

EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021

Business Development, Innovation and SMEs (“Business Innovation Greece”)

Pre-announcement of Call

Small Grants Scheme-2 for Soft Measures

Introduction

The Programme “Business Innovation Greece” shall contribute to the general objectives of EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021, respectively to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area (EEA) and to strengthening bilateral relations between the Donor States (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and the EEA and Norway Grants Beneficiary States. This Programme has the specific objective to increase value creation and sustainable growth in the Greek business sector. The Programme also seeks to stimulate and develop long-term business cooperation between Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, and Greece, through business development and innovation.

Expected outcomes and target group

The expected outcomes of the projects to be financed through this Soft Measures Call are:

- Increased competitiveness of Greek enterprises, within the focus areas of Green Industry Innovation, Blue Growth, and ICT (“Improving Capacity for Business Development”).
- Optionally, enhanced business cooperation between entities of the Donor States and businesses registered in Greece (“Strengthening bilateral relations in the business sector”).

The target group of the present Call is businesses in the private sector. For projects solely aiming at Improving the Capacity for Business Development, partnerships are not mandatory, but Donor Partnership Projects (i.e., projects that involve at least one entity from one of the Donor States) are strongly encouraged. For projects contributing to Strengthening the Bilateral relations, the involvement of at least one entity from one of the Donor States is mandatory.

Eligible applicants

- SMEs, and large companies with no more than 25% public ownership, established as legal entities in Greece
- Not-for-profit organisations (including clusters and business associations) established as legal

entities in Greece¹.

Eligible partners

Any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial and non-governmental organisations, established as a legal person in Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein or in Greece.

Areas of support

All projects must directly contribute to the following Outcome indicator: Increased competitiveness of the Greek enterprises within the focus areas Green Industry Innovation, ICT and Blue Growth.

In addition, **all projects must contribute to supporting enterprises to improve their capacity for business development.** More specifically, proposed projects should target at least one of the following groups:

- Business organizations/clusters that support SMEs to increase their knowledge on topics in fields such as business models, innovation, circular economy, internationalization, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) etc.
- Large enterprises that receive business skills support (training, coaching, mentoring etc.).
- SMEs that receive business skills support (training, coaching, mentoring etc.).
- Training of professional staff, in SMEs and large companies.

Eligible activities

- Trainings, coaching, mentoring on topics such as sustainable business models, green innovation, circular economy and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- Study trips, workshops, seminars, conferences, experience / good-practice-sharing events with the aim of supporting entrepreneurship and business development around environmentally sustainable, ICT-related or blue solutions/products/services.
- Study trips, workshops, seminars, conferences, experience / good-practice-sharing events with the aim of enhancing the collaboration, networking and learning within cluster organisations, that contribute to environmental sustainability, or are related to ICT or blue growth.
- Business matchmaking events aimed at partnerships for environmentally sustainable, ICT-related or blue business development and capacity building.

¹ Please note all projects, even those implemented by NGOs, must contribute to one of the outcomes mentioned above (“Improving Capacity for Business Development” or “Strengthening bilateral relations in the business sector”) and beneficiaries of the projects can only be Greek businesses. However, (part of the) activities could be carried out by NGOs.

- Feasibility studies, data collection, analyses directly contributing to or exploring environmentally sustainable, ICT-related or blue business development and -opportunities.
- In addition to one or more of the above, bilateral activities between Greek and Donor States' entities if they directly contribute to developing the capacity of the Greek business.

Budget and grant amount available

The total budget for this Call, that is made available to finance projects, is EUR 695,000. The minimum grant amount per project is EUR 10,000 and the maximum grant amount per project is EUR 200,000.

Grant rates and co-financing

The financial contribution from this Programme shall be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking all relevant factors into account. For this Soft Measure Call the legal bases for determining the grant rates will be as follows:

1. De minimis aid. De minimis aid within the meaning of the European Commission's Regulation (EU) No. 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid (OJ L 352, 24.12.2013) - (max. EUR 200,000 over three fiscal years). The maximum grant rate applied for should not exceed 90%.
2. Aid to SMEs, Article 18 "Aid for Consultancy in favour of SMEs", as referenced in the General Block Exemption Regulation ([GBER](#)). The maximum grant rate applied for should not exceed 50%.
3. Training aid, Article 31, as referenced in the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER). The maximum grant rate applied for should not exceed 70%.

Grant rate for non-economic operators: For not-for-profit organisations, proposing projects where state aid is not relevant, the maximum grant rate applied for can be up to 90% of the total eligible expenses for the project, without exceeding the maximum amount that may be granted to a project.

Timeline

The Soft Measures Call is planned to be launched in December 2022/January 2023. Deadline for applications will be set 2 months after the launch of the Call. Estimated project start is 1 May 2023. Final date of eligibility of project expenses is set to 30 April 2024. (This deadline is absolute.) This means that the maximum time available for implementation of projects will be 11-12 months.

Programme website:

The Call will be published on the Programme website www.innovasjon Norge.no/Greeceinnovation. General information about the Business Innovation Greece Programme, as well as information about the EEA and Norway Grants, are also available in the website above.

For further information and clarifications, please contact: GR.innovation@innovationnorge.no