COUNTRY FICHE - SPAIN

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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 – SPAIN

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 Spain the Austrian Institute for Small Business Research (IfGH) co-operated with Instituto Vasco de Estudios e Investigación (IKEI) in San Sebastian.

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 Spain 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 Spain 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 market for support services in Spain has undergone a rapid expansion and development during the last few years, both in quantitative as well as in qualitative terms. As a consequence of this development policy makers as well as entrepreneurs find it difficult to identify well established, well proven services aiming at promoting and supporting the smallest businesses. 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 Spain, 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 provided, 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:

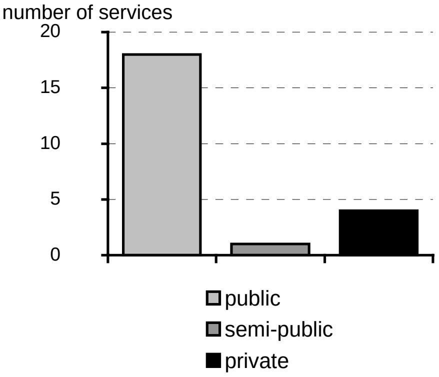
- The service originates in a public policy initiative and the provider of the service is public or, if private, is acting in line with agreed public policies (provider based criteria).
- The service is targeted at micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses either by its explicit intention or by its 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 Spain 23 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 Spain. Particularly, services that mainly offer financial support, such as loans, guarantees, or all kinds of subsidies as well as tax relief for small businesses are excluded from the analysis. In Spain, this kind of financial support is mostly provided by public service suppliers. Services available 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.

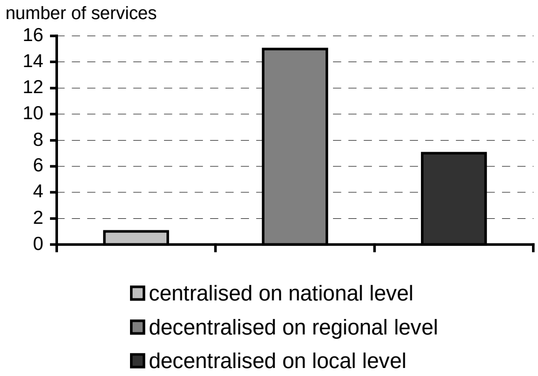
2.1 ORGANISATION OF SUPPORT SERVICES IDENTIFIED

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, the support services in Spain are mostly offered by public authorities. Only a small number of service providers has a private or semi-public legal status. The semi-public organisations are in general close co-operations between chambers of commerce, national authorities and regional employers' associations, respectively. Those services are normally implemented in a decentralised way. The network of the Spanish local chambers involved in the support services permits the direct contact towards the enterprises through 85 local chambers, disseminated all over Spain. A very good example of these network activities is the 'one-stop shop for Business' ('Ventanilla Única Empresarial'), a co-operation between public administration departments and chambers of commerce. The aim of this co-operation is to simplify the administrative environment which is surrounding business start-ups and to foster and promote the entrepreneurial spirit.

In Spain, public actors offering support services to enterprises constitute of both, national and regional institutions, whereby regional providers clearly outweigh national ones (see Graph 2). Nearly all Spanish regional authorities carry out several initiatives in the field of external business support, however, these initiatives might be rather different from one another and only difficult to summarise under the heading of a so called general 'Spanish' supply of support services.

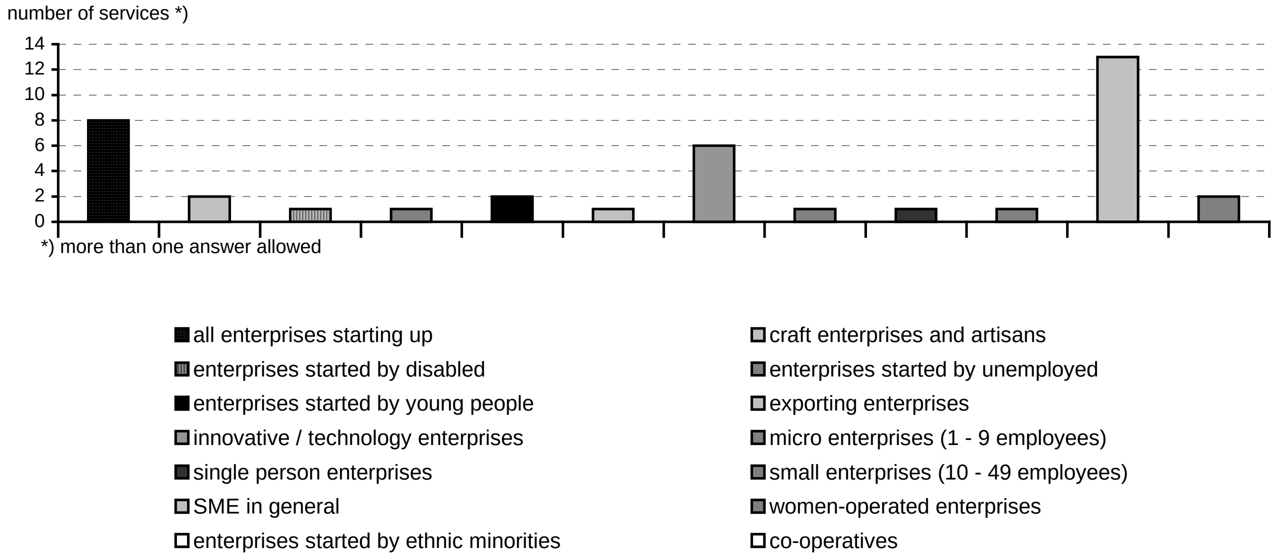
Private market operators are not particularly involved in the design of business support in Spain. Although, they are often subcontracted by public authorities to assist the smallest businesses in several activities (e. g. tutorials, training activities, etc.).

Graph 2 shows that most of the support services available in Spain are decentrally organised, either at regional or at local level. This decentralisation, on the one hand, leads back to the independent acting of regional administrations. On the other hand, services should be easily accessible for small enterprises which can only be ensured by a decentralised organisation. Centralised services are often accessible by free internet, telephone or fax services. In the following, when it is generally dealt with the 'Spanish' supply the decentralised organisation should be kept in mind - leading to the fact that services may strongly differ from one another (and possibly from the general picture drawn in this report) depending on the respective regions.

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 Spain, 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



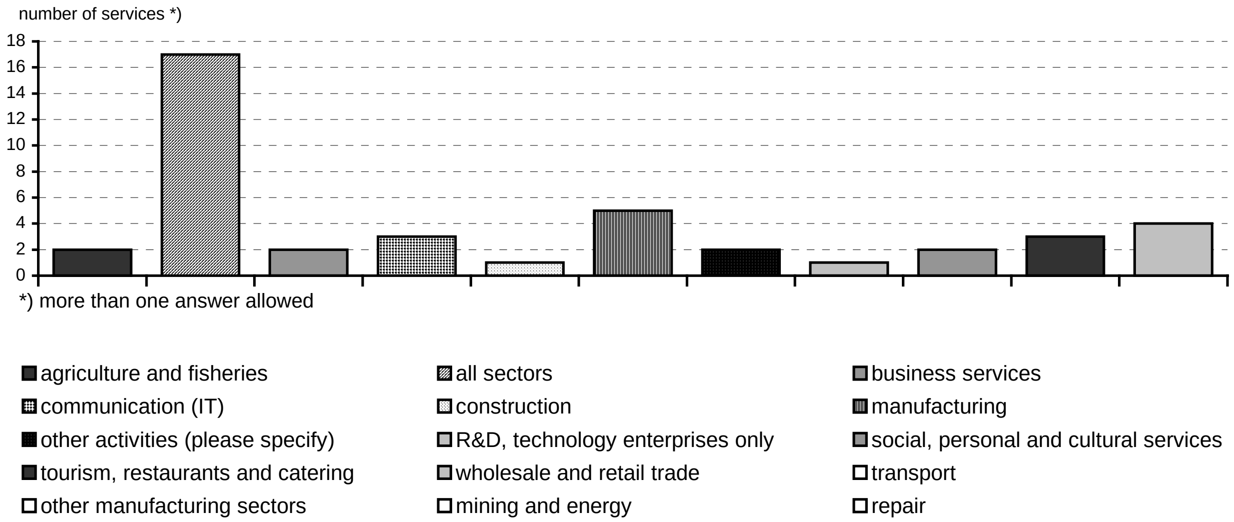
Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

Graph 3 shows that the majority of the services available in Spain concentrate on small and medium sized enterprises in general. These services are mainly provided by public authorities, aiming to provide a widespread support for every group of small and medium sized companies. This is also why services mostly apply to all sectors of the economy (see also Graph 4). Start-ups and innovative or technology-based enterprises receive particular attention in Spanish business support policy.

Some of the regional administrations try to focus their services on the specific needs of their region. This approach leads to the large variety of target groups (as can be seen from Graph 3), some of them only covered in single regions of Spain. One of the examples of such a region-oriented support is the 'Plan PIMEGA', carried out by the Galician Institute for Economic Promotion ('IGAPE'). The aim of the service is to support small businesses in Galicia in order to foster continuos improvement through the adoption of several business management schemes. Special target groups are craft enterprises and artisans, exporting enterprises and innovative or technology oriented companies in Galicia, only.

As mentioned above, most of the services provided to micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Spain are targeted at all sectors. A good example of dedicating support services to several sectors is the 'LANZA Programme' ('Programa Lanza') in Galicia. This programme is, amongst others, designed for enterprises from the agriculture and fishing sector, the wholesale and retail trade and tourism and crafts, and aims at fostering the entrepreneurial activity, especially among young people.

Graph 4: Sectors addressed by services identified

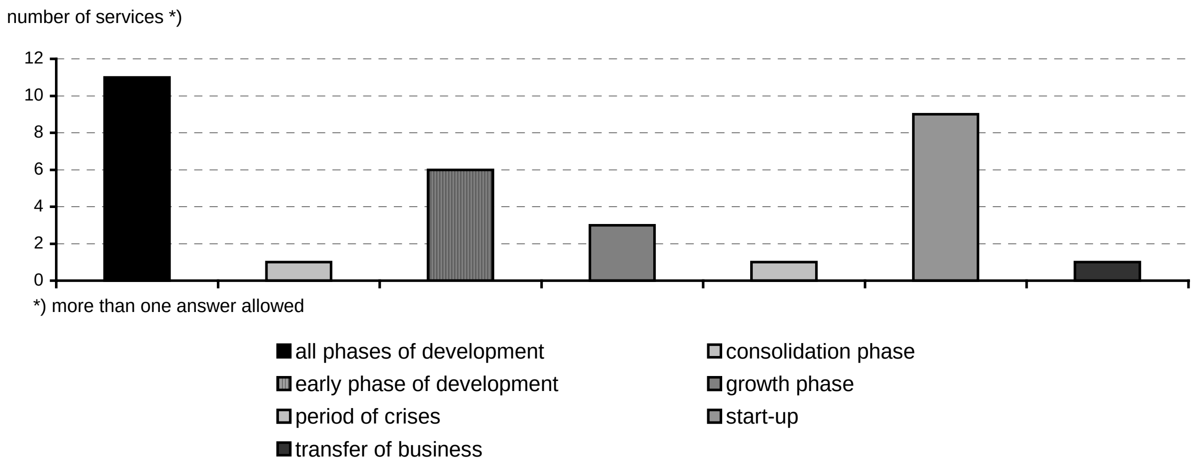


Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

The observed non-specialisation of the services offered in Spain is also remarkable when looking at the enterprise phase of development which the services address (see Graph 5). A large number of external support is targeted at all phases of the life cycle of an enterprise, followed by services specially tailored to start-ups. Special attention is also given to the early phase of development. The focus of business support on the first years of the existence of a company is explained by the high failure rate observed in Spain in earlier years. With support measures dedicated to those early years support policy tries to combat these failure rates.

Service providers in Spain seems to offer specific support for every phase of the life cycle of an enterprise, including the period of crisis and the transfer of businesses - although for certain phases only one provider has been identified explicitly targeting at (e. g. for the transfer phase or the period of crisis).

Graph 5: Enterprise phase of development targeted by services identified

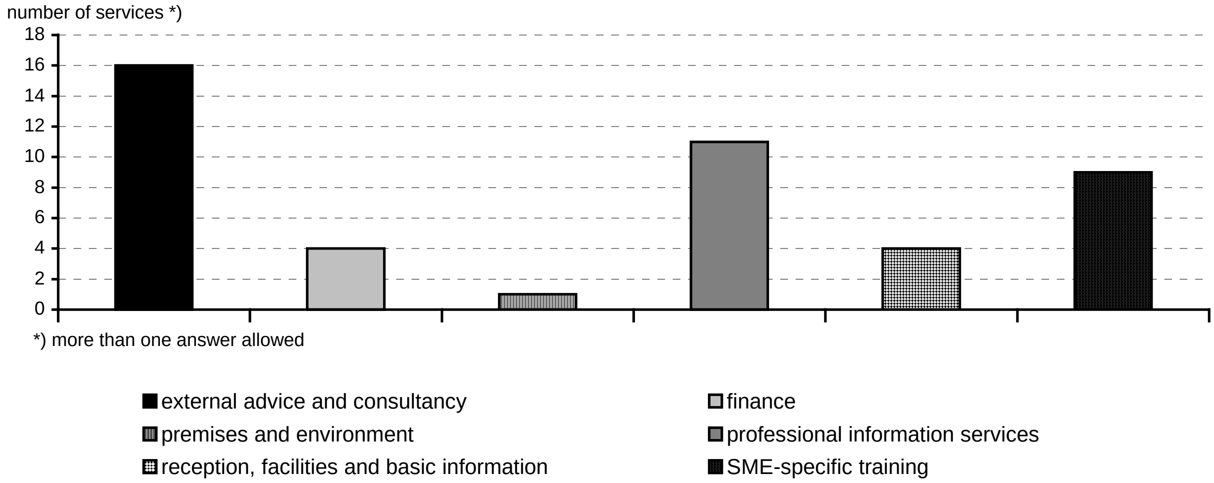


Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

2.3 TYPES OF SUPPORT SERVICES IDENTIFIED

When analysing the types of support services offered to micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Spain, 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



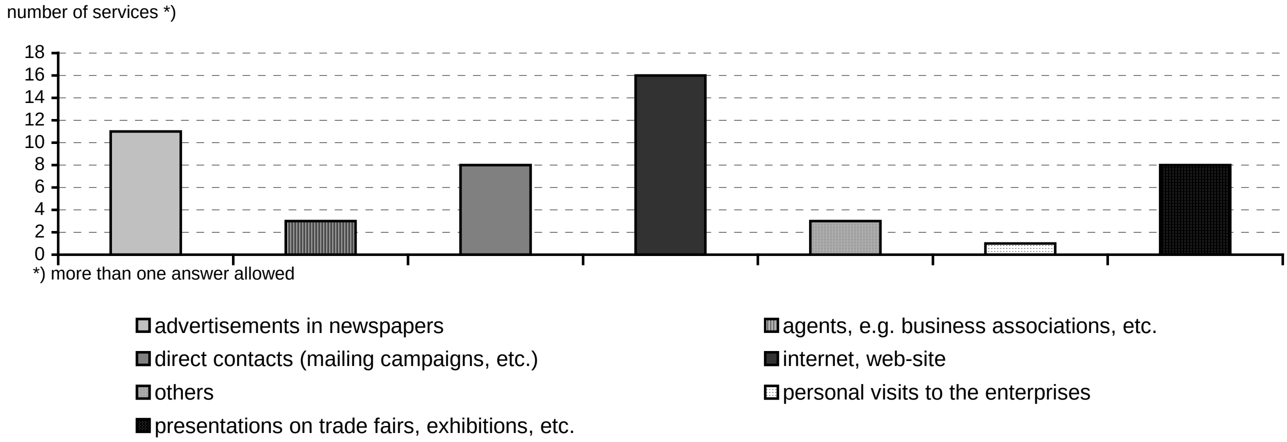
Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

The majority of services available in Spain offer external advice and consultancy for small companies. Thereby, business planning and strategy is often stressed within this area of support. Also access to professional information services is provided by a considerable number of services in Spain. These services are often utilised in the start up and early development phase in order to better establish the newly founded company in the market.

Support services offered in Spain also often concentrate on SME-specific training, i. e. SME-management. The service 'Excellence in Business Management' ('Excelencia en la Gestión Empresarial'), for example, put into life by the co-operation between the chambers of Castille-Leon, the Business Associations of Castille-Leon and the Quality Management Club, has the aim to improve the management level of firms from Castille-Leon and as a consequence to increase their competitiveness. The approach of this service is to analyse new management systems in a simple and practical way in order to enable enterprises to develop and implement their improvement plans and/or to develop their Quality Systems with the aim to be certificated.

2.4 PROMOTION OF SUPPORT SERVICES IDENTIFIED

Graph 7: Promotion of services identified

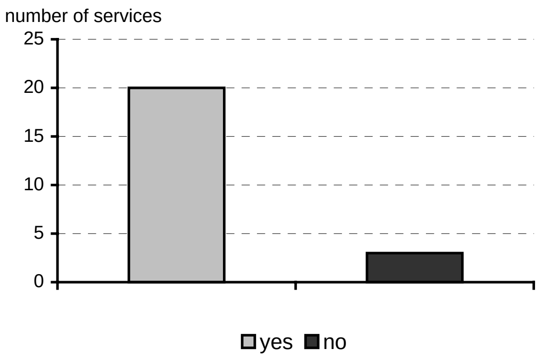


Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

As Graph 7 shows, the most important communication channel used by service providers in Spain 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 mean to get the required information. The traditional way of placing advertisements in newspapers is also widely used for communicational and promotional purposes, as it is common not only in Spain but in all of the Mediterranean countries except France. Direct contacts like mailing campaigns are also used to promote the services available and to give a short overview on how the service in question operates and how the entrepreneur can benefit from them.

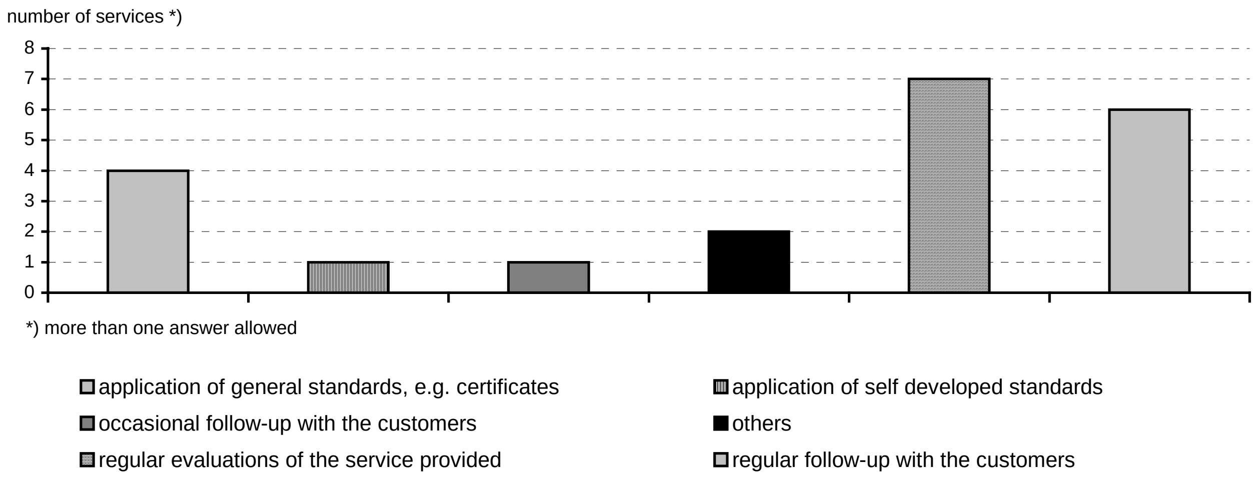
2.5 QUALITY AND PRICES OF SUPPORT SERVICES IDENTIFIED

Graph 8: Existence of quality assurance mechanisms



Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

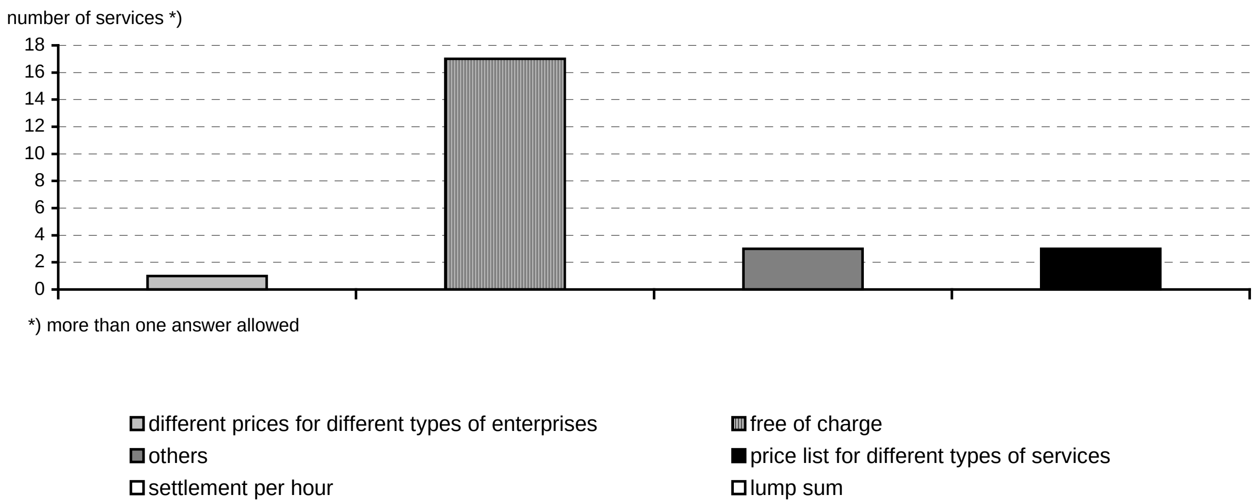
Graph 9: Types of quality assurance mechanisms



Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

As Graph 8 shows, nearly all support services existing in Spain and targeted at micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses apply some kind of quality assurance mechanism. The most common mechanisms are regular evaluations of the service in question and regular follow-ups with the customers, respectively (see Graph 9). The application of general standards is also quite usual - in most of the cases these standards are some of the ISO certificates. Due to the fact that the quality mechanism applied are mostly of a personalised character, generally reliable evaluation results of the services are hardly available.

Graph 10: Determination of prices of services identified



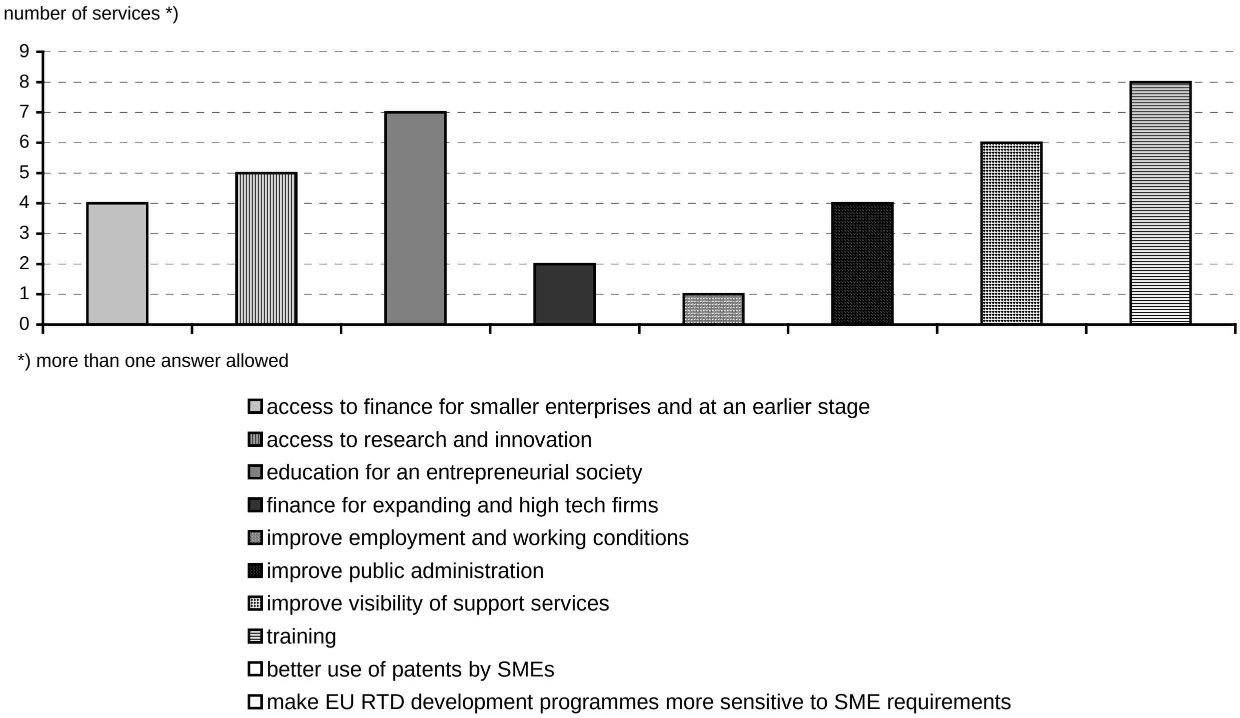
Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

As the service providers are largely public institutions, the support services are mostly funded and subsidised by public authorities. Thus, most of the existing support services do not take any fees for their activities, as Graph 10 demonstrates. Those service providers setting prices for their services generally are private training institutions subsidised by public authorities or some kind of associations, such as employers associations and several chambers of commerce.

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 Spain.

Graph 11: Action plan objectives addressed by services identified



Source: IfGH/ENSR Support Services Database, 2001

Training in general and the education for an entrepreneurial society are the two topics which are highly pursued by existing support services in Spain. Also the access to research and innovation for the small businesses plays an important role, whereas the improvement of employment and working conditions seems to be less important in the Spanish business support policy.

The strong emphasis of the education for an entrepreneurial society are connected with the comparatively high unemployment rates in Spain during the last decade. In order to increase the employment rate, programmes and measures were developed to help unemployed people to become self-employed.

3. DEMAND FOR SUPPORT SERVICES

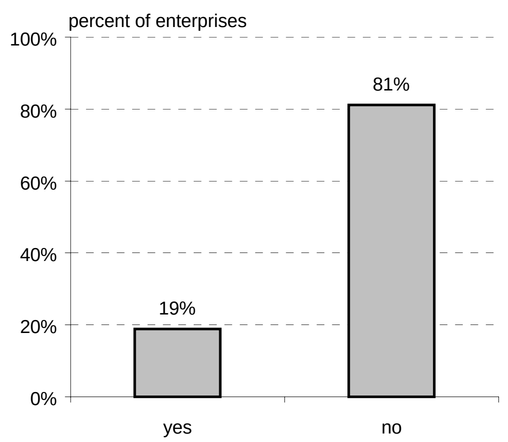
The purpose of this section of the report is to systematically analyse the demand side of the market for support services targeted at *micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses* in Spain, by examining the participation of enterprises in support services, their awareness of the availability of support 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 Spain, but, due to respective data weighting, relate to the whole population of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Spain (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

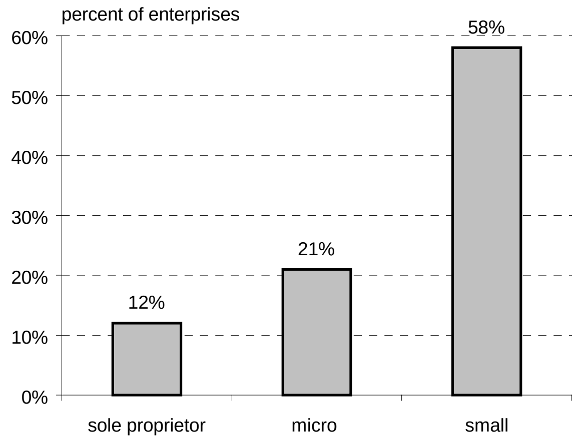
To improve the access of small enterprises to top-class business support is one of the major policy objectives of the European Commission expressed in various Commission documents, such as the *Action Plan to Promote Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness* (European Commission, 1999a) and the *Feira European Charter for Small Enterprises* (European Commission, 2000a), for example. 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. A lot of efforts have been undertaken in Spain as to this regard, already. Although the market for support services is characterised by a considerable increase of the supply (see section 2), micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Spain still seem to make rather little use of the services offered.

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

LINKMERGEFORMATLINKMERGEFORMATAs can be seen from Graph 12, the participation rate (i. e. the share of enterprises having made use of support services during the last five years) amongst Spanish micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses is rather low. Less than one fifth of the enterprises (19 %) took advantage of a support scheme within the last five years.

When referring to the various size classes considerable differences concerning the participation rate can be noted. Whereas more than every second small enterprise (10 to 49 employees) has made use of support services, only about 12 % of the sole proprietors have utilised any kind of support service during the last five years. This shows – as in most other European countries - a decreasing access to support services with decreasing size of businesses (see Graph 13).

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 Spanish participation rate lies in the midfield. In the Netherlands, Ireland and Denmark participation rates are above average, while in Sweden, Greece and Norway relatively less micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses have utilised any support service within the last five years.

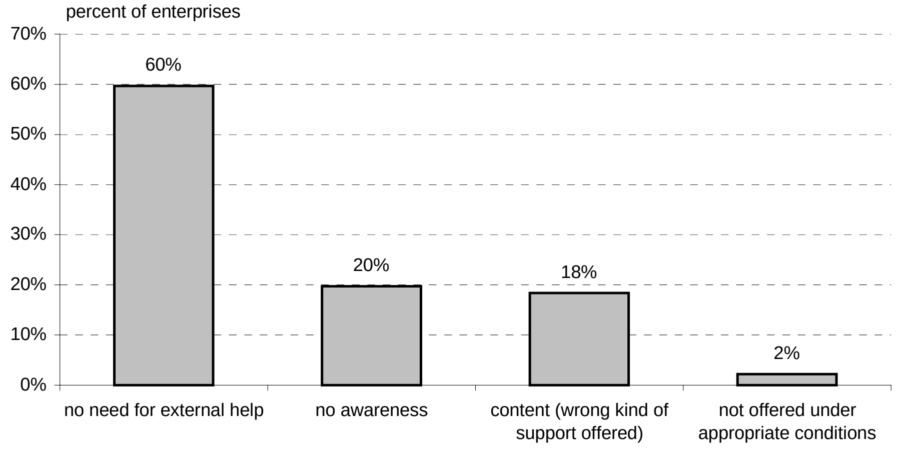
Table 1: Participation rate of enterprises, by country

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 make use of support service offered in their respective country. However, 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 Spanish micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses for non-utilisation of support services are illustrated in Graph 14.

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

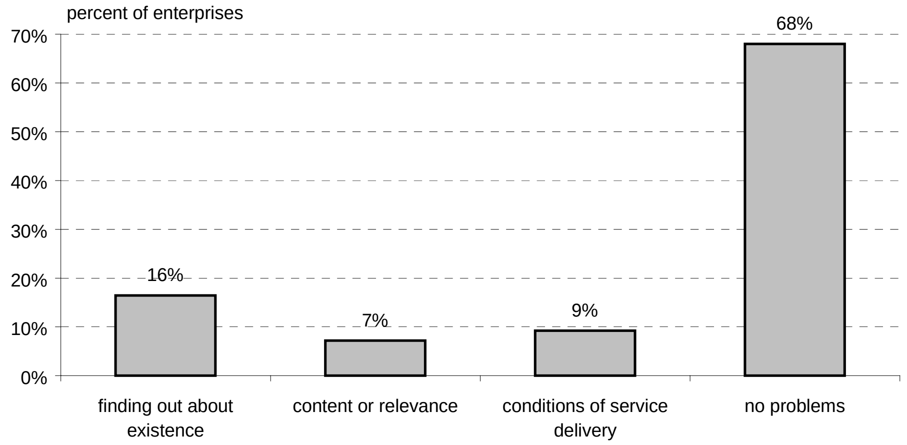


*) only enterprises that have not made use of support services within the last five years
Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

The main reason for the majority of Spanish enterprises not making use of support services is that they do not see any need for external help. This is especially true for sole proprietors (of which even 68 % indicate this as the motive for not taking advantage of support services). The second strongest reason for non-utilisation is that enterprises (in particularly small companies) often lack information on the existence and availability of support services even where they would basically have a need for external support. About one fifth of the companies indicates 'wrong kind of support offered' as the reason for not participating, whereby it is only sole proprietors and micro businesses (1 to 9 employees) who mention this as an issue.

It may be concluded that the low participation rate amongst Spanish enterprises might be successfully raised by improving the promotion of support services and by increasing the awareness on the merits support services can provide. Furthermore, for support services especially targeted at sole proprietors and micro-enterprises it would be useful to align the offered contents with the needs of the target group as there seems to be some mismatch as to this regard.

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

Once participating in support services more than two thirds of the Spanish companies do not seem to experience any problems. Also the share of enterprises claiming that finding out about the existence of the respective service is relatively small when compared to other European countries. This might be due to the wide range of communication channels used to promote the services in Spain (see section 2.4). However, as far as companies in the phase of crisis are concerned, getting information about adequate support services constitutes an important factor. Those companies require urgent solutions that can be delivered only by external support which is - due to the limited offer (see Graph 5) - rather hard to find. Similar holds true for enterprises in the transfer phase. Here, however, the main problem seems to lie in the content of the offered services, i. e. that the existing types of services generally do not offer the kind of support enterprises in the transfer phase need.

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 Spain: 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 Spain 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*.

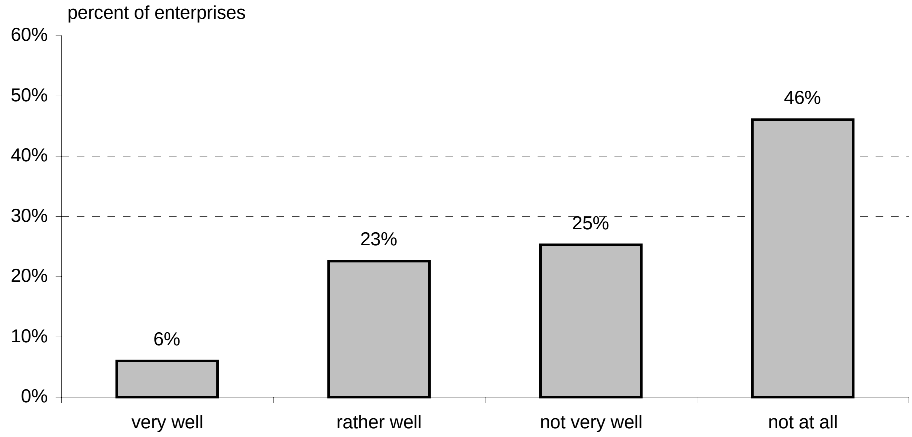
The problems related to the *content of support services* are treated by comparing the supply side of the market for support services (see section 2) to the needs of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses. Attempts are made to detect prevailing mismatches between enterprises' need for external help and what is actually available on the market for support services. This is done 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 done 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 issue 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 14, 20 % of the smallest enterprises in Spain have not yet used any support service as they are not aware of the existence of any support for their enterprise. 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.

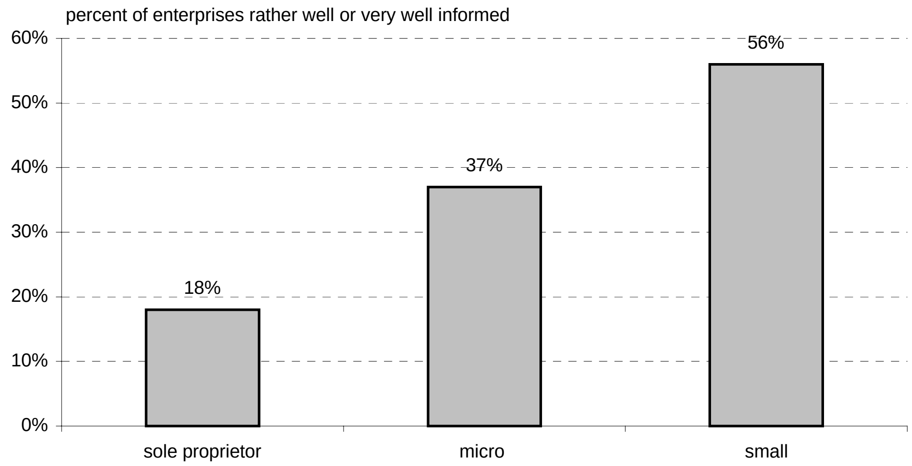
Graph 16: Information rate of enterprises with respect to support services



Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

Spanish micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses seem to be rather poorly informed on the existence and availability of support services: Only 6 % of the enterprises indicate to be 'very well' informed, and further 23 % state to be 'rather well' informed. In total, more than 70 % of enterprises lack information on support services.

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



Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

In general, the awareness level of enterprises on the existence and availability of support services decreases with declining enterprise size whereby the differences are considerable. Whereas more than half of the companies with 10 to 49 employees state to be sufficiently informed, less than one fifth of the sole proprietors indicates to be well or at least rather well 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 Spanish enterprises is around average. Information rates clearly above average are found in Belgium and the Netherlands, while in France, Portugal and Greece, 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 is far below the EU average.

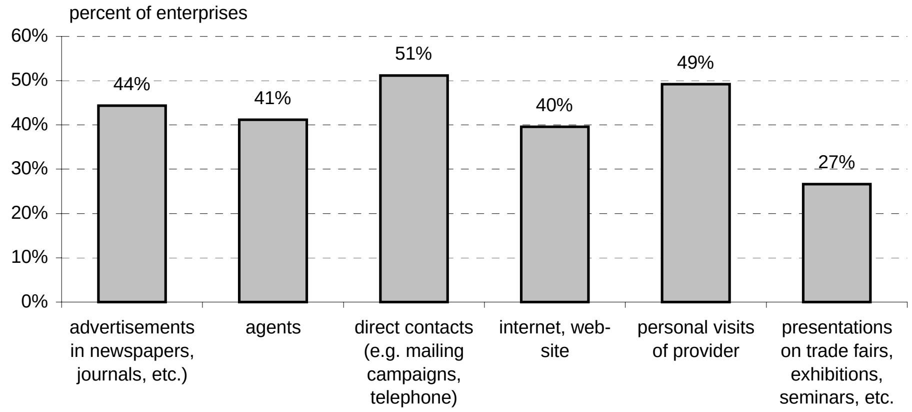
Table 2: Information rate of enterprises with respect to support services, by country

country		information rate*)
Belgium		45 %
Netherlands		43 %
Austria	*significantly*	36 %
Sweden	*above average*	36 %
Finland		34 %
Italy		31 %
Denmark		30 %
Spain		**29 %**
Norway	*on average*	27 %
Ireland		25 %
EU (15) and Norway		***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 a lack of information respectively awareness side of enterprises in the European Union Member States and Norway may be related to the effectiveness of promotional activities applied by support service providers in order to attract or to reach as many potential users as possible. As to this regard it is found in section 2.4 that a lot of information on support services is available on the Internet and in newspapers. However, an analysis of the preferences of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses with regard to the means for information provision shows that additional measures might need to be put in place in order to increase awareness of support services in Spain.

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 Spanish enterprises want to be informed on support services, it can be concluded from Graph 18 that although the majority of Spanish micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses like to get information via direct contacts, they have no clear preference for either form of promotion activity. Only presentations at trade fairs, exhibitions or similar events are less favoured as the other types.

When compared to how support services are actually promoted in Spain (see section 2.4), one can see that although many enterprises would appreciate being personally visited by the provider, this kind of promotion activity is hardly ever applied. The same seems to hold for direct contacts: More than half of the Spanish micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses would welcome being directly contacted by the providers (e. g. by telephone or mailing), but the majority of Spanish providers of support services do not do so as can be seen from Graph 7. However, it has to be noted that these two are of course amongst the most costly promotional means for service providers.

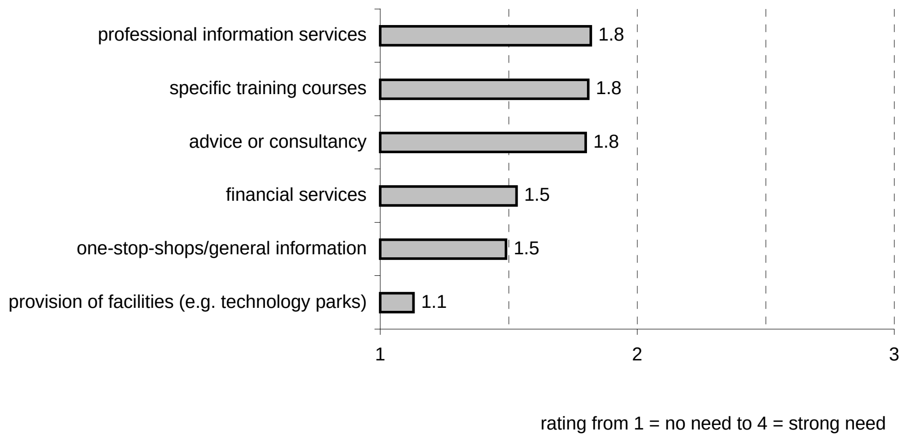
Generally, businesses seem to clearly prefer looking for support services either at local or regional level. About 16 % of the enterprises would consider visiting contact points at national level and only 4 % of the companies would look for information on available support services at European level. When compared to the actual organisation of support services in Spain (mainly decentralised at regional level as can be seen from Graph 2), it may be assumed that in this respect the supply side effectively meets the needs of the enterprises.

However, there seems to be some mismatch in the field of promotion and information provision on support services offered in Spain. The awareness of support available to micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses might be increased by personally visiting enterprises as well as by directly contacting them, i. e. via mailing campaigns, telephone contacts, etc., rather than presenting services at trade fairs or exhibitions, for example, which is among the least preferred types of promotion activities amongst enterprises. Especially personal visits are hardly focused by service providers in Spain, yet, but might be very effective with regard to creating awareness and increasing the information rate of enterprises.

3.3 CONTENT OF SUPPORT SERVICES

Once the problem of lacking awareness has been overcome by enterprises, it still remains difficult to identify the type of support that is considered relevant for the development of one's enterprise. As outlined in section 3.1, the content of available support (i. e. types of support offered, targeting of support services, etc.) seems to be one of the major reasons for Spanish micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses not to make use of support services. Nevertheless, only few enterprises claim this aspect of support services to be a major difficulty when participating in or using support services. However, although the need for support services generally seems to be comparatively low in Spain, which might be due to the fact that particularly smaller enterprises often have problems in identifying or expressing their actual need for external support, 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 mismatch between enterprises' need for external help and what is actually available on the market for support services.

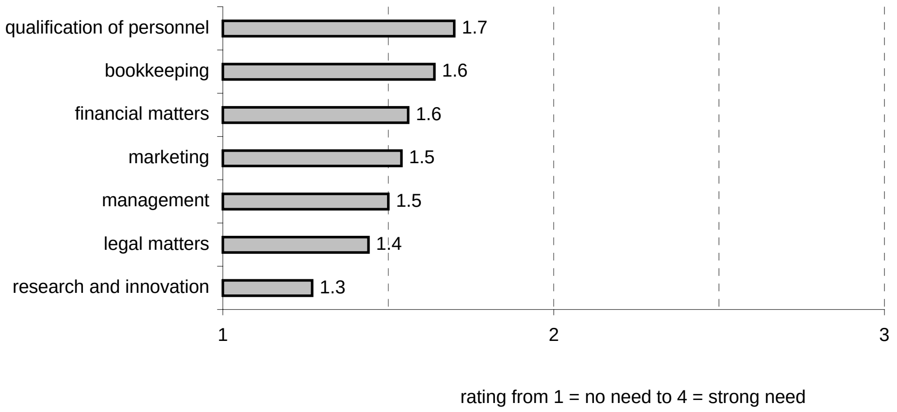
Graph 19: Need for different types of support services



Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

Spanish micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses generally express a very low need for support services (on average 1.6 on a scale from 1 - no need to 4 - strong need). However, when dividing between different types of services one can see that the demand for professional information services, specific training courses and advice or consultancy seems to be slightly higher than the one for the provision of facilities, for example - although still being quite low compared to other European countries (see Graph 19). A comparison of the demand with the supply side of the Spanish support services market (see Graph 6) shows that there exists a rather good match between supply and demand as external advice and consultancy and professional information services are the services offered most often.

Graph 20: Need for external support, by business areas



Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

Similarly, the need expressed for the various business areas by micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses is rather low compared to other European Union Member States and Norway. Spanish enterprises seem to need comparatively more support for the qualification of personnel than for research and innovation, but the general demand for any kind of support services is only marginal.

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 certain degree of lack in target group orientation of the support services offered as far as size class, sector, or the phase of development of enterprises are concerned. The majority of Spanish micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses (95 %) would prefer to use support services that are specifically targeted at enterprises of their respective *sector*. Almost half of the companies even indicate it to be 'very important' that the support service is tailored to the needs of a specific sector. When compared to the supply side of support services (see Graph 4), it can be seen that although a lot of support services offered in Spain address all sectors alike, there exists a wide range of sector-specific support services. Thus, the match between actual supply and demand seems to be better than in other European countries, but might lack some respective publicity.

A large share of Spanish micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses (88 %) also considers it important that support services are specifically targeted at enterprises of their respective *size class*. Here, however, the supply side does not correspond to the needs and wants of the enterprises as much as concerning sector-orientation (see Graph 3).

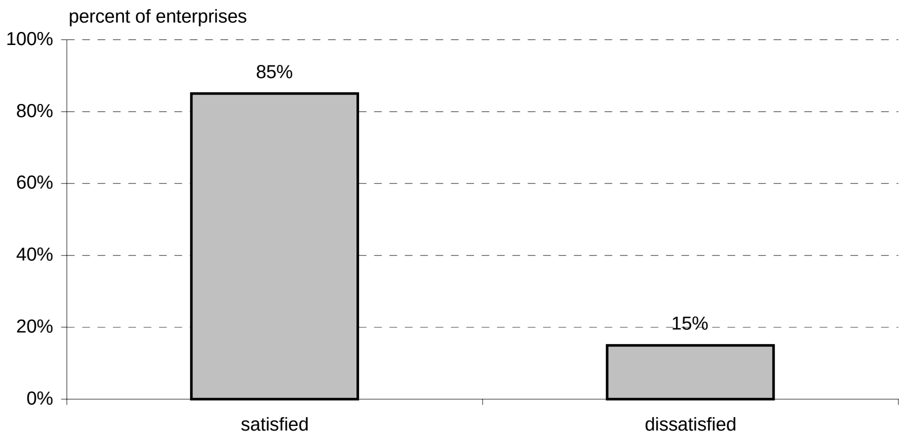
The majority of Spanish micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses (82 %) would prefer to use support services that are specifically targeted at their current *phase of development*. This is especially true for mature companies of which 93 % would prefer support services specially designed to their phase of development.

Particularly, it is believed that it is the start-up phase, the early phase of development and the growth phase 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 offered to enterprises starting-up in Spain. However, it has to be noted, that although more than 40 % of all enterprises think that businesses in the growth phase are among those needing most external help, only a small number of support providers exclusively seems to concentrate on enterprises in this particular phase.

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 almost 10 % of Spanish micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses it is the conditions of service delivery that pose the main difficulty when using support services. 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 appropriate 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

As can be seen from Graph 21, the majority of Spanish micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses (85 %) that have made use of support services within the last five years indicate satisfaction with their latest experience in this respect. This is in line with the high share of companies indicating not having experienced any problems when using support services (see Graph 15). Interestingly, the study of Hermosilla (1997) amongst more than 400 enterprises of all size classes disseminated all over Spain comes to the result that the satisfaction rate decreases with increasing company size. A result which can (not) be confirmed by the prevailing analysis.

When compared to other European countries it becomes evident, that the satisfaction rate in Spain is amongst the highest in the European Union Member States and Norway. Better results are only achieved in Portugal and Ireland, with 90 % of micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses being satisfied with the use of support services (see Table 3).

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 possibly 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 Ireland and Portugal are at the upper end while Luxembourg and Denmark are at the lower end of satisfaction with respect to support services used. The Spanish satisfaction rate is slightly above the value for the EU average.

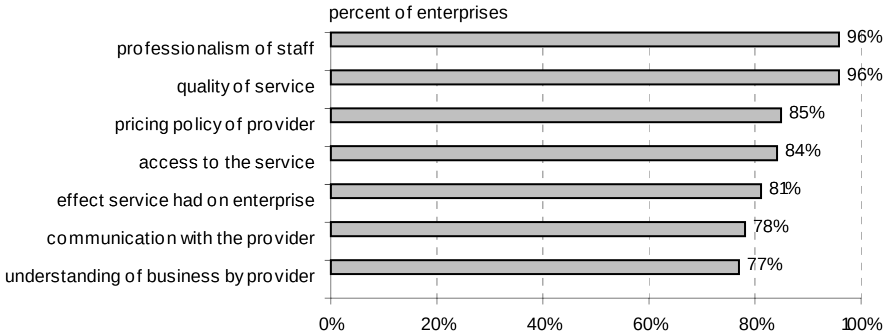
Table 3: Satisfaction rate of enterprises, by country

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 with support services used in rather general terms, the following Graph 22 illustrates the degree of satisfaction differentiated by specific issues related to the delivery of support services.

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



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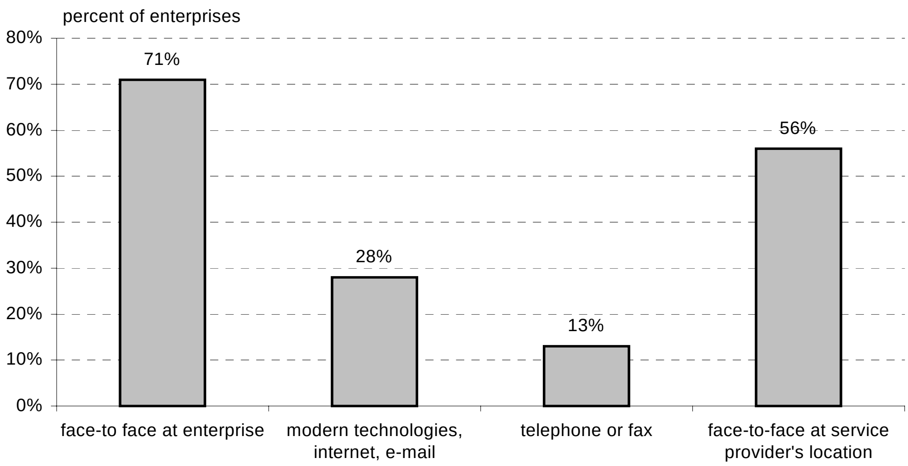
*) only enterprises that have made use of support services within the last five years

Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

As already shown by the high general satisfaction rate (see Graph 21) Spanish support service providers can be seen to perform satisfactorily which is not only true for their services in general, but also for the different aspects of their job. Almost all enterprises that have used support services during the last five years are satisfied with the professionalism of the providers staff and the quality of the service (96 % each). The comparatively lowest satisfaction is expressed with respect to the understanding of the business by the provider, but even here 77 % of the Spanish small businesses indicate to be satisfied. Therefore, it can be assumed that the high satisfaction rate is not solely due to the fact that the majority of services are offered free of charge (see Graph 10) but can be attributed to the high-value of services provided.

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 Spanish micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses regarding these aspects and furthermore to compare the findings with the supply side of the Spanish support services market.

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

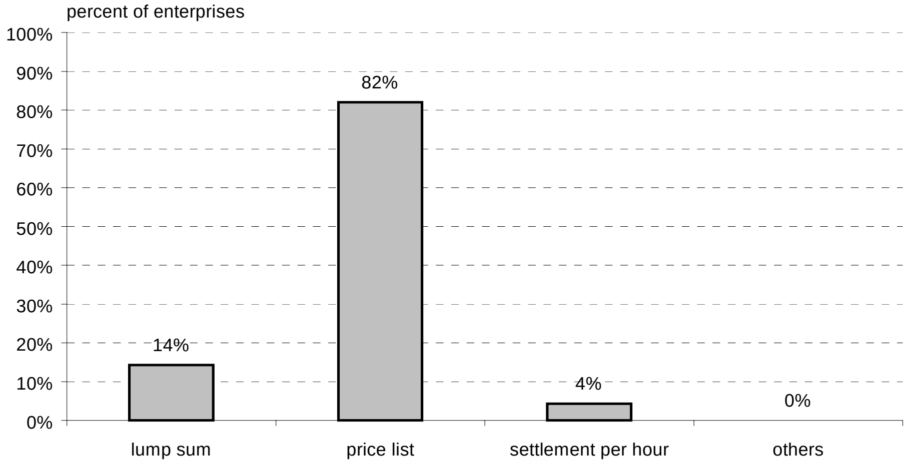


*) more than one answer allowed

Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

Micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Spain clearly prefer to communicate face-to-face with the support service provider either at their own enterprise (71 %) or at the provider's location (56 %) when using support services. More than one quarter of all enterprises appreciates the possibility of using modern technologies to communicate with the provider, whereas only 13 % like to use telephone or fax as to this regard (see Graph 23).

Graph 24: Form of payment preferred by enterprises



Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

As far as the pricing policy of service providers is concerned, Spanish micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses clearly prefer paying according to given price lists (stated by 82 % of the companies). However, this form of payment is rarely used by service providers which can be seen from Graph 10. (Here, again, it has to be mentioned that the majority of services are offered free of charge as they are subsidised by public authorities.)

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 to successfully promote support services. Choosing the right measures as to this regard - the ones enterprises trust most - and making them visible to the enterprises might be crucial in order to strengthen enterprises' belief in the usefulness of support services and by that their demand for support of this kind. Thus, the question of how high quality of services offered might be communicated to enterprises respectively which criteria enterprises apply to judge the quality of a service is also dealt with in the scope of this study. The findings for Spain as to this regard are presented in Graph 25, below.

Graph 25: Criteria that indicate high quality to enterprises

Source: IfGH/ENSR Small Business Survey, 2001

When micro, small or sole proprietor's businesses try to assess the quality of a service provider, the criteria they trust most include regular follow-ups with the customer and regular evaluations of the provided services. It seems to be comparatively less important to enterprises in Spain whether support service providers use registered trademarks or apply self-developed quality standards (see Graph 25). When compared to the quality assurance mechanisms providers in Spain actually deploy, it can be seen that both, follow-ups as well as evaluations are used by a large number of providers (see Graph 9).

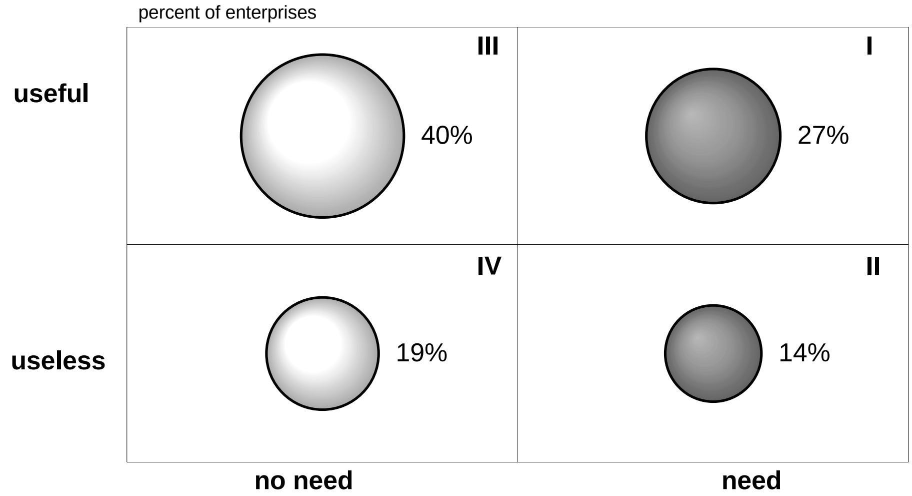
3.5 FUTURE POTENTIAL OF THE MARKET FOR SUPPORT SERVICES

The following matrix gives an overview on the future potential of the market for support services in Spain 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 Spain 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 Spain*)



LINKMERGEFORMAT

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

I. Quadrant: The first 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 Spain amounts to 27 %. They might best be mobilised by improving and reinforcing marketing and promotional activities of existing support services, by personally visiting enterprises or focussing on mailing campaigns, for example.

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 (14 % of the enterprises that have not utilised support services in the last five years in Spain) 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 Spain 40 % 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 Spain 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 may in consequence 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 amounts to as much as 19 % in Spain, which, however is still below the EU average.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The market for support services in Spain is characterised by a rapid increase in offered services during the last few years. A wide range of external support to micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses has been made available whereby, generally, public providers of support services dominate the market, mostly offering contact points disseminated all over Spain. However, there seems to be hardly any service available specifically targeted at micro, small or sole proprietor's businesses, but in contrast to other Member States of the European Union, service providers in Spain offer specific support for every phase of development of the companies. (Yet, it has to be kept in mind that the majority of Spanish support service providers act at a regional level, so that the measures taken by any of them – including their orientation on specific target groups – will be of benefit for a restraint region only).

Support services for small enterprises in Spain mainly offer external advice and consultancy, followed by professional information services, and SME-specific training. Thereby, the majority of support service providers use the Internet for promotion purposes, followed by advertisements in newspapers and periodicals (often special interest magazines) and presentations at trade fairs and exhibitions. Most of the support services targeted at small businesses have established mechanisms to assure the quality of the support provided, whereby regular evaluations and regular follow-ups with the customers are among the most commonly used instruments for quality assurance. Regarding the demand side, companies state those two criteria to be the best indicators for high quality of support services. Also, pricing policy of services providers in Spain seems to be rather transparent, whereby most of the services are offered free of charge. A large number of support services for micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Spain aims at training in general and at the education for an entrepreneurial society which is tightly connected to the rather high unemployment rates in Spain and should act as a mechanism to increase the employment rate.

As far as the demand side is concerned, micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Spain seem to make rather little use of the support services offered. Compared to other European countries the Spanish participation rate (19 %) is in the good midfield but drops with decreasing size of enterprises. The main reason for many Spanish enterprises not to make use of support services is that they do not see any need for external help. Generally, the information rate of enterprises in Spain is rather low, with only 29 % of small businesses considering themselves very well or rather well informed on the issue of support services. However, in comparison to the Member States of the European Union plus Norway the information rate of Spanish enterprises can be described as markedly above average. The awareness of support available to micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses might be increased by personally visiting enterprises as well as by directly contacting them, i. e. via mailing campaigns, telephone contacts, etc. However, especially personal visits are hardly focused by service providers, yet, but might be very effective with regard to increasing the information rate of enterprises.

Spanish micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses generally express a need for support services in the field of professional information services, specific training courses and advice or consultancy. With regard to specific business areas it is mainly personnel qualification matters the enterprises seem to need help with. However, one reason for the comparatively low utilisation of support services by enterprises might be due to a too little target group orientation of many support services offered in Spain as far as size class, sector, or phase of development of enterprises are concerned. As to this regard, utilisation of support services might benefit from better targeting services at the smallest businesses and at specific sectors, as well as from better promoting existing specialised services.

Generally, 85 % of the micro, small and sole proprietor's businesses in Spain that have made use of support services within the last five years are quite satisfied with the services received. This leads to a satisfaction rate lying in the good mid-field within the European Union Member States and Norway. Enterprises seem to be particularly satisfied with the professionalism of the staff and the quality of services provided.

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
PYME. Área de Información/ SME Information Area	Directorate General of SME Policy - Ministry of EconomicsDirección General de Política de la PYME - Ministerio de Economía	Head of the Information Department Emilio Cires Jiménez Paseo de la Castellana, 162 28046 Madrid	Tel.: 34/91/5830026 Fax: 34/91/5830027	ecires@ipyme.org www.ipyme.org
Agència Catalana de la Petita Empresa / Agencia Catalana de la Pequeña Empresa, ACPE./ Catalan Small Business Support Agency	Business Innovation and Development Centre; Centro de Innovación y Desarrollo Empresarial, CIDEM	Head of the Information Department Joan Martí Provença 339 08037 Barcelona	Tel.: 34/93/4767200 Fax: 34/93/4767214	jomarti@cidem.gencat.es www.gencat.es/cidem/acpe

original name/English name	organisation	contact person and address	telephone/fax	e-mail/web-page
Servicios de Formación/ Training Services	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises from Catalonia (Employers' Association) Petita i Mitjana Empresa de Catalunya, PIMEC-SEFES	Training Manager Lourdes Esteban Viladomat 174 08015 Barcelona	Tel.: 34/93/4964500 Fax: 34/93/4964531	lesteban@sefes.es www.sefes.es
Departamento Jurídico Laboral/ Department of Legal and Labour Issues	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises from Catalonia (Employers' Association) Petita i Mitjana Empresa de Catalunya, PIMEC-SEFES.	Head of Legal Department Vicenç González Viladomat 174 08015 Barcelona	Tel.: 34/93/4964500 Fax: 34/93/4964501	vgonzalez@sefes.es www.sefes.es
Programa LANZA/ LANZA Programme	Galician Institute for Economic PromotionInstituto Galego de Promocíon Económica, IGAPE	Technical expert Miguel Fidalgo Fray Rosendo Salvado, 16 15701 Santiago de Compostela	Tel.: 34/981/541175 Fax: 34/981/541114	mfi@igape.es www.igape.es
Plan PIMEGA/ PIMEGA Plan	Galician Institute for Economic PromotionInstituto Galego de Promocíon Económica, IGAPE	Technical expert Ramón Pinto Complejo Administrativo Barrio de San Lázaro 15703 Santiago de Compostela	Tel.: 34/981/541175 Fax: 34/981/541114	rpb@igape.es www.igape.es
Creación de Nuevas Empresas/ New Enterprise Creation	Economic Development Agency of Castille-Leon Agencia de Desarrollo Económico de Castilla y León, ADE.	Head of the Business Start-up Unit Itziar Martín Duque de la Victoria, 23 47001 Valladolid	Tel.: 34/983/411420 Fax: 34/983/414970	Itziar.Martin@cict.jcyl.es www.redpyme.net
Castilla y León Calidad. Excelencia en la Gestión Empresarial/ Castille-Leon Quality. Excellence in Business Management.	Economic Development Agency of Castile-Leon Agencia de Desarrollo Económico de Castilla y León, ADE.	Head of the Unit of Incentives to Competitiveness Montserrat Torices Duque de la Victoria, 23 47001 Valladolid	Tel.: 34/983/411420 Fax: 34/983/414970	Montserrat.Torices@cict.jcyl.es www.jcyl.es/ade
Servicio de Información y Comunicación/ Central Programme for Information	Development Institute of MadridInstituto Madrileño de Desarrollo, IMADE	Promotion Unit Director José Javier Peña José Abascal, 57 28003 Madrid	Tel.: 34/91/5802767 Fax: 34/91/5802589	jpeña@imade.es www.comadrid.es/imade

original name/English name	organisation	contact person and address	telephone/fax	e-mail/web-page
Iniciativas de Emprendimiento y Autoempleo de Madrid, IDEAM/ Initiatives on Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment in Madrid.	Development Institute of MadridInstituto Madrileño de Desarrollo, IMADE	SME Unit Director Ana Lillo Ronda de Toledo, 1 28005 Madrid	Tel.: 34/91/3540541 Fax: 34/91/3641296	alillo@imade.es www.comadrid.es/imade
Formación para Emprendedores/ Training for Entrepreneurs	Institute of the Medium and Small Industry of Valencia Instituto de la Mediana y Pequeña Industria Valenciana, IMPIVA.	Head of the Department of Business Services Jesús Cardona Plaza del Ayuntamiento, 6 46002 Valencia	Tel.: 34/96/3986200 Fax: 34/6/3986201	info@impiva.m400.gva.es www.impiva.es
Ventanilla Única Empresarial/ One-stop shop for Business	High Council of Spanish Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Navigation; Consejo Superior de Cámaras de Comercio, Industria y Navegación Public Administration (National, Regional and Local); Administraciones Públicas (Estatal, CC. AA. y Corporaciones Local	General Manager of Inspection, Simplification and Quality of Services provided by the Ministry of Public Administration Amador Elena María de Molina, 50, 3rd floor 28071 Madrid	Tel.: 34/91/5861000 Fax: 34/91/5861453	amador.elena@igsap.map.es www.igsap.map.es
Información y Asesoramiento para la Creación de Empresas/ Information and Advice for Entrepreneurs	Institute of the Medium and Small Industry of Valencia Instituto de la Mediana y Pequeña Industria Valenciana, IMPIVA.	Head of the Department of Business Services Jesús Cardona Plaza del Ayuntamiento, 6 46002 Valencia	Tel.: 34/96/3986200 Fax: 34/96/3986201	info@impiva.m400.gva.es www.impiva.es
Fundación Instituto Cameral para la Creación y Consolidación de Empresas, INCYDE/ Chamber Institute for Enterprise Start-up and Development.	High Council of Spanish Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Navigation. Consejo Superior de Cámaras de Comercio, Industria y Navegación de España.	Programme Co-ordinator Mónica Garrido Velázquez, 157 28002 Madrid	Tel.: 34/91/5906967 Fax: 34/91/5906969	monica@cscamaras.es www.cscamaras.es

original name/English name	organisation	contact person and address	telephone/fax	e-mail/web-page
Mujer Emprende (Programa de Apoyo Empresarial a las Mujeres)./ Entrepeneur Women (Entrepreneurial Support Programme for Women).	High Council of Spanish Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Navigation. Consejo Superior de Cámaras de Comercio, Industria y Navegación de España.	Technical expert Concepción Giménez Velázquez, 157, 1st floor 28002 Madrid	Tel.: 34/91/5906934 Fax: 34/91/5906908	forma.cg@cscamaras.es www.camaras.org
Servicio Cameral de Orientación Profesional, SCOP/ Career Guidance Chamber Service	High Council of Spanish Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Navigation. Consejo Superior de Cámaras de Comercio, Industria y Navegación de España.	Person in charge of SCOP Beatriz Zafra Velázquez 157, 1st floor 28002 Madrid	Tel.: 34/91/5906979 Fax: 34/91/5906908	forma.scop@cscamaras.es www.camaras.org/formacion
PIPE 2000, Plan de Iniciación a la Promoción Exterior./ Introduction Plan to Foreign Promotion.	Spanish Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Navigation and the Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade.Cámaras de Comercio, Industria y Navegación de España e Instituto Español de Comercio Exterior.	Programme Coordinator Carmen Ayllón Velázquez 157, 1st floor 28002 Madrid	Tel.: 34/91/5906938 Fax: 34/91/5906908	exterior@cscamaras.es www.camaras.org www.ppxc.com
Formación Empresarial para Inventores, Trabajadores en Activo y Personas Desempleadas./ Entrepreneurial Training for Inventors and Employed and Unemployed People	Inventors and Technology ClubClub de Inventores y de la Tecnología	Manager Manuel Matellán Septimania, 31 08006 Barcelona	Tel.: 34/93/2377573 Fax: 34/93/2377616	invent@conecta.es www.inventoseinventores.com