

The **Go-Online** Initiative

eBusiness Intelligence for Greek SMEs



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The Go-Online Initiative: eBusiness Intelligence for Greek SMEs

1. What is the Go-Online Programme

Go-Online is an action line of the Operational Programmes **Information Society** and **Competitiveness** funded by the 3rd European Union Support Framework, for the period 2000-2005. Its main objective is to encourage the adoption of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) by Greek **SMEs** and make them aware of the benefits and prospects that have arise in the new economy.

There are two types of support offered to the participating SMEs: **financial** and **educational**.

a. Financial Support

Financial Support includes partially funding the participant **SMEs** for obtaining IC infrastructure and Internet services. Features of the packages funded are:

- purchase of the basic HW
- Internet connection for 2 years
- technical support for 3 years
- development of a commercial website
- maintenance and virtual hosting over a period of 2 years

b. Training Support

The Training Support of **Go-Online** aims to acquaint 50.000 Greek SMEs with the new IC technologies and e-business practices. It has being carried out by 17 Consortia throughout Greece consisting of academic and technological institutions, industry and Chambers of commerce, private companies etc., based in the 13 regions of the country. Training Support includes:

- one central and 16 regional call centres
- 3 x 7-hour visits by a trained e-business consultant
- provision of informational and multimedia educational material
- online support through a **web portal**

c. Target Groups

Eligible to participate to the **Go-Online** programme are all Greek SMEs with up to ten employees apart from joint stock companies (S.A.'s) and self-employed professionals.

For the purposes of the programme, enterprises are classified according to the following stages:

1. enterprises with no Internet connection
2. Internet-ready enterprises
3. enterprises that have a web site and are capable of dealing electronically with customers and/or suppliers (B2C and B2B)

It is worth mentioning that during the evaluation process of the SME's applications, a number of criteria are taken into consideration, such as:

- number of employees and company's annual turnover
- geographical location (remote areas are in favour)
- firm's business sector and degree of susceptibility to e-commerce practices

Until now, approximately 40.000 SMEs have been approved to participate to Go-Online, whereas 14.265 of them have received formal training by 1.400 specialised e-business consultants. Since we are talking about an ongoing process these numbers increase daily.

2. Go-Online.gr: The one-stop e-business portal for Greek SMEs

Go-online.gr, the official web portal of the Go-Online Programme, has been developed in order to actively contribute to the further familiarization of Greek **SMEs** with the potentials offered by the new IC technologies within the new economy. The portal currently counts more than 14.000 registered users and an average of 40.000 visitors per month!

a. Go-Online Portal Elements

- **Training:** familiarizing Greek vSMEs with the use of new technologies in their business and the integration of e-business practices and activities
- **Awareness:** providing an online information channel with continuous update on Internet technologies and e-business news from Greece and from all over the world
- **Participation:** setting up an online community of Greek SMEs and trainers supported by communication and collaboration tools
- **Support:** providing additional Support services to the members of the Go-Online portal community (HelpDesk, Ask an Expert, Digital Library, FAQ etc.)

Training

- **E-learning courses** available online:
- **52** e-learning courses addressing **4** thematic areas
- **30** hours of online training
- **825** html pages, containing over **420** multimedia presentations in Flash

- More than **115** self-assessment questions for the candidate trainers and **260** questions for the trainees
- **Electronic brochures:** Development of **11 electronic brochures** about specific e-business topics, show-casing example applications of e-business practices

Awareness

- Continuous **news update** presenting current developments regarding the New Economy and e-business around Greece and the world
- More than **2.000** e-business news
- Detailed **articles**, **“How-To” Guides**, and special presentations
- Over **110** e-business articles and good practice guides
- **Directory of more than 900 Useful Links** to resources in Greece and around the world

Participation

- Registration in the **online community** of Go-Online
- Access to services exclusively available to registered members (chat, discussion forum)
- Automatic e-mail update about new additions in the portal
- Bi-monthly **Newsletter** informing registered members about “what’s going on”
- Go-Online news, new IC technologies, e-business practices, Information Society news.
- Getting access to the **regional communities** of Go-Online Trainers

Support

- Information about the **central Help Desk service** of Go-Online and the **regional Help Desks**
- **Online submission of questions** to e-business experts, i.e. legal issues and/or e-business activities
- **Digital Library**
- Surveys, studies, publications and other useful material
- **Online directory** of IC technology providers in every region
- **FAQ** (Frequently Asked Questions) answered by e-business experts

b. Training Material

Electronic Brochures

The **Electronic brochures**, combined with the overall training material of go-online.gr, aim to provide Greek SMEs as well as the business consultants with a short and comprehensive overview of e-business show cases. The 11 brochure titles are:

e-Business Plan

Structure and content of a successful e-business plan.

Tourism Sector and the Internet

Benefits of utilizing the Internet and ICT in the Tourism sector, and how to make a successful website.

The Wireless Enterprise

Wireless connectivity in modern business ventures. Ways of utilizing wireless LANs in specific industries within the country.

eCatalogue: Benefits and Structure

Comparing the benefits of an eCatalogue and a printed list of products. Guidelines to create a user-friendly eCatalogue, in order to achieve more sales.

Participating in B2B e-marketplaces

Structure and services of B2B e-marketplaces, benefits of participation, success factors, the three basic B2B business models.

Effective ways to advertise your e-shop

Web marketing benefits, models of digital advertising and ways to promote your e-shop through the Internet.

The Benefits of Making Business Online, for both the Enterprise and its Clients

E-Business benefits, especially by adopting new ways of making business.

Product websites

Guidelines towards successful product websites. Branding and promotion techniques for SMEs.

E-Commerce - Everything you need to know

Informative brochure about e-commerce and the Greek SMEs, with regards to the multiple advantages arising from the adoption of e-business practices.

STATIR Corporation - Case Study

Case study of STATIR, that examines how this organic food corporation has profited by informing its partners online about new products, and how it has created a wide client base by applying targeted marketing strategies.

Irish Chocolate - Case Study

How the famous Irish Chocolate company hit it big by developing a B2B and B2C website, selling its products online throughout the world.

E-Business & ICT Articles

Go-online.gr provides the business community with detailed SME-specific articles, “How-To” Guides and special thematic presentations, that cover a wide range of subjects concerning e-business and the ICTs, suggest best practices in the use of new technologies and familiarize Greek SMEs with the latest developments. The areas covered include: e-Business & Management Practices, New IC Technologies for SMES, Online Presence/Useful Tools, e-Commerce, Marketing & Advertising, Online Security & Protection, Online Transactions, Connectivity/Telecommunications, Software & Hardware, Public Sector/Online Services, European Issues, Legal Issues/eBusiness Legislation and Industry-specific Surveys.

There are currently more than 110 special articles available. The latest titles feature:

- Tourism & ICT: Online presence and software solutions
- Cafés and Restaurants: eBusiness solutions
- Web Services taxation
- E-Business Report 2003 on 15 EU business sectors
- European Software Patents: Large vs Small Enterprises
- Voice over IP: Cost-effective telephony for your business
- Accounting solutions: Top-notch tools for efficient financial management
- Rich media: The use of multimedia in modern online advertising
- Creative ways to promote your website
- B2B Special: The Textile and Leather Industry e-marketplaces
- eCatalogs: A great tool for extensive product sales
- Mobile Banking: Latest developments in Greece
- E-Waste Recycling: Ecological management of electronic waste

c. Value-added Services

Promotion of Information Technology service/product providers

Information Technology (IT) service/product providers can promote themselves through the Go-Online portal reaching a market of approximately 40.000 Greek SMEs. This is the estimated number of SMEs that have already been approved to participate in the Go-Online programme.

Through a click-and-find interactive map, the interested parties can find an IT service/product provider in any part of Greece (search results are subject to availability). The online mechanism is very easy-to-use and more than 600 providers have been registered so far. All they did was to fill in and submit electronically the online form at no cost.

Regions

The **Regions** feature provides each SME looking for consulting or/and technical support in ICT and e-business practices, whether participating in the Program or not, with the opportunity to acquire partners through a wide community of experienced consultants.

The utilization of this service by both Consultants and SMEs will contribute towards the establishment of professional contacts and partnership networks.

d. Content in English

The English pages of **go-online.gr** provide a short review of the Programme, as well as the web portal. All interested foreign parties can thus get informed and contact the Editorial, PR and Technical Teams or the Implementing Authority of the Programme.

The English site area is structured as follows:

- **Who We Are:** Implementing authorities
- **What We Do:** The Programme, Target Groups, Financial Support, Training Support
- **About Go-Online.gr:** A short description of the portal's content as well as its statistics
- **Press Room:** Press Releases, Marketing Material (incl. the Go-Online Brochure, extensive Presentations in English about the portal's e-Business Training and Awareness Support initiatives) and finally PR Contacts.

Video Presentation

A Video Presentation of the Go-Online Programme was recently added in the Press Room site area, featuring a short documentary that provides an introduction to the programme, as well as interviews with Greek SME entrepreneurs, explaining how Go-Online and Training Support changed the way they work and do business.

- **Contacts**