



Press Release

Business France publishes improved operating results across the board

Paris, March 2, 2017 – Business France has continued to build upon its success for the second successive year following its creation in January 2015, according to improved operating results across the board published Thursday, as greater synergies between supporting French exporters and attracting foreign investment to France start to pay off.

The number of SMEs and mid-size companies benefiting from Business France's export services increased from 9,755 in 2015 to **9,993 in 2016**, including 5,682 through collective events (France Pavilions at international trade fairs, business meetings, etc.) and 3,429 receiving customized support.

462 collective events were organized abroad as part of the France Export Program, including **152 France Pavilions**.

Criteria for providing customized support and follow-up to growth SMEs and mid-size companies, in partnership with France's public investment bank Bpifrance, showed that **1,101 businesses** had initiated their international action plan by the end of 2016, well ahead of an initial target of 1,000 by the end of 2017.

Business France's strategy to make the VIE International Internship Program a leading bespoke solution in foreign countries for businesses and young professionals alike can be seen by the surge in interns taking part in the program, rising from 9,006 in 2015 to **9,572 by the end of 2016** in 134 countries.

One business in two receiving support from Business France in 2016 struck at least one trading agreement, while three in four businesses found new potential trading partners.

Moreover, **643 foreign investment decisions receiving support from Business France** and its regional development partners were successfully completed during the year, up from 522 in 2015, while the total figures for foreign investment projects and jobs generated in France will be published in late March 2017.

No fewer than 1,553 foreign investment projects were identified and followed up in 2016, up from 1,333 in 2015, while Business France teams organized around a thousand site visits for foreign investors.

Business France currently operates in **73 different countries**, having doubled its presence throughout the world to attract foreign investors, opening new branches in Kuwait and Ethiopia in 2016, along with two offices in Iran and Nigeria.

As France's leading player in the international development of the French economy, Business France signed or renewed a number of public and private partnerships in 2016, which included agreements with France's public investment bank Bpifrance, French Chambers of Commerce and Industry both within France and internationally, France's foreign trade advisors (CCEFs), Expertise France, Atout France, the French Trademark and Patent Office (INPI), the French Trade Entrepreneurs Federation (OSCI), the French Employer Federation MEDEF International, the French Development Agency (AFD), Euler Hermes, Société Générale and Crédit Agricole.

Business France also looked to strengthen its regional partnerships in 2016 by signing a cooperation agreement in September with France's regions, enabling them to work more closely with the agency's various business lines and global network.

"These excellent results for 2016 are an endorsement of how Business France has been set up to operate. After an excellent start in 2015, we have now built upon our early success. For this, we can thank the unstinting commitment, expertise and capabilities of our 1,500 personnel, who hail from 65 different countries and together provide active support to help businesses succeed, whether this be in export markets or by investing in France. The coming year will see an even greater impact, as we work increasingly closely with public- and private-sector partners, especially in France's regions," said Muriel Pénicaud, CEO of Business France and Ambassador for International Investment.

Business France is the national agency supporting the international development of the French economy, responsible for fostering export growth by French businesses, as well as promoting and facilitating international investment in France.

It promotes France's companies, business image and nationwide attractiveness as an investment location, and also runs the VIE international internship program.

Founded on January 1, 2015 through a merger between UBIFRANCE and the Invest in France Agency, Business France has 1,500 personnel, both in France and in 70 countries throughout the world, who work with a network of public- and private-sector partners.

For further information, please visit: www.businessfrance.fr

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