

**PRESS RELEASE**

## EIB and INBONIS sign agreement to support access to financing for European startups and scaleups through credit ratings

- The initiative will explore how independent external credit ratings can accelerate access to bank financing for innovative and fast-growing companies in Europe.
- EIB Advisory and INBONIS to run a pilot programme funded by the [InvestEU Advisory Hub](#).



The European Investment Bank (EIB), through its advisory services (EIB Advisory) is exploring how to leverage external credit ratings to facilitate access to finance for innovative startups and scaleups in Europe. The initiative will support companies backed by EIB venture debt instruments by facilitating first-time independent credit ratings from ESMA-registered agencies. This tailored service will support companies that are strategic for Europe's competitiveness and strategic autonomy.

A first agreement to conduct a pilot of this service has been signed with Spain based credit rating agency INBONIS, specialized in providing ratings for SMEs. The pilot project will run over the next 18 months under the InvestEU Advisory Hub, the European Union's advisory and investment support platform managed by the European Commission and the European Investment Bank.

As part of the pilot, INBONIS Rating will perform independent creditworthiness assessments and issue Private Credit Ratings (PCRs) for companies selected by the EIB across sectors, including beneficiaries of the CleanTechEU Guarantee programme. The objective is to analyse to what extent the availability of an external credit rating issued by an ESMA-registered and EBA-recognised ECAI can support intermediary banks in their risk assessment processes, improve comparability across companies and accelerate access to working capital facilities and bank financing for fast-growing innovative firms.

The initiative addresses one of the key structural challenges faced by many European startups and scaleups: despite reaching significant technological and commercial maturity, many companies still struggle to access traditional bank financing particularly when they lack an established credit history or an external credit assessment. The pilot seeks to explore how credit ratings can help bridge this gap between innovation finance and mainstream banking finance.

## Background Information

### EIB Group

The European Investment Bank ([EIB](#)) Group is the financing arm of the European Union, owned by the 27 Member States, and one of the largest multilateral development banks in the world. In 2025, the EIB Group signed €100 billion in new financing and advisory services for over 870 [high-impact projects](#) under [eight core priorities](#) that support EU [policy objectives](#): climate action and the environment, digitalisation and technological innovation, security and defence, territorial cohesion, agriculture and the bioeconomy, social infrastructure, strong global partnerships and the savings and investments union. Beyond long-term loans for large infrastructure, the EIB Group crowds in private investment for high-risk innovative projects and businesses, with a growing role in Europe's markets for venture debt, venture capital, guarantees and securitisations. The EIB Group completed financing and investment operations in Spain totaling around €11 billion last year, which came alongside an additional €2.9 billion under the Regional Resilience Fund (NextGenerationEU loans).

The European Investment Fund ([EIF](#)) is the subsidiary of the EIB Group specialised in providing guarantees and equity to improve access to finance for small and medium-sized businesses and startups across Europe. Acting as an anchor investor, through its extensive network of partnering banks and investment funds, the EIF mobilises private investment and nurtures the ecosystem of venture capital funds to support innovative European entrepreneurs.

In 2023, the EIF together with six Member States (France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands) launched the European Tech Champions Initiative, a fund-of-funds to scale up innovative

startups. To date, this initiative has already enabled the creation of 15 European venture capital mega-funds and scaled up 43 companies, including 11 unicorns (with more than €1 billion in capital).

Photos of the EIB Group's representatives and headquarters, logo files and video B-roll for media use are available [here](#).

## EIB Advisory

In addition to financing, the EIB Group offers advisory services that help public and private clients develop markets, build capacity and support high impact investment projects. In 2025, EIB Advisory helped accelerate project delivery and crowd in finance for 179 projects worth more than €80 billion in the European Union and beyond.

## InvestEU

The InvestEU programme provides the European Union with long-term funding by leveraging substantial private and public funds in support of a sustainable recovery. It also helps crowd in private investment for the European Union's strategic priorities such as the European Green Deal and the digital transition. InvestEU brings all EU financial instruments previously available for supporting investments within the European Union together under one roof, making funding for investment projects in Europe simpler, more efficient and more flexible. The programme consists of three components: the InvestEU Fund, the InvestEU Advisory Hub and the InvestEU Portal. The InvestEU Fund is deployed through implementing partners that will invest in projects using the EU budget guarantee of €26.2 billion. The entire budget guarantee will back the investment projects of the implementing partners, increase their risk-bearing capacity and thus mobilise at least €372 billion in additional investment.

### [About INBONIS Rating](#)

INBONIS is a European pioneering credit rating agency specialising in SMEs and mid-caps in Europe. Since its registration with the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) in 2019, INBONIS has issued more than 1,300 corporate credit ratings across 30 countries, including European Union member states and emerging markets. INBONIS is recognised by the Eurosystem as an External Credit Assessment Institution (ECAI).

INBONIS' mission is to democratise access to credit ratings in order to facilitate SMEs' access to long-term financing, strengthen trust with business partners and contribute to financial education. Through this approach, INBONIS aims to support sustainable growth and competitiveness across Europe.

INBONIS is a certified B Corp company.

<https://inbonis.com/>

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