



**Do you have a strong business idea but need advice on how to make it happen? Are you looking for funding to make your business grow but are not sure what to do? If so the 'running the gauntlet' 2007 investment competition and education programme is for you.**

### **What is it?**

'Running the gauntlet' 2007 is the East of England Development Agency's (EEDA) innovative investment competition and education programme designed exclusively for entrepreneurs in the East of England. Its purpose is to help innovators in the region develop their business skills in order to attract equity funding from angel or venture capital investors.

This year EEDA has partnered with four investors who fund early stage businesses: CREATE, Low Carbon Accelerator, NW Brown Group and SEP.

Between them they are offering equity funding of up to £2 million to investable businesses (subject to diligence review).

“You have nothing to lose and everything to gain by entering this programme. It breaks business planning down into a step by step approach and offers support just when you need it. It certainly made us focus on the numbers and finance side of things.”

**Sophie Dansie, EcoCoffins**

### **Finance for innovation**

Turning innovative ideas into business growth

“The insight it (‘running the gauntlet’) provided has been invaluable, our commercial understanding has grown and with it our confidence.”

Han Lin, MARGO Technologies



#### Am I eligible?

You are able to enter if you are an entrepreneur located in the East of England (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk).

#### How can I enter?

You can enter online at [www.runningthegauntlet.com](http://www.runningthegauntlet.com) between 2 May 2007 and midnight on 2 September 2007 where a ‘run now’ button takes you into the step-by-step process.

“The competition process taught us a great deal more about working with investors, from The Gauntlet report card to the business support sessions and pitch to investors. Undoubtedly this was crucial in helping us secure the £500,000 funding from CREATE.”

Jonathan Sachs, Compound Photonics

#### How will my entry be assessed?

‘Running the gauntlet’ is based on The Gauntlet, a virtual investor that will take you through 16 core questions about your business proposition. A confidential report detailing the strengths and weaknesses of your business case is subsequently sent to you for future reference.

As an entrant you then have the opportunity to take part in a free-of-charge education programme aimed at refining your business proposals with a view to making them investment ready. This programme is managed by ‘running the gauntlet’s’ nine commercial partners: Bailey Fisher, Cambridge Marketing College, Grant Thornton, HSBC, Microsoft UK, Mudhut Communication, Taylor Vinters, The Commercialisation Company and Sagentia.

Based on the responses to The Gauntlet a shortlist of 50 companies will be invited to pitch to the programme’s investors and to receive their feedback.

Ten finalists will be selected and investment outcomes will be announced at ‘Destination Growth’ on 6 November 2007.

#### Where can I go for help?

Once you have registered via [www.runningthegauntlet.com](http://www.runningthegauntlet.com), you can access our dedicated help desk (run by Business Link) on **0800 587 3458**.