

*Fernand Grulms*



## LUXEMBOURG FOR FINANCE

*With the recent creation of an Agency for the Development of the Financial Center, it seemed most appropriate to offer Fernand Grulms, CEO of "Luxembourg for Finance" a platform to outline his views on the agency at the February ABAL Luncheon.*

The aim of the newly created Agency for the Development of the Financial Center, "Luxembourg for Finance", is to brand the financial center around the world.

It is perhaps surprising that one of the world's top financial centers and number two investment fund domicile should have waited until 2008 to launch a development agency. This reflects the close relationship between the business and political communities, which have worked together for 30 years to ensure that Luxembourg is attractive to financial services companies; and it is a credit to the individual professional associations that their energetic work, both in Luxembourg and internationally, has created a cohesive business community capable of presenting a strong image to international markets and articulating a clear political message, where necessary, towards international policy makers and regulators.

Nevertheless, the increasing competition between international financial centers as well as the sheer size of the Luxembourg financial centre and a rapid growth in the number of international tours and trade missions called for a central unit that could federate, coordinate and leverage the promotional efforts of the individual associations and of the Government.

Luxembourg for Finance (LFF) is a public-private partnership, a 50:50 joint venture between the Government and the Luxembourg Financial Industry Federation (PROFIL). The primary objective of PROFIL, which brings together representatives of banks, insurance companies, investment funds, wealth ma-

nagers, chartered accountants, auditors, domiciliation specialists, lawyers and ancillaries activities, is to promote a coherent image of Luxembourg as a prestigious international financial center. Thanks to the breadth of its membership, PROFIL has been able to act as a discussion partner with the Government on issues to do with the development of the financial sector.

The new development agency has been set up as an Economic Interest Grouping. The purpose of an EIG is "to facilitate or develop the economic activities of its members by a pooling of resources, activities or skills".

The task of LFF is to create a clear brand for Luxembourg at two levels. At the "general branding" level, LFF will articulate the message that the financial center is well regulated, a center of expertise, international (it is the world capital for cross-border distribution of investment products), diversified and – by no means unimportant – a nice place to live and work. At a "product branding" level, LFF will assist and leverage the efforts of its underlying associations in marketing individual sectors.

In terms of Communication, LFF will be the mouthpiece of the financial center. Developing contacts with the international media, LFF will work to raise the profile of Luxembourg where it is unknown, improve its image where necessary and ensure that a standard message is reaching the international business community.

In the promotional field, wherever the financial sector is involved in a foreign tour LFF will become involved in the intellectual preparation

of the mission, development of the schedule and follow up of the event. The economic benefits of such preparation are highly valuable. The agency will likewise take on the role of presenting the financial center to incoming foreign delegations and representing the community at international trade fairs, conferences and seminars.

Another overarching target of the agency is to highlight the breadth of career opportunities available, from the banking sector through asset management and insurance to a range of professional occupations present in the financial center.

Luxembourg for Finance has set itself no specific geographical goals or business focus. By listening to the market place and responding to market opportunities, LFF intends to become a key tool for the development and diversification of business in the financial center.

The agency has pulled together an experienced team of 13 staff led by an Executive Committee formed by CEO Fernand Grulms, a former director of ABBL the Luxembourg Bankers' Association, Anouk Agnes (Ministry of Finance) and Carlo Thelen (member of the Executive Committee of the Chamber of Commerce), seconded by Secretary General Jean-Jacques Picard, formerly Communications Director at ALFI, the Association of the Luxembourg Fund Industry.

**Fernand Grulms**  
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