

SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT ACT OF 1958

Sec. 301. ORGANIZATION OF SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT COMPANIES

(a) A small business investment company shall be an incorporated body, a limited liability company, or a limited partnership organized and chartered or otherwise existing under State law solely for the purpose of performing the functions and conducting the activities contemplated under this title, which, if incorporated, has succession for a period of not less than thirty years unless sooner dissolved by its shareholders, and if a limited partnership, has succession for a period of not less than ten years, and possesses the powers reasonably necessary to perform such functions and conduct such activities. The area in which the company is to conduct its operations, and the establishment of branch offices or agencies (if authorized by the articles), shall be subject to the approval of the Administration.

(b) The articles of any small business investment company shall specify in general terms the objects for which the company is formed, the name assumed by such company, the area or areas in which its operations are to be carried on, the place where its principal office is to be located, and the amount and classes of its shares of capital stock. Such articles may contain any other provisions not inconsistent with this Act that the company may see fit to adopt for the regulation of its business and the conduct of its affairs. Such articles and any amendments thereto adopted from time to time shall be subject to the approval of the Administration.

(c) ISSUANCE OF LICENSE.—

(1) SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION.—Each applicant for a license to operate as a small business investment company under this Act shall submit to the Administrator an application, in a form and including such documentation as may be prescribed by the Administrator.

(2) PROCEDURES.—

(A) STATUS.—Not later than 90 days after the initial receipt by the Administrator of an application under this subsection, the Administrator shall provide the applicant with a written report detailing the status of the application and any requirements remaining for completion of the application.

(B) APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL.—Within a reasonable time after receiving a completed application submitted in accordance with this subsection and in accordance with such requirements as the Administrator may prescribe by regulation, the Administrator shall—

(i) approve the application and issue a license for such operation to the applicant if the requirements of this section are satisfied; or

(ii) disapprove the application and notify the applicant in writing of the disapproval.

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(3) MATTERS CONSIDERED.—In reviewing and processing any application under this subsection, the Administrator—

(A) shall determine whether—

(i) the applicant meets the requirements of subsections (a) and (c) of section 302; and

(ii) the management of the applicant is qualified and has the knowledge, experience, and capability necessary to comply with this Act;

(B) shall take into consideration—

(i) the need for and availability of financing for small business concerns in the geographic area in which the applicant is to commence business;

(ii) the general business reputation of the owners and management of the applicant; and

(iii) the probability of successful operations of the applicant, including adequate probability [profitability] and financial soundness; and

(C) shall not take into consideration any projected shortage or unavailability of leverage.

(4) EXCEPTION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the Administrator may, in the discretion of the Administrator and based on a showing of special circumstances and good cause, approve an application and issue a license under this subsection with respect to any applicant that—

(i) has private capital of not less than \$3,000,000;

(ii) would otherwise be issued a license under this subsection, except that the applicant does not satisfy the requirements of section 302(a); and

(iii) has a viable business plan reasonably projecting profitable operations and a reasonable timetable for achieving a level of private capital that satisfies the requirements of section 302(a).

(B) LEVERAGE.—An applicant licensed pursuant to the exception provided in this paragraph shall not be eligible to receive leverage as a licensee until the applicant satisfies the requirements of section 302(a), unless the applicant—

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Sec. 303. BORROWING POWER.

(a) Each small business investment company shall have authority to borrow money and to issue its securities, promissory notes, or other obligations under such general conditions and subject to such limitations and regulations as the Administration may prescribe.

(b) To encourage the formation and growth of small business investment companies the Administration is authorized when authorized in appropriation Acts, to purchase, or to guarantee the timely payment of all principal and interest as scheduled on, debentures or participating securities issued by such companies. Such purchases or guarantees may be made by the Administration on such terms and conditions as it deems appropriate, pursuant to regulations issued by the Administration. The full faith and credit of the United States is pledged to the payment of all amounts which may be required to be paid under any guarantee under this subsection. Debentures purchased or guaranteed by the Administration under this subsection shall be subordinate to any other debenture bonds, promissory notes, or other debts and obligations of such companies, unless the Administration in its exercise of reasonable investment prudence and in considering the financial soundness of such company determines otherwise. Such debentures may be issued for a term of not to exceed fifteen years and shall bear interest at a rate not less than a rate determined by the Secretary of the Treasury taking into consideration the current average market yield on outstanding marketable obligations of the United States with remaining periods to maturity comparable to the average maturities on such debentures, adjusted to the nearest one-eighth of 1 percent, plus, for debentures obligated after September 30, 2001, an additional charge, in an amount established annually by the Administration, as necessary to reduce to zero the cost (as defined in section 502 of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 661a)) to the Administration of purchasing and guaranteeing debentures under this Act, which amount may not exceed 1.38 percent per year, and which shall be paid to and retained by the Administration. The debentures or participating securities shall also contain such other terms as the Administration may fix, and shall be subject to the following restrictions and limitations:

(1) The total amount of debentures and participating securities that may be guaranteed by the Administration and outstanding from a company licensed under section 301(c) of this Act shall not exceed 300 per centum of the private capital of such company: Provided, That nothing in this paragraph shall require any such company that on March 31, 1993, has outstanding debentures in excess of 300 per centum of its private capital to repay such excess: And provided further, That any such company may apply for an additional debenture guarantee or participating security guarantee with the proceeds to be used solely to pay the amount due on such maturing debenture, but the maturity of the new debenture or security shall be not later than September 30, 2002.

(2) MAXIMUM LEVERAGE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—After March 31, 1993, the maximum amount of outstanding leverage made available to a company licensed under section 301(c) of this Act shall be determined by the amount of such company's private capital—

(a) Section 3 of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (15 U.S.C. 77c), is hereby amended by inserting at the end thereof the following new subsection (c):

"(c) The Commission may from time to time by its rules and regulations and subject to such terms and conditions as may be prescribed therein, add to the securities exempted as provided in this section any class of securities issued by a small business investment company under the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 if it finds, having regard to the purposes of that Act, that the enforcement of this Act with respect to such securities is not necessary in the public interest and for the protection of investors."

(b) Section 304 of the Trust Indenture Act of 1939 (15 U.S.C. 77ddd) is hereby amended by adding the following subsection (e):

"(e) The Commission may from time to time by its rules and regulations, and subject to such terms and conditions as may be prescribed herein, add to the securities exempted as provided in this section any class of securities issued by a small business investment company under the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 if it finds, having regard to the purposes of that Act, that the enforcement of this Act with respect to such securities is not necessary in the public interest and for the protection of investors."

(c) Section 18 of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80a - 18) is amended by adding at the end thereof the following:

"(k) The provisions of subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of this section shall not apply to investment companies operating under the Small Business Investment Act of 1958."

Sec. 308. MISCELLANEOUS

(a) Wherever practicable the operations of a small business investment company, including the generation of business, may be undertaken in cooperation with banks or other investors or lenders, incorporated or unincorporated, and any servicing or initial investigation required for loans or acquisitions of securities by the company under the provisions of this Act may be handled through such banks or other investors or lenders on a fee basis. Any small business investment company may receive fees for services rendered to such banks and other investors and lenders.

(b) Each small business investment company may make use, wherever practicable, of the advisory services of the Federal Reserve System and of the Department of Commerce which are available for and useful to industrial and commercial businesses, and may provide consulting and advisory services on a fee basis and have on its staff persons competent to provide such services. Any Federal Reserve bank is authorized to act as a depository or fiscal agent for any company operating under the provisions of this Act. Any such company that is licensed before October 1, 2004 and has outstanding financings is authorized to invest funds not needed for its operations—

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(1) in direct obligations of, or obligations guaranteed as to principal and interest by, the United States;

(2) in certificates of deposit or other accounts of federally insured banks or other federally insured depository institutions, if the certificates or other accounts mature or are otherwise fully available not more than 1 year after the date of the investment; or

(3) in mutual funds, securities, or other instruments that consist of, or represent pooled assets of, investments described in paragraphs (1) or (2).

(c) The Administration is authorized to prescribe regulations governing the operations of small business investment companies, and to carry out the provisions of this Act, in accordance with the purposes of this Act.

(d) Should any small business investment company violate or fail to comply with any of the provisions of this Act or of regulations prescribed hereunder, all of its rights, privileges, and franchises derived therefrom may thereby be forfeited. Before any such company shall be declared dissolved, or its rights, privileges, and franchises forfeited, any noncompliance with or violation of this Act shall be determined and adjudged by a court of the United States of competent jurisdiction in a suit brought for that purpose in the district, territory, or other place subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, in which the principal office of such company is located. Any such suit shall be brought by the United States at the instance of the Administration or the Attorney General.

(e) Except as expressly provided otherwise in this Act, nothing in this Act or in any other provision of law shall be deemed to impose any liability on the United States with respect to any obligations entered into, or stocks issued, or commitments made, by any company operating under the provisions of this Act.

(f) In the performance of, and with respect to the functions, powers, and duties vested by this Act, the Administrator and the Administration shall (in addition to any authority otherwise vested by this Act) have the functions, powers, and duties set forth in the Small Business Act, and the provisions of sections 13 and 16 of that Act, insofar as applicable, are extended to the functions of the Administrator and the Administration under this Act.

(g) (1) The Administration shall include in its annual report, made pursuant to section 10(a) of the Small Business Act, a full and detailed account of its operations under this Act. Such report shall set forth the amount of losses sustained by the Government as a result of such operations during the preceding fiscal year, together with an estimate of the total losses which the Government can reasonably expect to incur as a result of such operations during the then current fiscal year.

(2) In its annual report for the year ending December 31, 1967, and in each succeeding annual report made pursuant to section 10(a) of the Small Business Act, the Administration shall include full and detailed accounts relative to the following matters: