



countries (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay), as well as from Chile and Venezuela and Europe. Their activities are directed at: increasing competitiveness and the degree of internationalisation of the SMEs in the region; strengthening the institutional capacity of the intermediary bodies; and disseminating information on achievements and activities.

### Services offered by the Programme

In addition, the Programme offers the following services to the Latin American consortia: technical assistance to the SMEs; participation by Latin American and European companies in Trade Fairs and Business and Technology meetings in Europe and Latin America; market studies; network of contacts with European bodies; information on EU procedures; and an exchange of experiences, knowledge and technology.

Through these services, the benefitting consortia receive: technical support; appropriate mechanisms and good practices that ensure the effectiveness of the activities; but also the development of internationalisation and business activities with the European Union; as well ensuring the sustainability and consistency of the Programme.

These services are provided by a grouping of institutions led by EUROCHAMBRES that in addition has a Programme Coordination team responsible for operating and implementing these services.

## 7. NETWORK OF INSTITUTIONS INTERESTED IN THE PROGRAMME

In addition to the aforementioned, the AL-INVEST Programme supports Latin American bodies in the search for quality information for SMEs; for this reason the creation of a Network of Interested Institutions (RII) was included in the Programme. Forming part of this RII are Chambers of Commerce, Trade Promotion Agencies, Industrial Federations and Business Associations.

For further information on the institutions that want to form part of this RII, please consult the Programme Web Page:

[www.al-invest4.eu](http://www.al-invest4.eu)



## 8. HOW TO GET IN CONTACT WITH THE PROGRAMME?

### Coordination and Services Consortium

#### EUROCHAMBRES

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Tel: +32 (0)2 788 48 40  
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[www.al-invest4.eu](http://www.al-invest4.eu)  
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### Beneficiary Consortia

#### CAMC

#### EUROCENTRO NAFIN MÉXICO

Insurgentes Sur 1971 Local 340  
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C.P. 01020 México, D.F.  
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[www.al-invest4.eu/camc](http://www.al-invest4.eu/camc)  
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#### RA

#### CAINCO

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#### MCV

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# AL-INVEST IV 2009-2012

## Facilitating the internationalisation of Latin American SMEs



## 1. WHAT IS THE “AL-INVEST IV” PROGRAMME?

The **AL-INVEST** Programme is one of the most important Regional Economic Cooperation Programmes of the European Commission in Latin America.

The Programme is based on the shared values and common strategic interests that exist between the European Union and Latin America. But it also exists because the European Union is an important political, economic, commercial and financial partner for Latin America.

The **AL-INVEST** Programme forms part of the development Policy of the European Union, established under the European Consensus on Development, and is based on the objectives of: poverty reduction; sustainable economic and social development; and the progressive and harmonious integration of developing countries into the world economy.

**AL-INVEST** is a pioneering Programme of the European Commission that began its activities in 1994, with a pilot phase, at the time in which market liberalisation policies were beginning to facilitate international trade expansion. So far there have been three phases: Phase I (1995-1999), Phase II (2000-2004), and Phase III (2004-2008).

In January 2009 phase IV of this Programme began.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The general aim of phase IV of the **AL-INVEST** programme is to contribute to the social cohesion, through support to the strengthening and internationalisation of Latin American Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs), and the exchange of innovations, knowledge and economic relations with their European counterpart companies.

More specifically, this Programme wants to contribute to Latin American SMEs becoming the local development engine, taking advantage of: globalisation opportunities; regional integration; commercial agreements; and business cooperation with Europe.

## 3. DURATION AND FINANCE

The **AL-INVEST IV** Programme will last four years (2009-2012). The total investment of the Programme will amount to €62 million, of which €50 million will be financed by the European Commission. This EU finance will come from a single grant (€40 million) and a bidding process for services (€10 million).

## 4. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF PHASE IV

Phase IV of the Programme will be carried out in accordance with the following priorities: internationalisation of relations-local development; regional integration; European orientation; representation of sectors and territories; and synergies with other cooperation programmes.

Phase IV of the Programme will give support to SMEs, promoting the creation of employment and sustainable wealth generation.

It will also strengthen the processes: of creating partnerships; regional integration; and development policies.

An integrated focus will be adopted in each and every one of the Programme components.

Emphasis will be placed on demand and on programme objectives through the production of annual work plans.

Knowledge and technology transfer will be encouraged.

Emphasis will be placed on qualitative aspects and in the search for new instruments and tools for the internationalisation of companies.

Account will be taken of the political context of the relationships between the European Union and Latin America; there will be room for flexibility that allows the Programme to adapt to demand and to the changes and needs of the beneficiaries.

## 5. BENEFITS THAT THE PROGRAMME SUPPORTS FOR SMEs

Since its beginning, the **AL-INVEST** Programme has organized 140,000 individualized initial contact meetings that have generated more than €500,000 million in new commercial agreements.

In addition, thanks to the **AL-INVEST** Programme, the Latin American SMEs have strengthened their capacity for internationalisation and for negotiation.

During phase IV, the **AL-INVEST** Programme will support the following benefits for Latin American SMEs:

- Commercial development thanks to the organisation of business meetings between the European Union and Latin America so that: the SMEs meet each other; get to know each other; and do business with each other.
- Support for the internationalisation of Latin American SMEs.
- Collaboration with intermediary representatives of the SMEs.
- The facility of commercial exchanges between Latin American and European SMEs.
- Strengthening of the capacity of business associations.
- Common business culture between Latin America and the European Union.

## 6. HOW DOES THE PROGRAMME WORK?

The execution of the Programme activities is the responsibility of the following three Latin American consortia: the Central American, Mexican and Cuban Consortium (CAMC); the Andean Region Consortium (RA); and the Mercosur, Chile and Venezuela consortium (MCV). These three consortia will also receive the support of horizontal services provided by the Coordination and Services Consortium.

### Execution of activities

#### CAMC Consortium

The Central American, Mexican and Cuban consortium is led by Nacional Financiera de México (NAFIN) and is made up of partners from Mexico, Central America and Cuba, in addition to European partners. Their activities cover all possible situations in which the SMEs may find themselves. On the one hand a diagnosis of the situation is carried out; and on the other hand there are: business familiarisation missions; business conferences; special agendas; promotion of innovation; technical training; and institutional strengthening.

#### RA Consortium

The Andean Region consortium is led by the Industry, Commerce, Services and Tourism Chamber of Santa Cruz de Bolivia (CAINCO) and this is made up by partners from institutions in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru as well as including European partners.

Through the “Observatorio Andino” (Andean Observatory): the internationalisation levels of Andean SMEs are strengthened; a proper business climate is promoted; and commercial interchanges between the European Union and the Andean Region are analysed.

Thanks to the **AL-INVEST** Programme, business centres are created which offer the companies the opportunities for an exchange of information and knowledge, as well as the possibility of establishing business links and the possibility of joint activities to benefit the businesses belonging to the centre.

#### MCV Consortium

The Mercosur, Chile and Venezuela consortium is led by the Brazilian National Confederation of Industries (CNI) and is made up of partners coming from institutions in the four Mercosur