

The Athens Stock Exchange and the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce present the ROOTS program at Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF)

The Athens Stock Exchange and the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce presented the ROOTS program on Sunday December 9th 2018 at the American Pavilion of the 83rd Thessaloniki International Fair. Program partners, such as Piraeus Bank, National Bank of Greece, International Federation of Competitiveness Councils (GFCC), Grant Thornton, CFA Society Greece, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated in the event. Moreover, representatives of entrepreneurship and capital market honoured the event with their presence.

The Athens Exchange president, Mr. George Handjinicolaou, introduced the ROOTS initiative by stressing the need to support the new generation of companies in accessing global markets and establishing the organization, transparency, and effective corporate governance conditions that investors expect.

The American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce president Mr. Simos Anastasopoulos, and the Chief Executive Officer of Athens Exchange Group Mr. Socrates Lazaridis, while addressing potential program partners and participants, outlined the goals and main activities of the ROOTS Program. ROOTS is an initiative designed to showcase and accelerate new companies with internationally competitive and mature business plans. At its core, the programme aims to facilitate SMEs' access to financing according to the evolving international trends and best-practices.

ROOTS provides access to an international network of experts, capacity building, and skills training opportunities, to ensure SMEs have the necessary knowledge and the skills to effectively communicate their proposals to investors and access financing opportunities through the capital market. The programme, as highlighted by Mr. Lazaridis, also aims to mobilize the capital markets ecosystem to make an active contribution and support the financing needs of a new, competitive productive fabric in the country.

The president of the World Federation of Competitiveness Councils (GFCC), Mrs. Deborah Wince-Smith, emphasized the importance of creating a dynamic network of internationally acclaimed experts and entrepreneurs to help companies seize strategic opportunities in the light of the competitive conditions of globalization and the digital transformation of the economy.

Mr. Alkis Alexandrou, Deputy General Manager, Agricultural Sector represented Piraeus Bank, a ROOTS program Corporate Champion of the agricultural sector. He underlined this joint effort's excellent potential to promote innovation in Greece and bring growth and prosperity. Mr. Alexandrou also stressed the complementary relationship between this initiative and other efforts by Piraeus Bank to enhance the prospects of the agricultural sector, such as the Contractual Agriculture Program.

Contributing to the design of the ROOTS capacity building curriculum, Harvard Business School professor Mr. George Serafeim spoke of the imperativeness of not only inspiring, but also instilling new entrepreneurs with the necessary tools to develop their initiatives into a globally competitive companies.

Mr. Spyros Arsenis, representative of National Bank of Greece, a ROOTS program Corporate Champion and NBG Business Seeds Manager, stressed the need to finance companies at all stages of their growth in order to create a dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem, highlighting the complementarity of ROOTS and the NBG Business Seeds program that supports companies in their early stages of growth.

Finally, Mr. Byron Kaklopoulos, Vice President of CFA Society Greece, confirmed his organization's contribution to the ROOTS capacity building program. They will help companies effectively restructure their proposals and present them to investors, by transferring their global and local expertise in corporate finance topics through the CFA Institute.

The program will start in October, with an open call, and will accept applications from companies with a viable and interesting investment proposal and significant growth prospects.

For more information and partnership proposals, contact us at: roots@athexgroup.gr