criteria).

In Portugal, 12 support services have been identified according to the above criteria.([1]) However, it has to be noted that due to the comparatively strict definition, the selected services represent only a fraction of all external support available to micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Portugal. Particularly, all kinds of purely financial support, such as loans, guarantees, or all kinds of subsidies, for example, are excluded from the analysis, as well as tax relief for small businesses. In Portugal, the POE Management Office is one of the largest organisations offering this kind of financial support. Services that reimburse costs or expenses for training of employees or for utilising external advice in specific business areas are also not included in the following analysis.

[1] A list of support services considered in section 2 is given in the appendix.

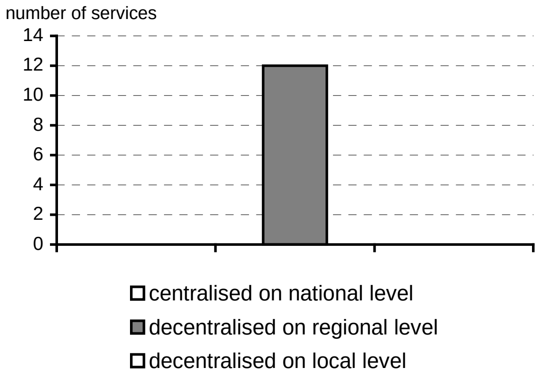
2.1 ORGANISATION OF SUPPORT SERVICES IDENTIFIED

Graph 1: Status of the leading organisations of services identified



Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

Graph 2: Organisation of the contact points of services identified



Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

As can be seen from Graph 1, support services available in Portugal are mainly offered either by public or by private service providers. The public bodies offering services in general belong to the Ministries of Economy, Agriculture and Labour. Private organisations involved in the provision of support measures for small businesses are generally non-profit organisations. In Portugal, these private organisations often represent partnerships between public authorities and private or semi-public institutions such as industrial associations, chambers of commerce and Business Innovation Centres. One example for this kind of co-operation is the 'TAGUSPARK Incubator', ('Incubação de empresas') a private entity formed by public and private partners.

IEAPMEI (Small Business Institute) as a public institution plays a key role in business support policy in Portugal. It acts as a link between public initiatives and private or semi-public organisations, e. g. by holding a shareholder position in some non-public organisations offering support services. Moreover, IAPMEI keeps close collaboration with industrial associations in order to be able to make use of their funds for current support operations.

Irrespectively of the legal status of the leading organisations of the Portuguese support services, a lot of them benefit of financial contributions coming from bodies of the European Commission, e. g. the European Structural Funds or General Directories of the European Commission.

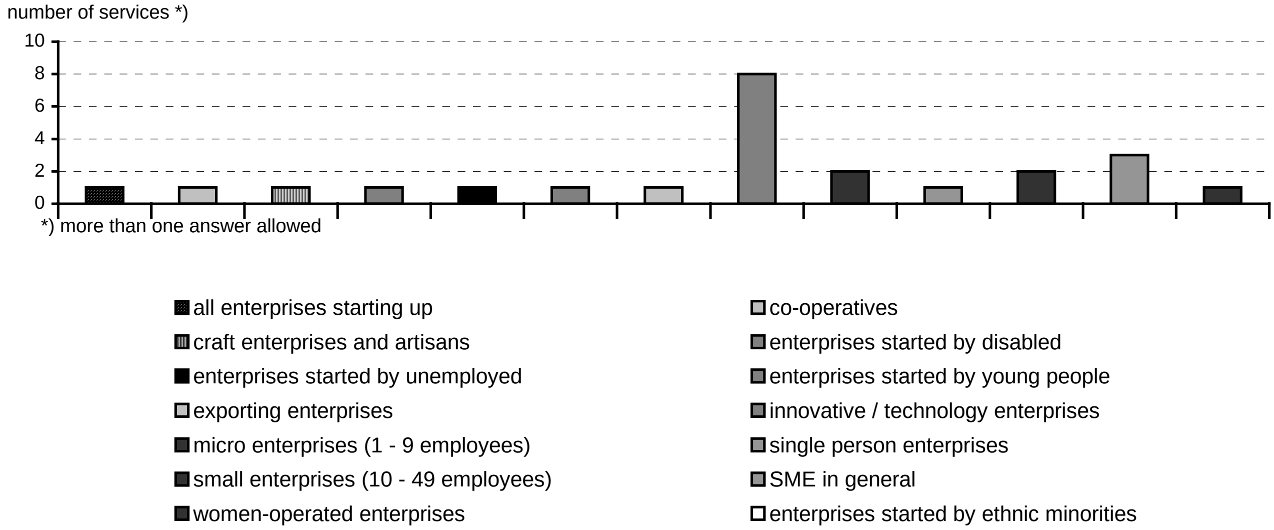
The support services available in Portugal are not only partly financed by European institutions, some of the existing support services are also originated in European initiatives, such as the Business Innovation Centres, the Business Angels, the Euro Info Centres or the LIFT programme.

All support services available in Portugal are organised on a decentralised basis. Depending on the individual service, the contact points of the service are to be found in most of the regional capitals (see Graph 2).

2.2 TARGET GROUPS OF SUPPORT SERVICES IDENTIFIED

As stated above, this report only deals with support services targeted at micro, small or sole proprietor's businesses. However, in many countries, and also in Portugal, these businesses are considered a sub-group of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and are hardly subject to a separate business support policy. Therefore, also services though not explicitly targeted at but mainly used by micro, small or sole proprietor's businesses are included in the analysis.

Graph 3: Target population of the services identified



Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

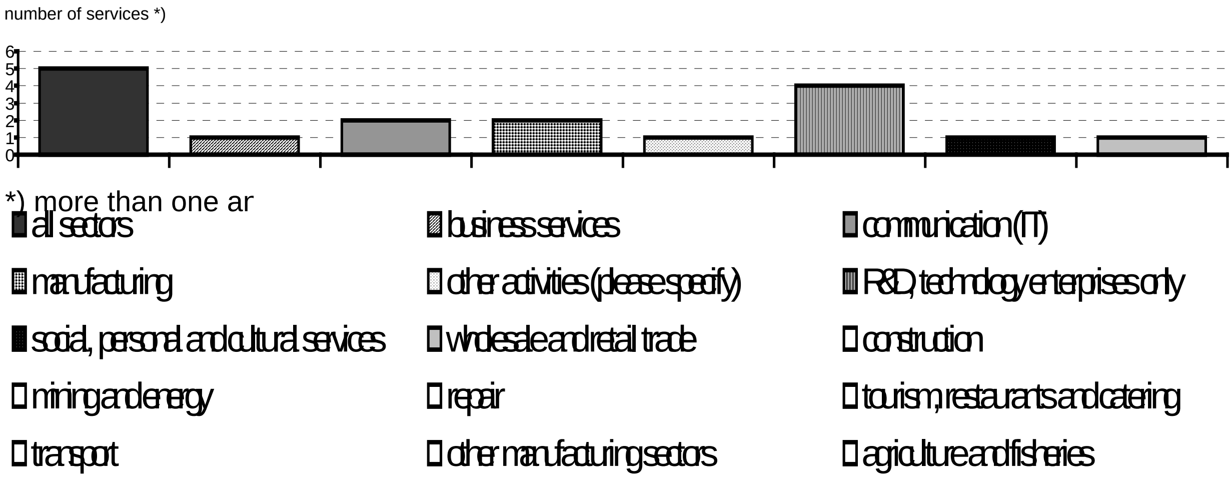
Most of the support services available in Portugal for micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses are targeted at innovative and technology based enterprises like incubators and technology parks. Emphasis is also put on enterprises started by young people. A good example for helping young people to launch their own business are the 'Business Nests' ('Programa "Ninhos de Empresas'). Those incubation services try to stimulate the creative and entrepreneurial capabilities of young people by helping them to establish their service companies.

The strong diversity of Portuguese support measures (as shown in Graph 3) is due to the fact that the programme 'Consulting, Training and Support to Small Businesss - 4th edition' ('Programa REDE) offers a wide range of support for nearly every kind of target group. The Programa REDE is organised by the IEFP (National Vocational Training Institute) with the help of industrial organisations. It concentrates on the increase of competitiveness and growth of small and micro firms by the means of providing appropriate managerial and training resources based on the needs of the companies.

Graph 5 shows that the majority of the support organisations offer services targeted at all phases of development of an enterprise, although some of the organisations also provide specific support for special phases in the life-cycle of enterprises. Interestingly, in comparison to other countries of the European Union, Portugal is one of the few countries where specific support for all different phases of the business life cycle seems to be available. Particularly, there has been quite some support implemented for enterprises in the growth phase.

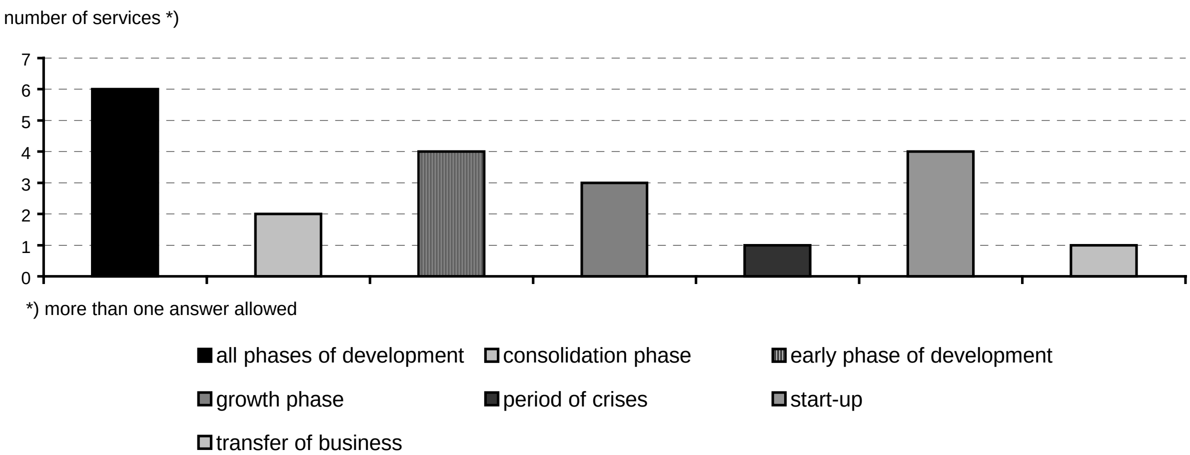
Most of the services initialised by European initiatives do not focus on a special life-cycle phase but target at all phases of development. In contrast, the LIFT programme ('Linking Innovation, Finance and Technology') is a good example of targeting special phases of the life-cycle in its aim to support start ups and enterprises in an early phase of development.

Graph 4: Sectors addressed by services identified



Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

Graph 5: Enterprise phase of development targeted by services identified

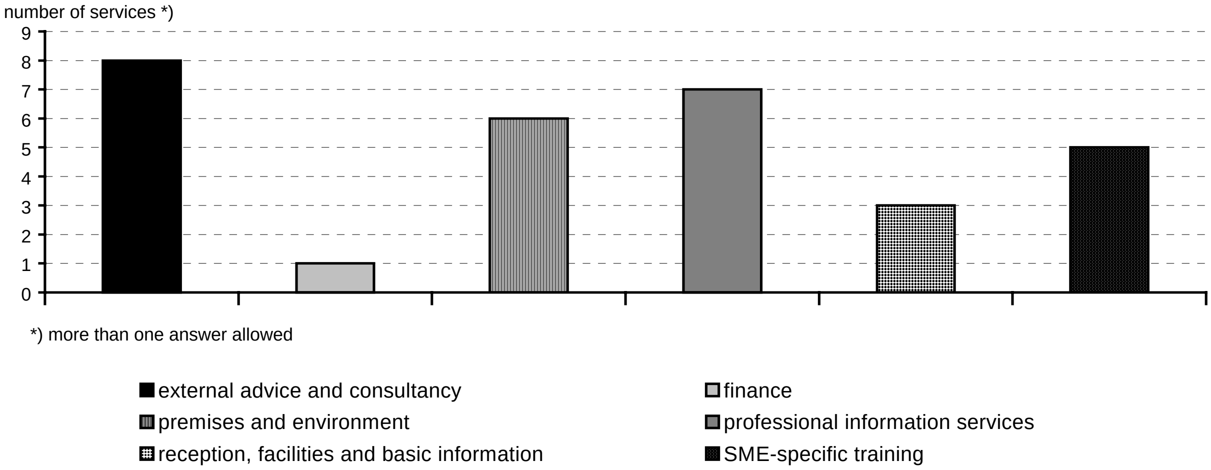


Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

2.3 TYPES OF SUPPORT SERVICES IDENTIFIED

When analysing the types of support services offered to micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Portugal it seems necessary to recall the definition applied in this part of the assessment. As to this regard, particularly, all kind of purely financial support, such as loans, guarantees, or all kinds of subsidies or tax relief for small businesses are excluded from the analysis. Thus, it is not surprising that hardly any service has been identified with focus on 'finance'.

Graph 6: Types of services identified



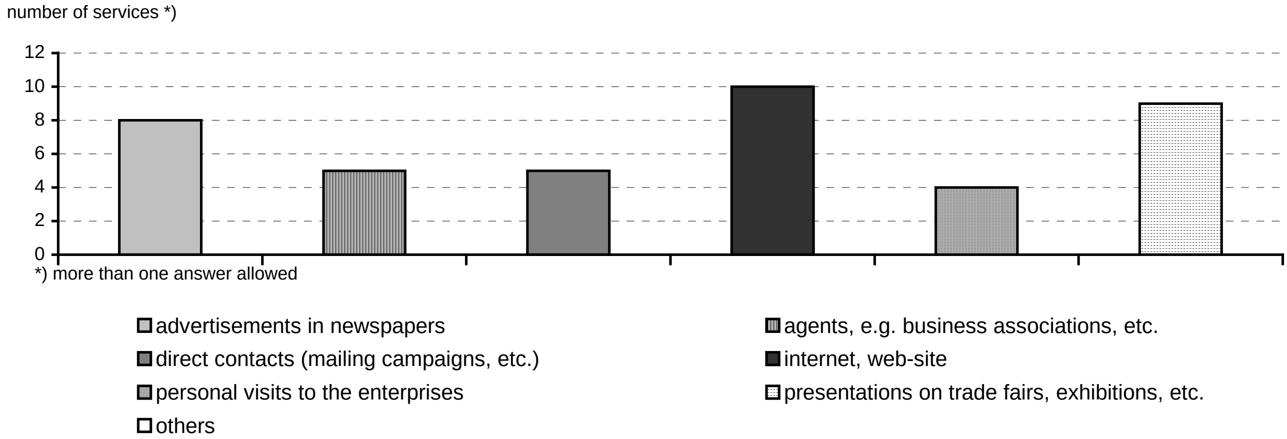
Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

In Portugal, services provided seems to concentrate on external advice and consultancy as well as on professional information services and premises and environment (see Graph 6). A closer analysis shows that advice on specific areas of business activity, business planning and strategy, the development of business contacts as well as consultancy play major roles in the range of existing support services for micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses.

Apart from advice of any kind the allocation of premises is a very important type of services offered. Some incubators provide the premises and give general advice for newly founded enterprises, others like the 'Oporto Polytechnic Incubator ('SOGISTFIPP - Sociedade de Incubacao Sectorial, SA') place incubation units at the disposal of technology-based firms, only.

2.4 PROMOTION OF SUPPORT SERVICES IDENTIFIED

Graph 7: Promotion of services identified

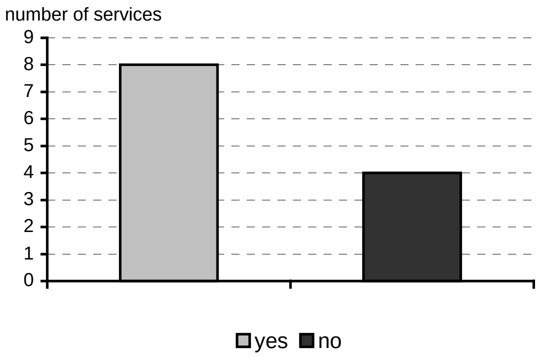


Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

As Graph 7 shows, the most important communication channel used by the service providers is the Internet, making first information about the services for micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses available on their web-sites. It is believed that primarily young customers, who are familiar with the Internet, use this means to get the required information. The Internet as a presentation medium is followed closely by presentations on trade fairs and exhibitions, putting the personal contact in the foreground. These presentations are normally better suited for the entrepreneurs in question to receive personalised information regarding their specific situation. The traditional way of placing advertisements in newspapers is also widely used for communicational and promotional purposes, as it is common not only in Portugal but in all of the Mediterranean countries except France.

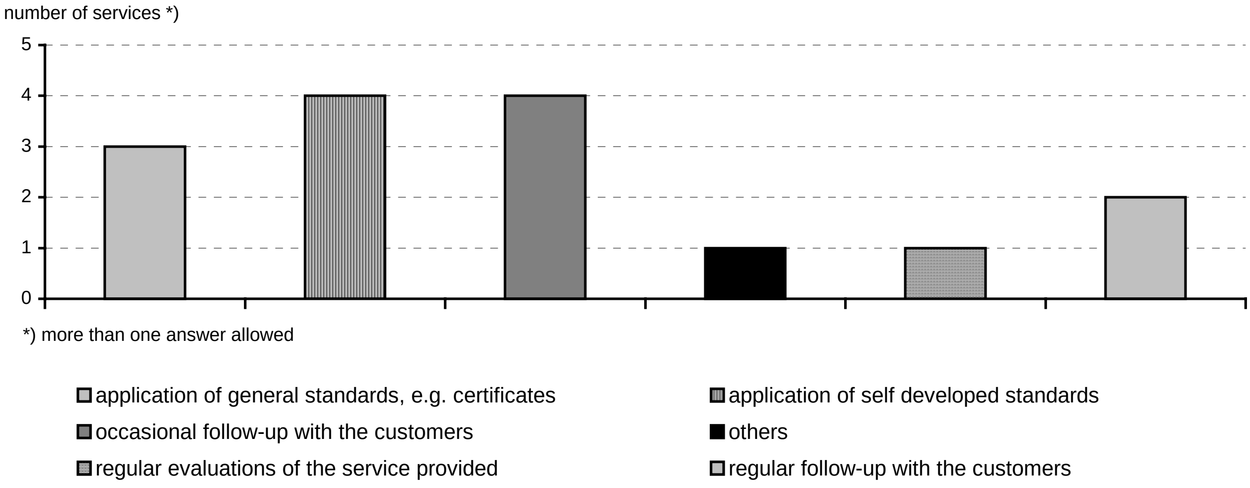
2.5 QUALITY AND PRICES OF SUPPORT SERVICES IDENTIFIED

Graph 8: Existence of quality assurance mechanisms



Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

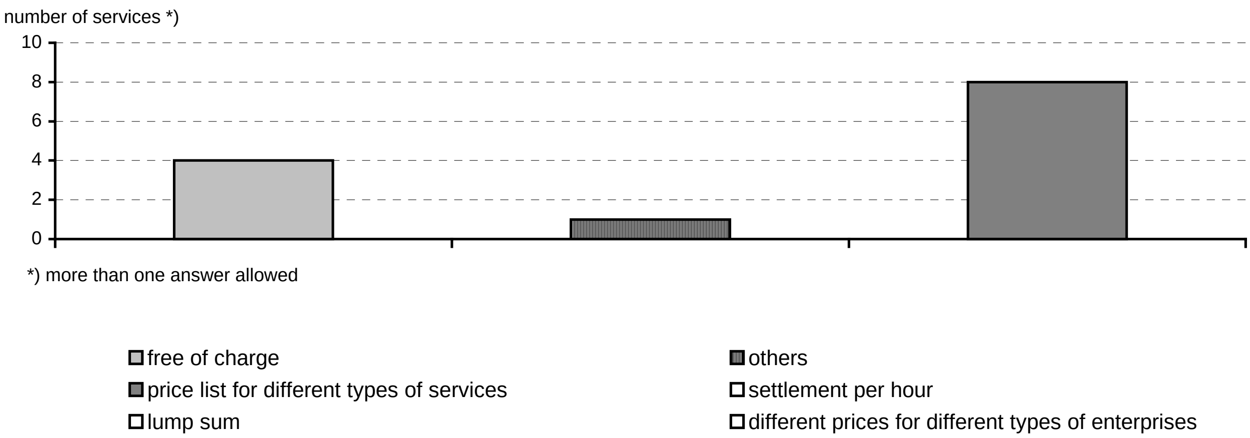
Graph 9: Types of quality assurance mechanisms



Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

Two thirds of the existing support services have implemented some quality assurance mechanism within their organisation (see Graph 8). The two most common quality assurance mechanisms are self developed standards and occasional follow-ups with the customers. General standards such as quality certificates are in use for trainers who are in charge of consultancy and specific training. As the mechanisms for quality assurance are not very regularly adopted, no reliable evaluation results are available.

Graph 10: Determination of prices of services identified



Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

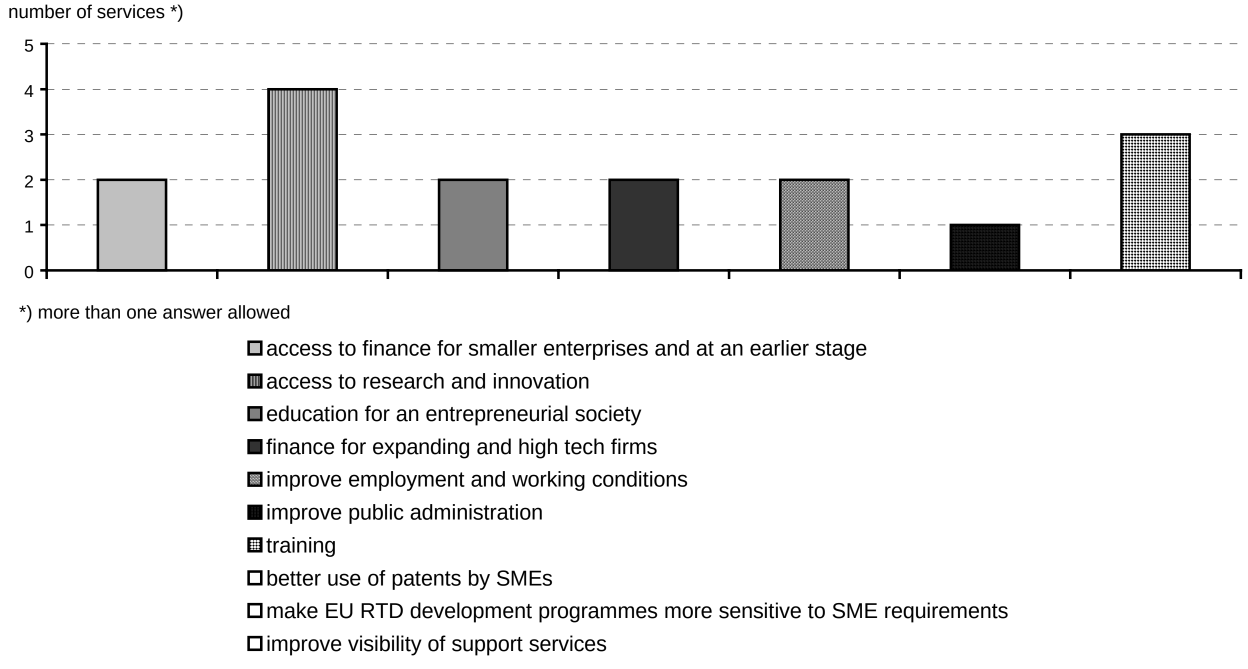
Although this study analyses support services which do not underlay commercial market conditions, the services do not necessarily have to be free of charge. Of course, some services are totally subsidised and do not demand any fees, whereas others do have to operate cost covering (especially private organisations) and therefore most often set price lists for different types of services.

2.6 OBJECTIVES OF SUPPORT SERVICES IDENTIFIED

Public support for micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses is founded on the conviction that economic growth is strongly linked to the development of these enterprises. The objectives of the various forms of support offered are complex and aim at different scopes of business life. Many services offer practical advice and consultancy with special emphasis on sectors or different phases of development. Depending on the main focus of the service, objectives are, for example, to provide information on support services, to strengthen the readiness for enterprise start-ups and prepare potential entrepreneurs, to improve SMEs' competitiveness and innovation capacity or to secure jobs. The achievement of these aims should lead to a higher and sustainable economic growth and welfare. By means of an *Action Plan to Promote Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness* the European Commission (1999a) has set out a number of priority aims which are most important for promoting entrepreneurship and creating a business environment that encourages the creation and growth of new businesses in order to improve the competitiveness of Europe's economy (see Graph 11). The classification of national support measures according to these 'action plan objectives' shall help to present a well structured and systematic overview on the aims of the various support services available to micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Portugal.

The emphasis on research and innovation, which has already been noted in the previous sections, consequently leads to the finding that the objective 'access to research and innovation' is highly pursued by existing support services in Portugal. Training for entrepreneurs and employees is another objective very often addressed by existing support services in Portugal.

Graph 11: Action plan objectives addressed by services identified



Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

To improve public administration is less often pursued by the services offered. However the Business Formalities Centres ('Rede Nacional dos Centros de Formalidades das Empresas') in Portugal enhance and simplify the relations between firms and the public administration. Several delegations of the public administrations are located in one-stop-shops in seven cities of Portugal, covering all regions, in order to provide legal and/or administrative assistance to the companies and manage their files. Due to optimised procedures and substantially reduced lead times, the centres are considered as a good example of a more efficient and customers focused public administration. They were awarded the Quality Prize for Public Services in 2000 by the Department for Public Administration Modernisation.

3. DEMAND FOR SUPPORT SERVICES

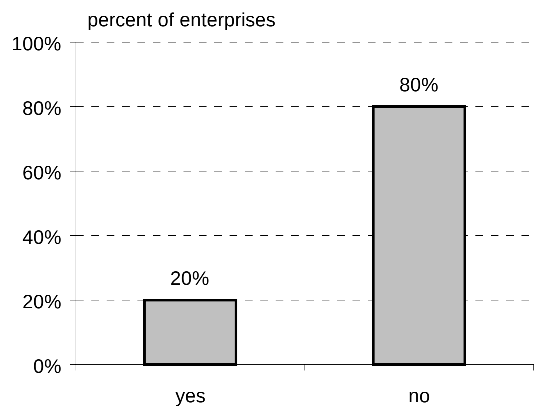
The purpose of this section of the report is to systematically analyse the demand side of the market for support services targeted at *micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses* in Portugal, by examining the participation of enterprises in support services, their awareness of the availability of support services, their needs with respect to the content, conditions and design of support services as well as on issues such as the general attitude of entrepreneurs toward support services.

The definition of the term support services applied to this part of the research study contains all types of services, such as the provision of information, advice, training, or other business services that are offered at non-market conditions and are of non-financial kind. The findings provided in the following, however, are not directly related to those services mentioned in section 2 of the report. Furthermore, results presented are based on 75 telephone interviews conducted in Portugal, but, due to respective data weighting, relate to the whole population of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Portugal (see section 1). Nevertheless, because of a relatively low number of observations with regard to specific issues at country level, results might show high sample errors and thus have to be interpreted cautiously.

3.1 PARTICIPATION IN SUPPORT SERVICES

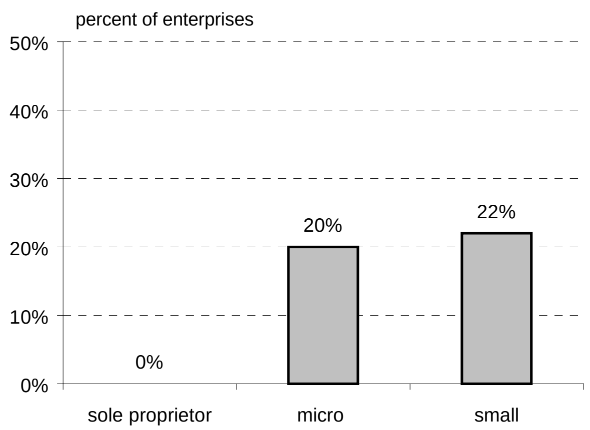
To improve the access of small enterprises to top-class business support is one of the major policy objectives of the European Commission expressed in various Commission documents, such as the *Action Plan to Promote Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness* (European Commission, 1999a) and the *Feira European Charter for Small Enterprises* (European Commission 2000a). In order to stay competitive and contribute to economic growth and employment in Europe, small enterprises need the best possible environment as well as information and business support systems that are easy to access and understand and relevant to the needs of small businesses. Although there are a number of support services available for Portuguese micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses (see section 2), only a relatively small fraction of the companies actually takes advantage from these services.

Graph 12: Participation rate of enterprises



Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

Graph 13: Participation rate of enterprises, by size class



Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

As can be seen from Graph 12, the participation rate (i. e. the share of enterprises that has utilised support services during the past five years) among Portuguese micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses is rather low. Only one fifth of the smallest enterprises has used a support scheme within the last five years. Broken down by company size, it is evident that mainly micro (1 to 9 employees, 20 %) and small business (10 to 49 employees, 22 %) take advantage of support services. Sole proprietors that use support services, by contrast, are extremely scarce (see Graph 13). The low participation rates observed in Portugal are in line with previous findings obtained by Dores Guerreiro et al. (2000).

On average 20 % of all micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in the European Union Member States and Norway have participated in support services within the last five years. Variations from this value at country level have to be interpreted cautiously as sample errors may be up to +/- 10 %. However, it can be concluded from Table 1 that compared to other European countries the Portuguese participation rate is to be found in the midfield. In the Netherlands, Ireland and Denmark participation rates are above average, while in Sweden, Greece and Norway relatively few micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses have utilised any support service within the last five years.

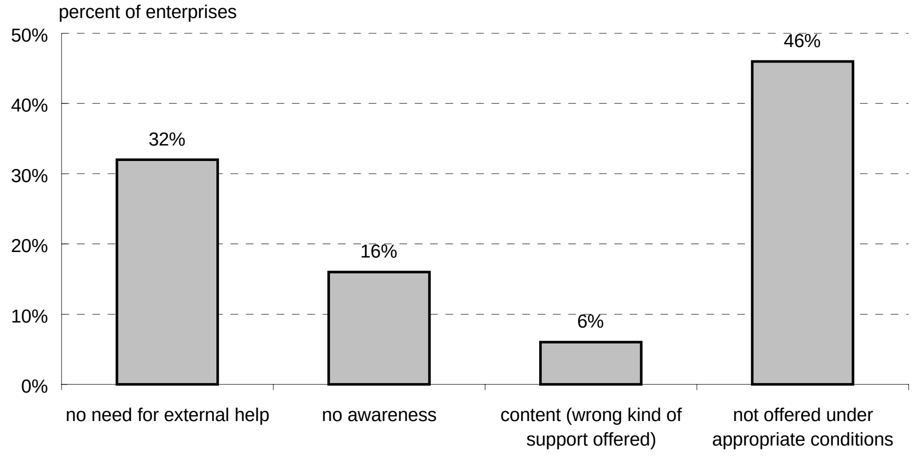
Table 1: Participation rate of enterprises, by country

country	participation rate*)	
Netherlands		34 %
Ireland	*significantly*	32 %
Denmark	*above average*	28 %
United Kingdom		27 %
Finland		25 %
France		22 %
EU (15) and Norway		***20 %***
Germany	*on average*	20 %
Portugal		**20 %**
Belgium		20 %
Spain		19 %
Austria		16 %
Italy		16 %
Sweden	*significantly*	10 %
Greece	*below average*	6 %
Norway		3 %
Luxembourg		**)

*) share of enterprises having made use of support services within the last five years, maximum sample error at country level: +/- 10 %
**) no reliable data available
Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

There may be various reasons why enterprises do not utilise support services offered in their respective country. Most of these reasons can be categorised into four groups: a) enterprises believe that they do not have any need for external help, b) enterprises are not aware of the existence and availability of support services, c) the content of support services offered does not match the needs of enterprises, and d) the respective support services are not offered under appropriate conditions. The most dominant reasons for Portuguese micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses for non-participation are illustrated in Graph 14.

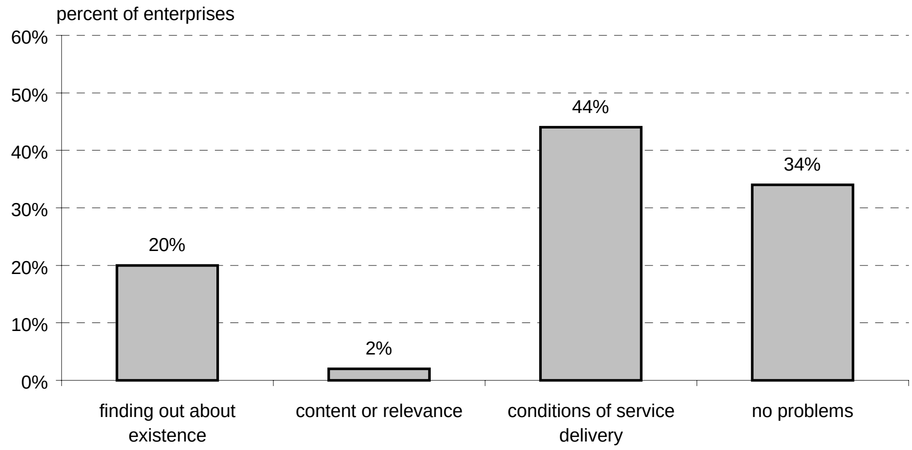
Graph 14: Main reason for not using support services*)



*) only enterprises that have not made use of support services within the last five years
Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

The main reason for many enterprises not making use of support services is the terms and conditions of support services offered, which 46 % of the Portuguese micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses consider to be inappropriate. Second to this, almost one third of the companies do not see any need for support schemes. By comparison, lack of awareness (16 %) and content-related issues (6 %) play a less important role as barriers to using support services. As will be shown in section 3.2, this does, however, not mean that the awareness level can be considered satisfactory – it merely states that the conditions of service delivery pose a bigger problem.

Graph 15: Main difficulty when using support services*)



*) only enterprises that have made use of support services within the last five years
Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

When asked about the main difficulties encountered while using support services, 44 % of the enterprises that have taken advantage of support schemes criticise the terms of service delivery, such as pricing or promptness (see Graph 15). One fifth encounters problems in finding out about existing support services. Issues related to the content or relevance of a support scheme, by contrast, pose a problem for only 2 % of the companies. More than one third of the businesses do not encounter problems at all.

It seems that while the service contents in principle meet the needs of the enterprises, more attention must be given to the formulation and establishment of attractive and SME-friendly terms and conditions (see also section 3.4). As shown in Graph 10, there are more than twice as much services which have to be paid for than services that are offered for free. This fact - which is opposed to the findings in most other European countries - might indicate a reason for the higher-than-average mentioning of problematic conditions of service delivery.

In the following sections, it is sought to deepen the investigation on the main reasons for not using support services by micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Portugal: Beginning with the problem related to a *lack of awareness*, an illustration of the rate of information on the existence and availability of support services in Portugal is provided followed by a cross-national comparison of *'information rates'* (i. e. the share of enterprises well informed on the existence and availability of support services). An attempt is made to detect mismatches between enterprises' needs with respect to how they want to be informed on support services and how providers actually promote the services they offer. This is done in *section 3.2*.

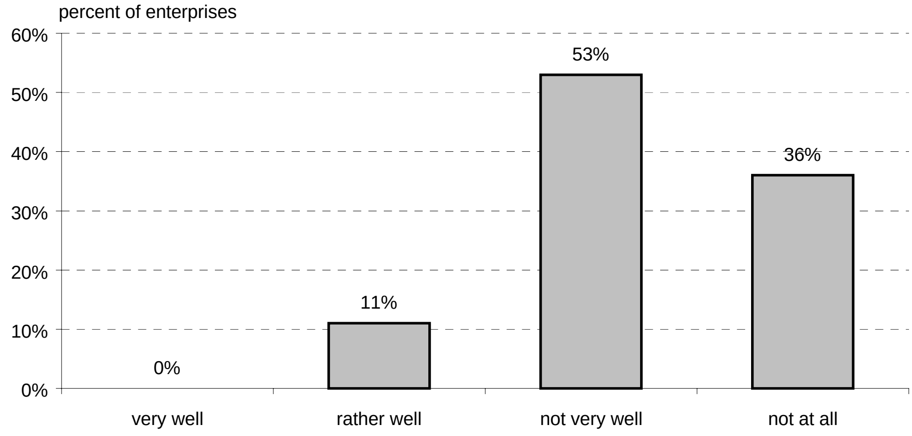
The problems related to the *content of support services* are analysed by comparing the supply side of the market for support services (see section 2) to the needs of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses. Attempts are made to detect prevailing mismatches between enterprises' need for external help and what is actually available on the market for support services. This is presented in *section 3.3* of this report.

Finally, the *conditions of delivery* and the respective problems are investigated by considering on the issue of satisfaction with the use of support services. An illustration of how satisfied enterprises are with the utilisation of support services is followed by a cross-national comparison of *'satisfaction rates'* (i. e. the share of enterprises satisfied with the use of support services). This is presented in *section 3.4*.

3.2 AWARENESS OF SUPPORT SERVICES

The counterpart of a potential 'lack of awareness' on the demand side might be a 'lack of visibility' of support services on the supply side. Creating awareness of the existence and availability of support services among entrepreneurs is considered one of the major challenges in support policy for small and medium sized enterprises and in particular for micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses. Several previous empirical studies have identified this issues as being one of the major constraints for the utilisation of support services by small enterprises (see, for example, the *European Observatory for SMEs*, European Commission, 2000b). As can be seen from Graph 15, also 20 % of those enterprises that have already used this kind of services found it most difficult to find out about the existence of the respective support. It is the aim of this section to further elaborate on the issue of awareness by providing data on the information rate of enterprises with respect to the availability of support services for their respective business and by identifying a potential mismatch between enterprises' needs with respect to how they want to be informed on support services and how providers actually promote the services they offer.

Graph 16: Information rate of enterprises with respect to support services

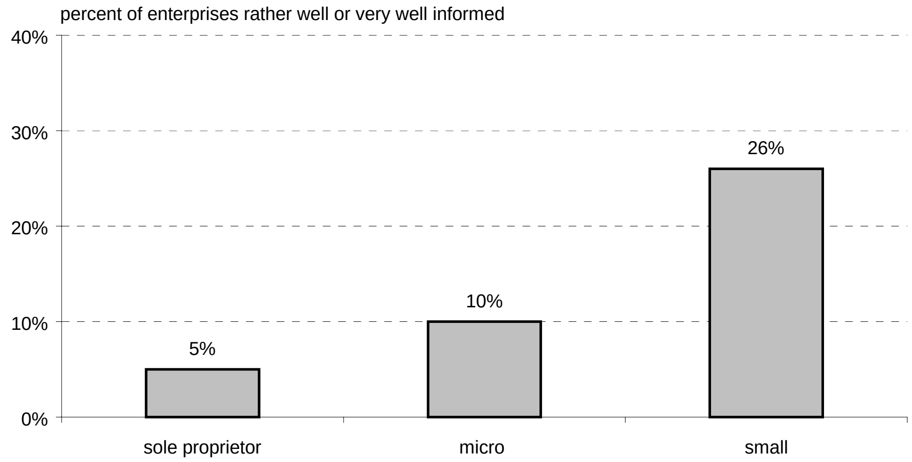


Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

As can be seen from Graph 16, Portuguese micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses are rather poorly informed on the existence and availability of support services offered for their respective enterprise: No company indicates to be 'very well' informed, only 11 % feel 'rather well' informed. Thus, in total, almost 90 % of enterprises in Portugal lack information on the availability of support services for their business.

This somewhat surprising result, when compared to the results on barriers to participation in support services, can be explained by a more differentiated perception of the companies' information rates. 'Not very well informed' in this case seems to mean that some knowledge is present concerning the existence of support schemes, which is high enough to not consider the lack of information as prohibitive for participation. However, there also seems to be some room for a more detailed briefing of the businesses to feel more comfortable with their information rate on support services.

Graph 17: Information rate of enterprises with respect to support services, by size class



Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

The information rate of enterprises on the existence and availability of support services decreases with enterprise size, as can be seen from Graph 17. Whereas 26 % of the small and 10 % of the micro enterprises indicate to be 'very well' or at least 'rather well' informed, only 5 % of the sole proprietors feel sufficiently informed.

The average information rate of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in the European Union Member States and Norway lies at 24 %. Again, variations from this value at country level have to be interpreted cautiously as sample errors may be up to +/- 10 %. However, it can be concluded from Table 2 that compared to other European countries the information rate of Portuguese enterprises is clearly below average. A comparably meagre information rate is also found in France and Greece, whereby the amount of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses being informed on the existence and availability of support services offered for their respective enterprise in Belgium and the Netherlands, for example, is far above the EU average.

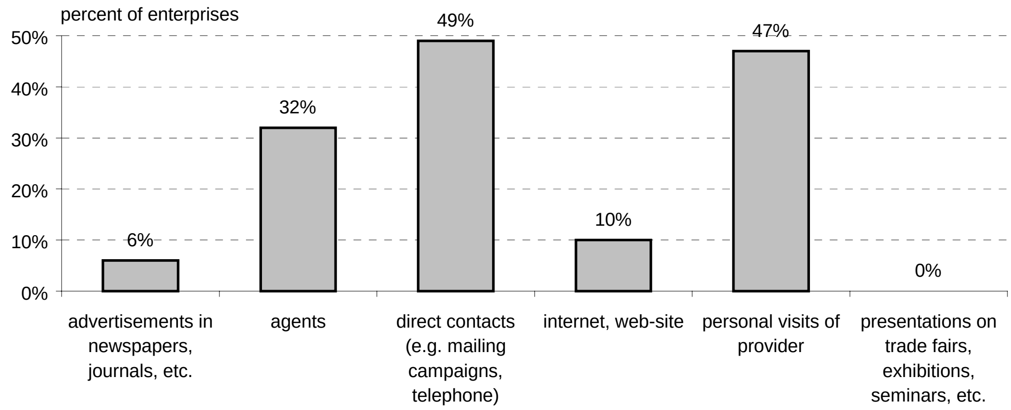
Table 2: Information rate of enterprises with respect to support services, by country

country		information rate*)
Belgium		45 %
Netherlands		43 %
Austria	*significantly*	36 %
Sweden	*above average*	36 %
Finland		34 %
Italy		31 %
Denmark		30 %
Spain		29 %
Norway		27 %
Ireland		25 %
EU (15) and Norway	*on average*	***24 %***
Germany		22 %
United Kingdom		18 %
France	*significantly*	15 %
Portugal	*below average*	**11 %**
Greece		6 %
Luxembourg		**)

*) enterprises rather well or very well informed on support services, maximum sample error at country level: +/- 10 %
**) no reliable data available
Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

Problems related to lack of information respectively awareness on the side of enterprises in the European Union Member States and Norway may be related to the effectiveness of the promotional activities of support service providers. As shown in section 2.4 some information on support services in Portugal is already available on the Internet making it the most valuable information source. However, an analysis of the preferences of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses with regard to the means for information provision indicates that additional measures might be needed in order to increase the level of awareness for support services in Portugal.

Graph 18: Type of promotion activities preferred by enterprises*)



*) more than one answer allowed
Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

With respect to how enterprises want to be informed on support services, it can be concluded from Graph 18 that in Portugal micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses have a preference for information transfer by direct contacting (49 %) and personal visits by the provider (47 %), followed by information transfer through agents (32 %). Internet-based promotion (10 %) and advertisements in classic print media (6 %) do not seem to be very popular. The least preferred means of communication (at least as sources of information for support services) are presentations on trade fairs or exhibitions and the like.

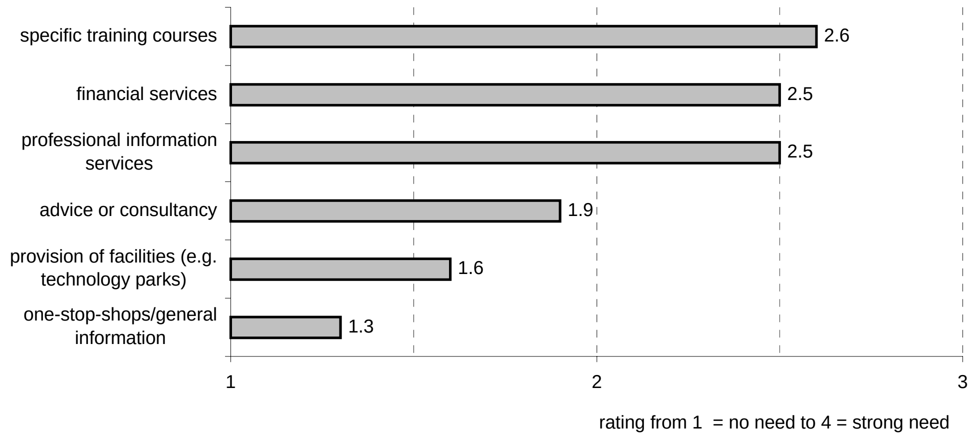
When compared to how support services are actually promoted in Portugal (see section 2.4), it is found that service providers rely to a high degree on presenting their services on the Internet. However, most companies seem to feel more comfortable with directly being contacted receiving detailed information on the terms and advantages of support services in an individualised face-to-face matter. By trying to eliminate the mismatch between the promotional activities preferred by the enterprises and the actually applied promotion activities by the service providers, i. e. by emphasising personal visits and direct contacts - which of course are amongst the most costly promotional means - it should be possible to increase the awareness level of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Portugal.

Generally, businesses in Portugal clearly prefer looking for support services at local level: 57 % of the companies would try to find a support service in their geographical neighbourhood first. By contrast, only 14 % would start with research on a regional, and only 16 % would search at a national or even European level, respectively. When compared to the actual organisation of support services in Portugal (mainly decentralised at regional level as can be seen from Graph 2), it may be concluded that the supply side by in large meets the needs of the enterprises.

3.3 CONTENT OF SUPPORT SERVICES

Once the problem of lacking awareness is overcome by the enterprises, it still remains difficult to identify the type of support measure that is considered relevant for the development of a particular company. As outlined in section 3.1, the contents of the available support schemes (i. e. the types of support offered, the targeting of support services etc.) seem to be no major reason for Portuguese micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses not to apply for aid within the scope of a support service program. Furthermore, virtually no enterprise claims that this is a major difficulty encountered while using the services. However, there are some types of services that seem to be more important to enterprises than others. Thus, it is the aim of this section to detect prevailing mismatches between the enterprises' needs for external help and the kind of support services actually available on the market.

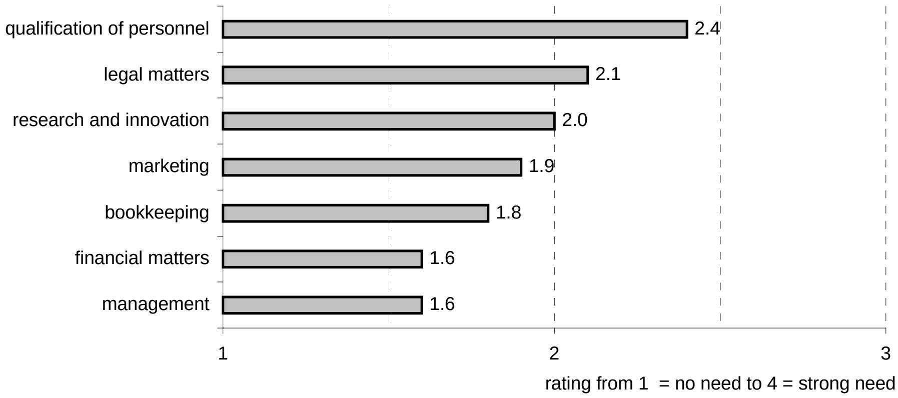
Graph 19: Need for different types of support services



Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

Portuguese micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses generally express only a moderate need for support services: On a scale from 1 – no need to 4 – strong need on average 2.1. However, the demand for specific training courses, financial services and professional information services is definitely higher than the demand for advice or consultancy, the provision of facilities and the demand for one-stop-shops offering general information (see Graph 19). A comparison of the demand side with the supply side of the market for support services in Portugal shows that although enterprises do not seem to feel a strong need for advice and consultancy, it is, nevertheless, the most common type of support services offered (see Graph 6). A number of services, however, is available to meet the needs of the enterprises with regard to specific training courses and professional information services.

Graph 20: Need for external support, by business areas



Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

Broken down by business areas, Portuguese small, micro and sole proprietor's businesses seek support for improving the qualification of their personnel, for fostering research and development and for legal matters. Less need for support seems to be present for financial matters and for issues relating to the management of an enterprises (see Graph 20). Especially the figures for financial matters are surprising as demand for support services in this area is very high throughout Europe.

One reason for the relatively low take-up for support services expressed by enterprises of all size classes - as in most other European countries - might be due to a lack of target group orientation of the majority of support services offered as far as size class and sector the enterprise are concerned. The majority of Portuguese micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses (93 %) would prefer to use support services that are specifically targeted at enterprises of their respective *size class*. More than 70 % even indicate that it is 'very important' for them to get support tailored to their company size.

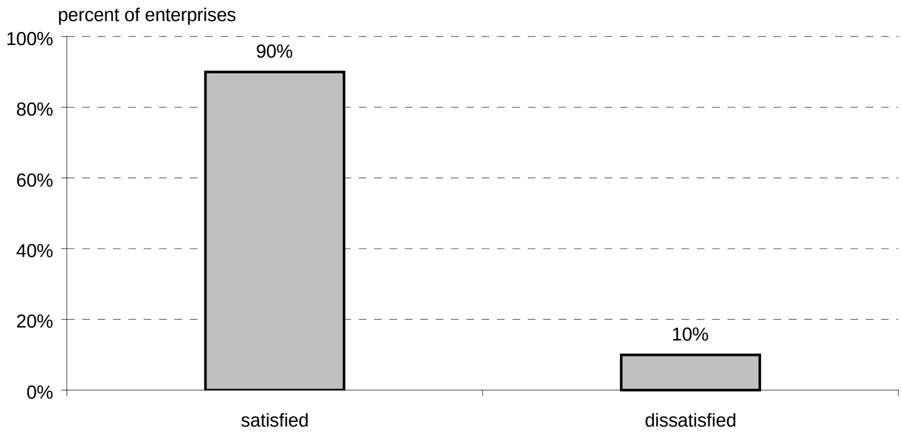
Also, the majority of Portuguese micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses (96 %) consider it important that support services are specifically targeted at enterprises of their respective *sector*. When compared to the supply side of support services (see Graph 4), however, it can be assumed that the demand for sector-specific support services is significantly higher than their actual supply: Almost all support services offered in Portugal either address all sectors alike or target technology and innovation sectors. The supply of sector-specific services in other sectors is very low.

Most micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses (93 %) in Portugal would also prefer to use support services that are specifically targeted at their current *phase of development*. Particularly, it is believed that it is the start-up phase, the early phase of development and the phases of crises in which enterprises need most external support. When compared to the supply side of support services (see Graph 5) it might be concluded that there is indeed a wide range of support for enterprises in different stages of development in Portugal, as opposed to most of the other European countries.

3.4 CONDITIONS AND DELIVERY OF SUPPORT SERVICES

In order to increase the take-up of support services by micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses, creating awareness of the availability of support and offering suitable or relevant types of services might not be sufficient if enterprises are not convinced of their real value and quality. As outlined in section 3.1, for quite many Portuguese micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses it is the conditions of service delivery that poses the main difficulty when using support services. Also a lot of small enterprises in Portugal indicate not to make use of existing support services because they believe that services are not offered under appropriate conditions. This credibility gap needs to be overcome in order not to lose potential participants who are generally convinced of the usefulness of external help and are likely to use support services regularly if these are offered under acceptable conditions. Thus, it is the aim of this section to further elaborate on the issue of delivery of support services by providing data on the satisfaction rates of enterprises with support services offered and by identifying a potential mismatch between enterprises' preferences for specific forms of communication, payment, etc. and the way, support services are actually delivered.

Graph 21: Satisfaction rate of enterprises*)



*) only enterprises that have made use of support services within the last five years
Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

The average satisfaction rate with respect to support services used by micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in the European Union Member States and Norway during the last five years lies at 80 %. It is hardly possible to interpret variations from this value at country level due to comparatively high sample errors amounting up to +/- 15 %. Still, it might be assumed that Portugal and Ireland are at the upper end while Luxembourg and Denmark are at the lower end of satisfaction with respect to support services used. Due to the high variation of the corresponding values for some countries these are not included in the country ranking presented.

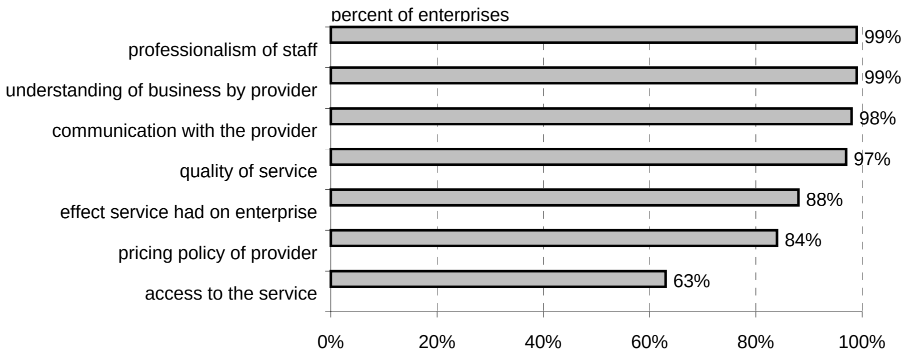
Table 3: Satisfaction rate of enterprises, by country

country		satisfaction rate*)
Ireland		90 %
Portugal		**90 %**
Spain		85 %
Belgium		82 %
United Kingdom		81 %
EU (15) and Norway	*on average*	***80 %***
Finland		80 %
France		79 %
Netherlands		76 %
Germany		76 %
Luxembourg		69 %
Denmark		67 %
Austria		51 %**)
Greece		68 %**)
Italy		82 %**)
Norway		64 %**)
Sweden		22 %**)

*) enterprises very or rather satisfied with the latest use of support services, maximum sample error at country level: +/- 15 %
**) due to small number of observations sample error may amount up to +/- 25 %
Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

While Graph 21 presents the satisfaction rate of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Portugal with the support services used in rather general terms, Graph 22 below illustrates the degree of satisfaction with more specific issues related to the delivery of support services.

Graph 22: Satisfaction with the use of support services, by different aspects*)

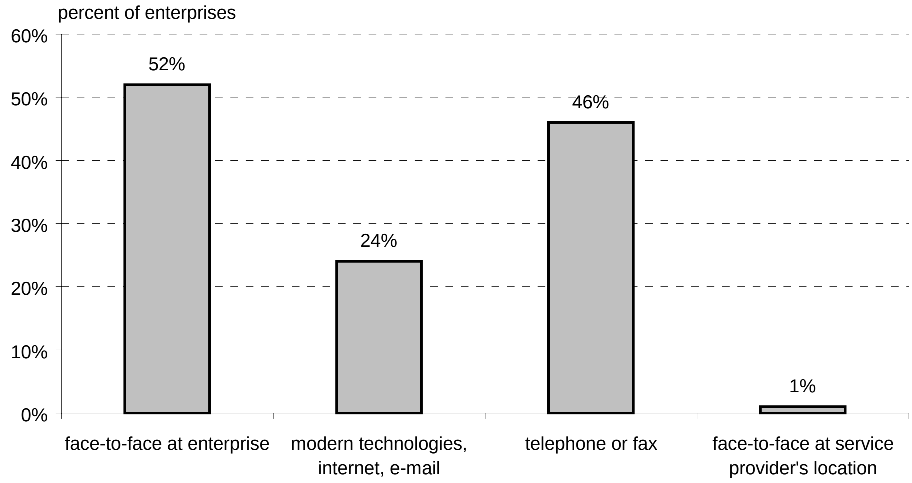


*) only enterprises that have made use of support services within the last five years
Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

As can be seen from Graph 22, most micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Portugal that have used support services in the last five years are very satisfied with the issues in question. The aspect rated lowest is the access to the service itself. This aspect shows a satisfaction rate of 'only' 63 %. Second lowest is the satisfaction rate of 84 % related to the pricing policy of the services used. The overall effect the service had on the enterprise shows a satisfaction level of 88 %. In all other areas, the satisfaction rates are close to 100 %.

In the following, it is intended to investigate three different facets of service delivery: the form of communication with the provider, the form of payment, and quality assurance mechanisms. The attempt is to analyse the preferences of Portuguese micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses regarding these aspects and furthermore to compare the findings with the supply side of the Portuguese support services market.

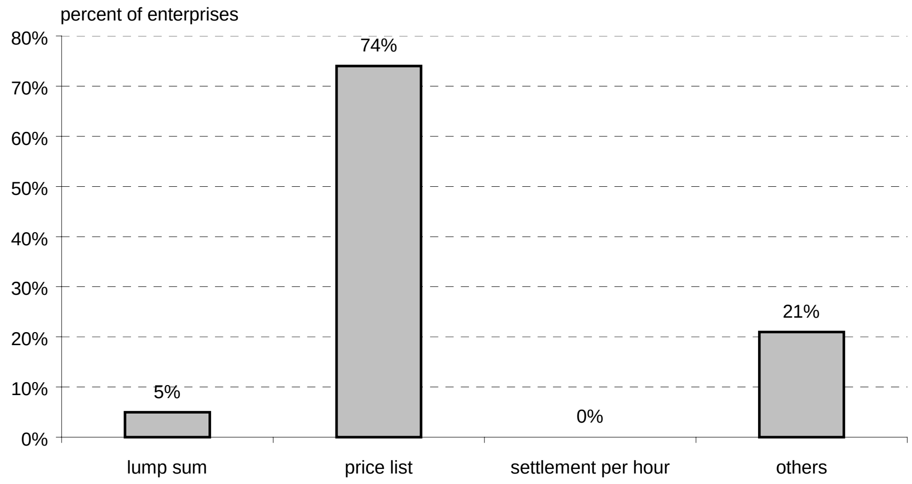
Graph 23: Form of communication with the service provider preferred by enterprises*)



*) more than one answer allowed
Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

Micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Portugal clearly prefer communicating fact-to-face with the service provider at the enterprise's premises (52 %). Only 24 % of all enterprises appreciate the possibility to use modern technologies (mainly Internet) to communicate with the provider, while 46 % would like to use telephone or fax as a means of communication (see Graph 23). If compared to the communication channels mainly used by Portuguese service providers (Internet and presentations at trade fairs etc., see Graph 7) it seems reasonable to extend face-to-face communication with the clients and communication using more 'traditional' electronic media.

Graph 24: Form of payment preferred by enterprises



Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

In Portugal there is a clear preference for pricing models based on predefined price lists. This form of payment is preferred by 74 % of the companies to the other alternatives (see Graph 24). Only 5 % like to pay lump sums. Settlements on an hourly basis is the least preferred form of payment as almost no enterprise wishes to pay their invoices for support services that way. 21 % of the companies have a preference for other methods of payment. Compared to the supply side (see Graph 10) it may be concluded that the offerings generally correspond to the preferences of the entrepreneurs, as most of them are either offered for free or charge prices according to given price lists.

The quality of services is usually difficult for enterprises to asses before actually utilising them. However, in order to increase enterprises' trust in the reliability of the respective providers it is advisable to apply quality assurance measures, that are, besides being indispensable in order to guarantee high quality service provision, also highly visible and recognised by the enterprises. Applying quality standards or offering regular follow-ups with the customer, for instance, is vital for a successful promotion of support services. Choosing the right quality measures - the ones enterprises trust most - and making them visible to the enterprises might be crucial for strengthening the enterprises' belief in the usefulness of support services. A rating of a number of quality criteria important to Portuguese companies is given in Graph 25.

Graph 25: Criteria that indicate high quality to enterprises

Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

When micro, small or sole proprietor's businesses in Portugal try to assess the quality of a service provider, the indicator for quality they consider most important is regular follow-ups with the customer. The application of quality standards of any kind is valued lower but still plays a significant role in the quality assessment by enterprises. The least important indicators for measuring quality are trademarks (see Graph 25). When compared to the quality assurance mechanisms actually applied, it can be seen that Portuguese providers prefer to use occasional follow-ups and self-developed standards. Thus, by and large there seems to be no strong mismatch between externally trusted and actually applied quality management tools, although self-developed standards specific to the services offered, seem to be more an instrument for successfully ensuring the quality of services offered, rather than indicating high quality to potential clients.

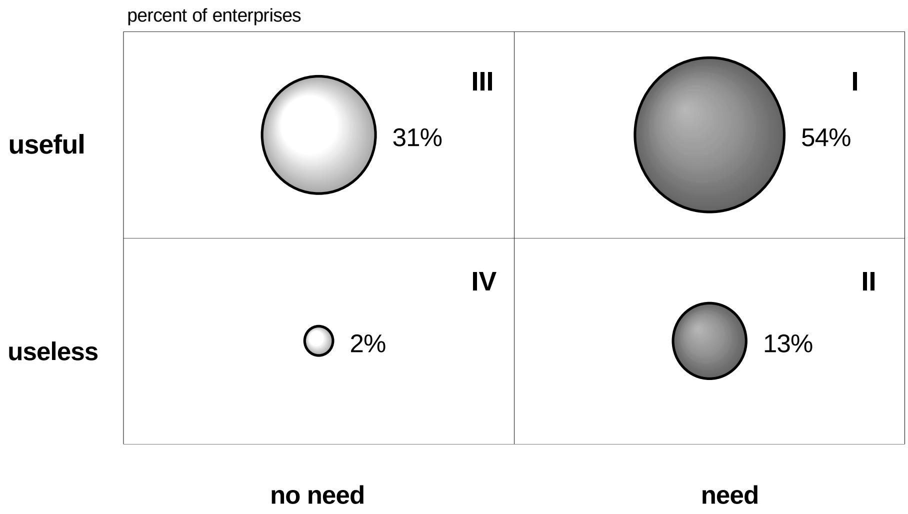
3.5 FUTURE POTENTIAL OF THE MARKET FOR SUPPORT SERVICES

The following matrix gives an overview on the future potential of the market for support services in Portugal by different types of enterprises, together with the respective strategy to be applied in order to increase the take-up and utilisation of support services. For this purpose, the attitude of enterprises towards support services has been segmented according to two characteristics:

a) enterprises' subjective rating of the general *usefulness* of support services and
b) enterprises' indication of the *need for support services* with respect to the own enterprise.

These characteristics are assumed to significantly influence the readiness of enterprises to participate in support services in the future. The combination of these two characteristics in a matrix results in four different types of enterprises and allows one to judge the potential of the market for support services as well as to derive specific strategies for mobilising this potential. The matrix shown in Graph 26 distributes those micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Portugal that have not participated in any type of support service during the last five years, according to their attitude towards support services.

Graph 26: Strategic matrix on the potential of the market for support services in Portugal*)



*) only enterprises that have not made use of support services within the last five years
Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Businesses Survey, 2001

I. Quadrant: This quadrant describes the share of enterprises that have indicated a need for external support and that are convinced of the usefulness of support services. These enterprises are basically willing to participate in support services, but seem to lack information on their availability and on how to access them. This group of enterprises is probably very sensitive to any type of *awareness-raising measures and promotional activities* applied by support service providers. Enterprises located in this quadrant are the ones that are most likely to use support services in the future. Their share in all enterprises not having used support services in the last five years in Portugal amounts to 54 %. They might best be mobilised by improving and reinforcing marketing and promotional activities of existing support services, by directly contacting potential clients or by the enhanced disposal of agents personally visiting the enterprises.

II. Quadrant: Enterprises in this quadrant have indicated a general need for support services, but doubt their usefulness. This might be due to a certain discontentment with the existing offer of support services. These enterprises might be most sensitive to strategies aiming at the improvement of the *content and conditions of delivery* of services, such as a better target group orientation of services offered or an improvement of communication strategies and the understanding of the businesses' needs, for example. The enterprises in this quadrant (only 13 % in Portugal) are rather critical towards support services but may well be mobilised by improving the content and delivery mechanisms of support services.

III. Quadrant: This quadrant contains the share of enterprises that generally consider support services to be useful, but do not see any need for their own enterprise as to this regard. It is usually more difficult to mobilise enterprises that indicate no need for external support than enterprises not utilising support services for other reasons, such as a lack of information or dissatisfaction with the offer, for example. However, as these enterprises believe in the general usefulness of support services they might be sensitive to strategies aiming at the *proliferation of information on the merits of support services* by the dissemination of 'good practices' or the demonstration of success rates of enterprises using support services, for example. In Portugal 31 % of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses seem to be sensitive to this kind of strategies. However, the attitude of this comparatively large group of enterprises is also often related to a general difficulty in identifying needs or facing economic or operational problems of their daily business, which needs to be overcome. Still, the majority of enterprises in Portugal seem to be at least convinced of the usefulness of support services, which is a good starting point for further activities as to this regard.

IV. Quadrant: Finally, quadrant IV describes the share of enterprises that neither indicate any need for support services nor believe in their usefulness. This attitude, particularly of smaller enterprises, is in line with results from a previous research study on SMEs in the European Union (Alten and Weiß, 2000), where it has been found that many small enterprises do not have the competency to judge their own needs correctly and to derive a specific demand from these needs. The lack of knowledge of their own needs in consequence may lead to a low acceptance of support services offered to the market, which is often associated with a general suspiciousness against 'externals' and a lacking readiness to give external support service providers insight into the economic and operational matters of one's enterprise. This group of enterprises will most probably stay insensitive to any traditional promotional or awareness creation measures and is thus not very likely to use support services in the future; their share fortunately amounts to only 2 % in Portugal.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In Portugal, support services are offered by either public or private organisations. Private organisations very often form a partnership with public bodies. Semi-public organisations seem to be less common. The supply of support services is regionally organised. The services offered mainly target SMEs in general and thus do not account explicitly for size-specific differences between micro, small and sole proprietors businesses. A lot of services are tailored to specific phases of development of an enterprise (especially to the growth phase). Portugal is one of the few European countries that offers support for all phases of the business life-cycle of an enterprise. As far as sector-orientation of the services is concerned, most of the services aim either at technology/innovation-based companies or at all sectors alike. Some services address young entrepreneurs.

Portuguese support services mainly offer external advice and consultancy, professional information services, and provide premises. Most of the providers offer their services at prices according to given price lists. Services offered for free are scarce. Two thirds of the services apply quality management tools, namely occasional follow-ups with the customers and the application of self-developed standards. More regular follow-ups with the customers and regular evaluations are less common. Although the objectives of the services are wide-spread some emphasis is given to the improvement of enterprises' 'access to research and innovation'. The main communication channel used by services providers in Portugal to reach customers is the Internet, followed by presentations on trade fairs and advertisements in newspapers, journals or magazines.

As far as the demand side is concerned, micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Portugal seem to make rather little use of the support services offered. Compared to other European countries the Portuguese participation rate (20 %) is average. Furthermore, sole proprietors hardly utilise support services. The main reason for Portuguese enterprises not to use support services is that the services are not offered under appropriate conditions. In addition, the information rate of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses is significantly below average, with only 11 % of the smaller businesses considering themselves well or rather well informed on the existence and availability of such services. The awareness of support available to enterprises might be increased by personal visits as well as by direct contacting (i. e. via mailing campaigns, telephone contacts, etc.) Both types of promotion activities are, however, not applied by many service providers as they are very const-intensive.

Portuguese micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses generally express a rather little need for support services. Thereby, demand for specific training courses, financial services and professional information is higher than for advice and consultancy or the provision of one-stop shops/general information. Regarding specific business areas it is mainly the qualification of personnel, legal, and R&D matters, the smallest enterprises seem to need help with. One reason for the comparatively low need for support services might be due to a low target group orientation of the majority of support services as far as size classes and sectors are concerned.

Generally, Portuguese entrepreneurs who used support services are very satisfied with their experience. The satisfaction rate of 90 % is one of the highest in Europe, matching up only with the Irish satisfaction rate. Pricing policy and access to the service itself are two areas, where room seems to be left for improvement. Overall, utilisation of support services might benefit from better targeting services at the smallest businesses and at specific sectors, as well as from improving promotion of existing specialised services and establishing more suitable (possibly cheaper) terms and conditions for participation. When micro, small or sole proprietor's businesses in Portugal try to assess the quality of a service provider, the indicator for quality they consider most important is regular follow-ups with the customer.

APPENDIX

List of support services considered.

original name/English name	organisation	contact person and address	telephone/fax	e-mail/web-page
Business Angels		Monica Reino Avenue des Arts 12, Bte 7 1210 Bruxelles	Tel.: 32/2/2184313 Fax: 32/2/2184583	Info@eban.org www.eban.org
Business Innovation Centres (BIC)		Ben Butters Avenue de Tervuren 168, Bte 25 1150 Bruxelles	Tel.: 32/2/7611085 Fax: 32/2/7729574	Bbu@ebn.be www.ebn.be
Euro Info Centres	Euro Info Centres Network		Info-eic@fcis.cec.eu.int	http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/networks/eic/eic.html
Innovation Relay Centre (IRC)		George Barton 2, Rue Pletzer 8080 Helfent-Bertrange	Tel.: 35/2/4410122200 Fax: 35/2/4410122055	Info@ircnet.lu www.cordis.lu/irc
Linking Innovation, Finance and Technology (LIFT)	European Commission	Steve Glange 11, Rue de Bitbourg 1273 Luxembourg	Tel.: 35/2/428001 Fax: 35/2/428003	Info@lift.lu www.lift.lu
Rede Nacional dos Centros de Formalidades das Empresas/ Business Formalities Centres	Institute for the Support of Small Businesses and Investment; IAPMEI – Instituto de Apoio às Pequenas e Médias Empresas e ao Investimento	General Manager and Member of Board of IAPMEI António Souta Rua Rodrigo da Fonseca nº 73 1295-190 Lisboa	Tel.: 351/21/3836082 Fax: 351/21/3836211	asouta@mail.telepac.pt www.cfe.iapmei.pt
Programa "Ninhos de Empresas"/ Business Nests	Fundação da Juvenbtude	General Manager Maria Geraldes R. das Flores, 69 4050-265 Porto	Tel.: 351/22/3393530 Fax: 351/22/3393544	fjuventude@mail.telepac.pt http:\\www.fjuventude.pt
GrupUnave - Incubadora de Empresas da Universidade de Aveiro/ Aveiro University Incubator	Aveiro University	General Manager Cristiana Figueiredo Rua José Rabumba, 56 3810 – 125 Aveiro	Tel.: 351/234/379770 Fax: 351/234/421748	cf@grupunave.pt http://www.grupunave.pt/

original name/English name	**organisation**	**contact person and address**	**telephone/fax**	**e-mail/web-page**
Incubadora de Empresas do Instituto Pedro Nunes/ Coimbra University Incubator	IPN – Instituto Pedro Nunes	Marketing Manager Nuno Silva Rua Pedro Nunes 3030-199 Coimbra	Tel.: 351/239/700900 Fax: 351/239/700965	nsilva@ipn.pt http://www.ipn.pt
Programa Rede (4ª Edição)/ Consulting, Training and Support to Small Businesses (4th edition)	IEFP (National Vocational Training Institute)	General Manager José Manuel Sousa Rego R. Xabregas, 52 1949-003 Lisboa	Tel.: 351/21/8614510 Fax: 351/21/8614619	rede.mail@iefp.pt http://rede.iefp.pt
Incubação de empresas/ Taguspark Incubator	Taguspark	Icubator Manager Carlos Freire Taguspark – Núcleo Central, 100 2780 Oeiras	Tel.: 351/21/4226991 Fax: 351/21/4226901	cfreire@taguspark.pt www.taguspark.pt
SOGISTFIPP – Sociedade de Incubação Sectorial, SA/ Oporto Polytechnic Incubator	Oporto Polytechnic	General Manager José Freitas Rua Dr. António Bernardino de Almeida, 537 4200-072 Porto	Tel.: 351/22/8347900 Fax: 351/22/8302556	secretariado@sogist.pt www.sogist.pt