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EU for Economic Growth (EU4EG) Project

Contracting Authority:
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ)

CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR EXISTING MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs)

CALL REF: EU4EG_MSMEs_3

IMPORTANT NOTE: ONLY NORTH-EAST REGION

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Deadline for submission of Full Applications: 20 June 2023, 12:00 hours local time



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GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS - MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs)

Note: MSMEs which are interested in applying to this Call for Proposals are kindly requested to download the electronic version of the Guidelines for Applicants (GfA) at the EU4EG Academy page containing the Application Package with the mandatory application templates¹.

Version 2.0
11 April 2023

NOTICE: This is a restricted Call for Proposals. **This Call for Proposals has a specific geographic focus on North-East region as project target area.**

Disclaimer: By applying under this Call for Proposals, the Applicant agrees to all the Terms and Conditions outlined in these Guidelines. Furthermore, by submitting an application, the Applicant agrees that GIZ EU4EG project cannot be held liable for any of the costs incurred by it prior to and/or during the application and selection process.

¹ If after the publication of these Guidelines for Applicants or its Annexes errors are found in its content, the corresponding correction/s shall be uploaded on the EU4EG Academy page in the form of numbered corrigendum.



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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---|
| AF | Application Form |
| ASP | Area Science Park |
| BMWK | German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action |
| BSO | Business Support Organisation |
| BSS | Business Support Service |
| CD | Capacity Development |
| CEI | Central European Initiative |
| CfP | Call for Proposals |
| CV | Curriculum Vitae |
| EU | European Union |
| EU4EG | EU for Economic Growth project |
| EUR | Euro |
| FA | Full Application |
| GfA | Guidelines for Applicants |
| GIZ | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit |
| IT | Information Technology |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| KPI | Key Performance Indicator |
| MSME | Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise |
| PP | Project Proposal |
| RES | Renewable Energy Sources |
| WP | Work Package |



I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The project “EU for Economic Growth (EU4EG)” aims at increasing the local economic activity and competitiveness in four target areas: North-East, Polog, and South-West planning regions and Prespa area (Municipality of Resen) by improving access of start-ups and Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) to financing and high value-added services. The duration of the project is four years until 01/2025. The EU4EG project is co-funded by the European Union Delegation to North Macedonia and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK). The project is implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) in partnership with Area Science Park (ASP) from Trieste, Italy and supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) and the Central European Initiative (CEI) as Associates.

The project will achieve its objective by implementing work packages under 3 major components:

- (i) working on the business advisory services for start-ups and different segments of MSMEs by size and sector
- (ii) improving business support infrastructure in the targeted areas
- (iii) by disbursing grants, targeting start-ups and high value-added business initiatives including those related to the green and circular economy

The target groups for the EU4EG project include businesses owned or majority employing people under 40 years old; women; and vulnerable groups. The types of economic activities include the Circular economy and green economy; Innovation and IT; and Highly competitive/growth potential economic sectors. In the frame of the Component 3 “Support selected high value-added business initiatives” it is planned to provide non-reimbursable financial support to start-ups and growth potential businesses complementary to the expert support provided to the applicant companies under other project components.

GIZ has launched the 1st Call for Proposals (CfP) as a two steps procedure (Concept Note and Full application) on 13 April 2022 for the MSMEs with growth potential established in the Republic of North Macedonia with physical office/premises and staff in the four target areas. Deadline for submission of Concept Notes was 16 May 2022, while the deadline for submission Deadline for submission of Full Applications was 04 August 2022. After the evaluation and selection of the applicants it was realized that there is not sufficient number of quality applications from North-East.

Thus, the GIZ as Contracting Authority is exercising the right to publish additional Call for the remaining amount which was not allocated.

Through this Call for Proposals, EU4EG project shall identify MSMEs with growth potential established in the Republic of North Macedonia with physical office/premises and staff in one out of the four target areas (North-East region) which shall be provided with non-reimbursable financial support (grants) which shall be complemented with business support services (BSSs) provided by local Business Support Organisations (BSOs). The grants shall be mainly used by MSMEs for introducing new innovative technologies, technology lines, machinery and equipment, production methods with an impact in improving business processes, and production efficiency to increase their competitiveness.



II. OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

II.1. Objectives

The **Overall Objective** of this Call for Proposals is to contribute in increasing the local economic activity and competitiveness in the target area of the North-East region by improving access of existing MSMEs to high value-added business support services and financing.

The **Specific Objectives** of this Call for Proposals are to:

- operationalize growth plans resulting from local BSOs' support.
- provide non-reimbursable financial support (grants) to MSMEs with growth potential complemented with BSSs provided by local BSOs.
- increase competitiveness of MSMEs by introducing innovative technologies, technology lines, machinery and equipment, production methods with an impact in improving business processes, and production efficiency.
- support high value-added business initiatives including those related to the green and circular economy.

This Call for Proposals has a **specific geographic focus** on the target area of the North-East region in the Republic of North Macedonia.

The Call for Proposals targets **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with growth potential** established in the Republic of North Macedonia with physical office/premises and staff in the two target areas.

The North Macedonia market is relatively small and dominated by MSMEs with low competitiveness and innovation capacity, and low export potential. If foreign direct investments exist, these internationally oriented actors are not linked with the local businesses. There is high disparity in development between the capital and the target regions. There is no systematic provision of advisory services, and what does exist is fragmented and of varying quality. The innovative activity in the country, especially in the business-sector, is marginal - making the awareness raising and entrepreneurial development aspects of this action of fundamental importance.

Sales of new to market and new to firm innovations as a percentage of turnover are significantly below the EU average. The innovation rate, an indicator that measures the degree to which products or services are new to at least some customers and that few/no businesses offer the same product, is also below the EU average. The skills indicators also exhibit poor performance.

The national SME strategy 2018-2023 identifies challenges including that: BSSs are mostly provided directly by government and international partners and donors and very rarely from the private sector; there is insufficient capacities of BSOs to offer services based on the latest trends such as internationalisation, innovative solutions in investing in renewable energy sources (RES); there is limited access to financing and financial services and low use of alternative financing instruments; high cost of bank loans; an underdeveloped entrepreneurship culture; low access to skilled workforce; and insufficient membership and/or passive membership in business or employers' association.



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Furthermore, there is a lack of systematic and continuous business support to MSMEs on local/regional level. Despite constant development of strategies and programmes, a functional and effective support system for MSMEs is still not in place. In addition, there is a lack of thorough analysis of real needs of MSMEs differentiated by size & sector. The companies are not always willing to disclose “publicly” issues related to their business, making the mentoring/coaching approach much more effective and appreciated. On the other hand, there is no developed culture to pay for the offered advisory services vis-à-vis the quality of the BSSs offered.

The growth of local MSMEs is limited by both, internal factors like their managerial and organisational capacity as well as unfavourable framework conditions. Overcoming the lack of investment, modernisation of production lines, competitiveness and know-how as well as the poor products standards and quality are still among the top priorities of targeted MSMEs.

This is particularly important against the prospect of closer trade with the EU following a future approximation, which presents increasing opportunities for the country. At the same time progress towards the future adoption of the *acquis* requires significant regulatory changes, giving rise to substantial investment needs for MSMEs in order to comply with the new standards. The relevant *acquis* covers relevant EU directives, related to product safety, health and safety at work, all kind of industries and environment. EU Standards are an important tool for enhancing MSMEs’ competitiveness as they help to reduce technical barriers to trade, reduce costs, and facilitate MSMEs’ access to markets. However, the investments are often not undertaken due to lack of awareness of MSMEs of the applicable regulations and compliance standards, coupled with limitations of access to suitable medium/long term financing.

Manufacturing and other value-added companies are of particular importance for local competitiveness. For ex., the agri and food processing companies will need to adjust especially regarding sanitary and phytosanitary aspects. This will necessitate not only additional investment into new equipment, but also adopting new managerial and production processes, including preparation for increased inspections and application of new technical and sanitary standards.

Next to standardisation and an enhancement of product quality, MSMEs’ competitiveness will also require investment into product development and diversification. Innovation in products, services and processes will boost economic growth and job creation.

The EU4EG project has introduced a process that has several steps that should reinforce the provision of high-quality BSSs to MSMEs: 1) Support for Capacity Development (CD) of local BSOs through dedicated EU4EG Academy Platform; 2) The BSOs, with their newly acquired capacity and knowledge, approach and work with client MSMEs; 3) In their work with client MSMEs they shall identify growth opportunities and/or opportunities to become greener and more resource efficient, etc.; 4) As an assistance to implement this pre-identified solutions, the MSMEs shall then apply for a grant to this Call for Proposals.

This Call for Proposals aims at tackling the above constraints. Through the provided grants local MSMEs could not only improve their financial and creditworthiness capacities, thus allowing for further investments boosting the local economy, but also enhance their managerial, technical, and business capacities, improve their business performance in terms of turnover, export potential and profit and therefore create new jobs, introduce new products and services, etc.



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MSMEs will have multiple benefits from this Call: grants for purchase of technologies, machinery and equipment to selected MSMEs with high value-added business initiatives complemented with basic and advanced BSSs (increase in number/quality) delivered by local BSOs, which will lead to improved performance in terms of turnover, exports and profit. They will increase their offer with new services/products in line with the EU Green Deal to move towards the green and circular economy which has more value-added and increased profit margin. The MSMEs will also benefit from improved information and networking.

Unemployed persons will benefit from improved job offers / jobs created in the supported MSMEs, and in particular in companies managed by women, young people (U40) and people belonging to vulnerable groups and minorities. Population in the four target regions benefits from improved environment due to investments in green / circular economy, increased income due to new job offers, faster economic development and better standard of living.

The objectives of all proposals as a whole shall be assessed / evaluated in terms of the potential it provides for the target group (MSMEs), after participation in such an initiative, to undergo positive changes at organisational and individual level and to capitalize from the envisaged intervention in the long-term (impact).

The measures which could make this impact possible are mainly modernisation of the production lines, equipment, and similar “hard” measures. The automated systems and machineries substantially contributed to increase the production capacity, to reduce production costs, and also to diversify the products. These instruments positively affected the MSMEs capabilities to strive and to meet the market demands, to invest in new premises, in new production lines, or to export their products.

Support will be provided to innovation projects underpinned by a sound **Business Plan** (Annex B.2).

Support will be also provided for the standardisation of existing processes; the design or production of new products, processes or services and favours their readiness to face market competition, underpinned by a sound action plan incorporating a detailed commercialisation strategy and a financing plan in view of market launch (e.g. on how to attract private investors, if applicable).

The beneficiaries of the financial support under this Call for Proposals will be **MSMEs that are identified through the network of advanced BSSs and which are already beneficiaries of the proposed services**. Thus, the concentration of advisory and financial support will increase significantly the chances for the company survival and growth.

IMPORTANT NOTE: It is thus important that MSMEs interact with the local BSOs/ use BSSs provided by the local BSOs (those already supported by the EU4EG project) that could help them to identify their growth opportunities.

In this regard, the MSMEs which intends to apply to this Call, shall provide together with the Full Application a supporting document prepared by a local BSO where it will be clearly indicated that the project proposal is identified/recommended in such process and it is a result of the use of BSSs originating from the EU4EG Academy/ Catalogue of BSSs (e.g. Innovation audit, Energy audit for



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industrial processes, Circular business model assessment, Product development roadmap, Export Audit, Export Plan, Quality readiness assessment, etc.) provided by the local BSOs or in networking with other BSOs (Note: [LINK](#) to the Catalogue of BSSs).

II.2. Target Group

The **Target Group** of this Call for Proposals are Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) established in the Republic of North Macedonia with physical office/premises and staff in the four target areas, with high-growth potential, preferably owned or majority employing people under 40 years old; women; and vulnerable groups. The types of economic activities of the MSMEs include the circular economy and green economy; Innovation and IT; and competitive/growth potential economic sectors such as:

- North-East planning region
 - Manufacturing
 - Textile and Leather industry
 - Food and agricultural production.

This Call for Proposals is targeting individual active companies (MSMEs) in the abovementioned target area, and, more specifically, those that have high growth potential. These can be sectoral (based on specific regional economic activities and cluster/value chain opportunity) or horizontal (based on individual company growth potential).

Innovative project proposals in other sectors will be also considered given that they satisfy other eligibility and quality criteria.

II.3. Final beneficiaries

The **Final beneficiaries** of this Call for Proposals is the population in the target area of the North-East planning region in the Republic of North Macedonia, and people below 40 years of age and/or women and/or people belonging to vulnerable groups and minorities.



III. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION

The overall indicative amount made available under this Call for Proposals is 275.000,00 EUR. The GIZ as Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award all available funds if there are not sufficient number of applications with the required quality. The GIZ as Contracting Authority reserves also the right to publish additional Calls if there is not sufficient number of applications.

Size of grants

Any grant requested under this Call for Proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts of total eligible costs of the action:

- **Minimum: 50.000 EUR and**
- **Maximum: 100.000 EUR**

Any grant requested under this Call for Proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum percentages of total eligible costs of the action:

- **Minimum: 20%**
- **Maximum: 50%**

The balance (i.e. the difference between the total cost of the action and the amount requested from the Contracting Authority) must be financed from sources other than the European Union Budget or the European Development Fund² or BMWK.

Selected Applicants will sign Grant Agreement (Annex G) with GIZ which shall stipulate the roles and responsibilities of the Applicant and the GIZ including their respective financial contribution. In this regard, both GIZ and the Applicant shall have full responsibility for ensuring that their respective contribution to the action is implemented in accordance with the Grant Agreement.

² Where a grant is financed by the European Development Fund, any mention of European Union financing must be understood as referring to European Development Fund financing.



IV. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

- (1) the Actors:
 - The Applicant, i.e. the entity submitting the Full Application form (IV.1.),
- (2) the Actions:
 - Actions for which a grant may be awarded (IV.2.);
- (3) the Costs:
 - Types of cost that may be considered in setting the amount of the grant (IV.3.).

IV.1. Eligibility of Applicants

IV.1.1. Eligibility of the Applicant: Who may apply?

(1) In order to be eligible for funding, Applicants **must**:

- be a legal person; and
- fall under the EU “Small and Medium Enterprise” definition³: consist of fewer than 250 employees and have EITHER an annual turnover not exceeding 50 Million EUR, OR an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 Million EUR⁴; and
- be established⁵ in the Republic of North Macedonia at least 36 months⁶ before the deadline for submission of this Call for Proposals⁷; and
- has physical office/premises and staff in North-East region in the Republic of North Macedonia, and
- have sufficient technical, financial and managerial capacity to implement the project proposal, and
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action, not acting as an intermediary, and
- is beneficiary of the other activities of the EU4EG project, such as the proposed business support services
- submit a document prepared by a local BSOs where the project proposal is identified/recommended based on the provided business support service from the EU4EG

³ Applicants should provide a Self-declaration (Annex A.3) concerning the number of employees and financial data

⁴ COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium- sized enterprises (2003/361/EC):

Company category Staff headcount Turnover or Balance sheet total:

| | | | |
|--------------|-------|----------|----------|
| Medium-sized | < 250 | ≤ € 50 m | ≤ € 43 m |
| Small | < 50 | ≤ € 10 m | ≤ € 10 m |
| Micro | < 10 | ≤ € 2 m | ≤ € 2 m |

⁵ To be determined on the basis of the organisation’s statutes, which should demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the national law of the Republic of North Macedonia and that it has established physical office/premises and staff in an eligible target area. In this respect, any legal entity whose statutes have been established in another country cannot be considered an eligible local organisation, even if the statutes are registered locally or a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ has been concluded.

⁶ The company shall have completed and has submitted financial report for at least 3 financial years (2020, 2021, 2022)

⁷ It can be sum of the period of establishment as a result of the business growth and transformation of the legal entity (e.g. farm to production, trade to production, services to production, etc.). The Applicant shall provide combination of financial reports for at least 3 financial years (2020, 2021, 2022) for the associated legal entities. The Applicant shall also provide a proof for business continuity (e.g. transfer of fixed assets, etc.).



Catalogue (e.g. Innovation audit, Energy audit for industrial processes, Circular business model assessment, Product development roadmap, Export Audit, Export Plan, Quality readiness assessment, etc.).

In addition to the listed categories, and in order to avoid conflict of interests and double funding, the following **may not participate** in this Call:

- MSMEs established in North Macedonia and have shareholders which are either German commercial (non-public-benefit) corporation under private law or foreign legal entities with registered office in the EU/EEA that are subject to limited tax liability in Germany⁸.

(2) Potential applicants may not participate in Calls for Proposals or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations listed in the Declaration of honour by the Applicant (Annex F.1). The Applicant must declare that the Applicant itself, is not in any of these situations.

IV.1.2. Eligibility of the Co-applicants

Participation of Co-applicants is NOT foreseen under this Call for Proposals.

IV.1.3. Affiliated entities

The Applicant may act with Affiliated entity(ies).

Only the following entities may be considered as Affiliated entities to the Applicant: those having a structural link with the Applicant, in particular a legal or capital link.

This structural link encompasses mainly the following notion: Control, as defined in Directive 2013/34/EU on the annual financial statements, consolidated financial statements and related reports of certain types of undertakings.

Entities affiliated to the Applicant may hence be:

- Entities directly or indirectly controlled by an Applicant (daughter companies or first-tier subsidiaries). They may also be entities controlled by an entity controlled by an Applicant (granddaughter companies or second-tier subsidiaries) and the same applies to further tiers of control;
- Entities directly or indirectly controlling the Applicant (parent companies). Likewise, they may be entities controlling an entity controlling the applicant;
- Entities under the same direct or indirect control as the Applicant (sister companies).

The structural link shall, as a general rule, be neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation. This means that the link would exist independently of the award of the grant; it should exist before the call for proposals and remain valid after the end of the action.

What is not an affiliated entity?

The following are not considered entities affiliated to an Applicant:

⁸ Foreign corporations are subject to limited tax liability in Germany if they generate taxable income in Germany (§ 49 German Income Tax Act (EStG))



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- Entities that have entered into a (procurement) contract or subcontract with an applicant, act as concessionaires or delegates for public services for an applicant,
- Entities that receive financial support from an applicant,
- Entities that cooperate on a regular basis with an applicant on the basis of a memorandum of understanding or share some assets,
- Entities that have signed a consortium agreement under the grant contract.

How to verify the existence of the required link with an applicant?

The affiliation resulting from control may be proved on the basis of the consolidated accounts of the group of entities the applicant and its proposed affiliates belong to.

If the applicants are awarded a grant contract, their affiliated entity(ies) will not become beneficiary(ies) of the action and signatory(ies) of the grant contract. However, they will participate in the design and in the implementation of the action. They may also provide third sources financing.

Affiliated entity(ies) must satisfy the same eligibility criteria as the Applicant. They must sign the Affiliated entity(ies) statement in Annex A.1., Section 5.

IV.1.3. Associates and Contractors

The following entities are not Applicants and do not have to sign any mandate:

- Associates

Other organisations or individuals may be involved in the action. Such Associates play a real role in the action, but may not receive funding from the grant, except for per diem or travel costs. Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in section IV.1.1. Associates must be mentioned in the Full Application (Annex A.2), Section 5 “Associates participating in the action”.

- Contractors

The Beneficiaries are permitted to award contracts. Associates cannot also be Contractors in the project. Contractors are subject to the procurement rules which apply in the beneficiary country and shall in any case comply with the provisions in the Article 6 of the Standard Grant contract as well as the Procurement Guidelines (Annex 4a of the Standard Grant contract), which are its integral part. The contract award procedure, including but not limited to all decisions in this context, shall be documented in accordance with the template provided in the Procurement documentation template (Annex 4b of the Standard Grant contract).

IV.2. Eligibility of Actions

Definition

An action (or project) is composed of a set of activities.

Specific instructions

All project proposals must demonstrate that they:

- provide benefit to the main target groups of the EU4EG project, that is people below 40 years of age and/or women and/or people belonging to vulnerable groups and minorities; and
- ensure the highest impact on the local economies in terms of additional income and profit, exports, innovation, job creation (especially for people below the age of 40, women and vulnerable people) and contribution to green economy, circular economy; and
- demonstrate a strong commitment for the green and circular economy and takes measures towards a zero pollution and zero waste model to prevent negative impact on the environment and climate



change (e.g. using advanced / clean / climate friendly technology for production; using less materials and ensure that products can be reused, recycled; taking measures to prevent waste and pollution being generated as well as measures to clean and remedy it; environment friendly packaging of products; commitment for efficient energy use, promoting green energy, etc.).

Important note: Each project proposal must contribute (OBLIGATORY) to the achievement of the following EU4EG project indicators:

1. Number of supported MSMEs in:
 - a. Circular economy and green economy
 - b. Innovation and ICT
 - c. Highly competitive economic sectors (based on regional value chain analysis)
 - d. Rural development (based on regional value chain analysis)
2. Number of new jobs (of which women/under 40s/marginalised/vulnerable groups)
3. Number of new products/services provided by supported MSMEs
4. Improved performance of supported MSMEs (turnover, profit and exports)
5. Number of business support services used by MSMEs from BSOs (of which number of advanced services)
6. Decrease in emission of CO₂ (tons/ CO₂)

Those indicators must be considered when defining the results and the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the action (See Sections 2.1.1. and 2.1.4. of the Full Application Form (Annex A.1.)). Those KPIs should be clearly specified in a Logical Framework Matrix (LFM) for the project proposal. The template of the LFM is provided in Annex C.

In their submission, Applicants must also provide the following information in their Full Application:

- Proof that the action is identified/recommended in a process for identification of growth opportunities as a result of their interaction with a local BSOs and/or use of BSSs provided by the local BSOs originating from the EU4EG Academy/ Catalogue of BSSs (e.g. Innovation audit, Energy audit for industrial processes, Circular business model assessment, Product development roadmap, Export Audit, Export Plan, Quality readiness assessment, etc.);
- Explicitly explain how the action supports and contributes to the achievement of the Overall Objective and the Specific Objectives of the Call, stated in Section II.1 of this document;
- Provide a thorough strategy on how the Specific Objectives will be achieved;
- Provide the overall design of the project proposal, including a set of diverse activities oriented to the achievement of measurable results in line with the abovementioned Specific Objectives, and a realistic action plan;
- Provide realistic budget based on market research, with well justified activities and taking into consideration eligibility of all costs according to the Call.

The Full Application (Annex A.1) should be accompanied with:

- Supporting document prepared by a local BSO according the BSSs provided (the template is pre-specified with the used tool/methodology for provision of the BSS as published in the EU4EG catalogue of advanced services for SMEs - [LINK](#));
- Self-declaration (Annex A.2);



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- Detailed budget (Annex B.1);
- Business Plan (Annex B.2);
- Logical Framework Matrix (Annex C);
- Other supporting documents (see Section VI.2.2.1. for description).

IMPORTANT NOTE: Information across all documents shall be harmonised (for ex. titles of the planned activities shall be identical in all documents, costs shall be identical, etc.)

IV.2.1. Duration

The expected overall duration of the Project Proposals may not exceed **12 months**.

IV.2.2. Location

The actions must be implemented in the Republic of North Macedonia, and in the following target area:

- North-East planning region.

IV.2.3. Priority sectors and themes

The actions shall support specific types of economic activities of the MSMEs such as:

- Circular and Green economy in line with the EU Green Deal
- Innovation
- Digitalisation
- Competitive/growth potential economic sectors in the target areas as follows:
 - North-East planning region
 - Manufacturing
 - Textile and leather industry
 - Food and agricultural production

Innovative project proposals in other sectors will be also considered given that they satisfy other eligibility and quality criteria.

IV.2.4. Type of Actions

Indicative types of actions which may be supported under this Call for Proposals shall include those leading to the sophistication and innovation of MSMEs' processes, systems and products. The following list is not exhaustive and appropriate innovative actions that are not mentioned below may also be considered for support:

- 1) Introducing of NEW innovative technologies, technology lines, machinery and equipment, production methods with an impact in improving business processes, product quality and production efficiency;
- 2) Construction of production/storage facilities provided that the amount does not exceed 25% of the total grant requested;
- 3) Construction works linked to the installation of movable equipment purchased under the Call (see the limitation under 2);
- 4) Expanding and improving production or services for the internal market and/or for export;
- 5) Introduction of measures to improve marketing/packaging of products/export strategies;
- 6) Upgrade the product service by purchasing and installing equipment and/or ICT solutions;
- 7) Purchasing of equipment, machinery, production line, software, and similar and/or improvement of production process;



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- 8) Introduction of environmental measures in line with the EU Green Deal;
- 9) Upgrading businesses to meet food/product safety standards and/or products market quality;
- 10) Measures that facilitate the commercial exploitation of innovative investments (standardisation process, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources, circular economy, ICT improvement, etc.)
- 11) Processes and products leading to EU Standards conformity certification only as part of the action and not the sole activity;
- 12) Specialised training, but only if related to the above-mentioned investments.

The following types of actions are ineligible:

- actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses;
- one-off events such as conferences, round tables, seminars and similar events. Such events may be financed if they are part of a wider action;
- actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- actions already totally or partially financed by another donor;
- preparatory studies or the preparation of preliminary / main designs for works to be carried out as part of the project.
- actions with negative impacts on the environment.
- actions linked to political parties.

IV.2.5. Type of Activities

The following types of activities are eligible:

- Purchase of new modern machinery and equipment, production lines, tools and measurement instruments for improving business processes, product quality and production efficiency;
- Construction works *provided that the amount does not exceed 25% of the total grant requested*;
- Purchase of business support services, for ex. certification and accreditation; testing, training, etc., but *only as part of the action and not the sole activity and/or only if related to the above-mentioned investments*.

IV.2.6. Financial support to third parties

Applicants shall NOT propose financial support to third parties⁹ in order to help in achieving the objectives of the action.

IV.3. Eligibility of Costs

Only “eligible costs” can be covered by a grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for “eligible costs”.

The budget (Annex B.1) must contain sufficient information about the financing of the project as a whole. The budget must be presented in EUR only. For each measure, the budget must clearly show the anticipated cost types and amounts and that part of the total financing package attributable to each financier (including the recipient). This is essential in order to control the use of the funds and allocate costs to each financier.

⁹ These third parties are neither Associates nor Contractors



The following rules apply to all individual items costed in the budget. As a rule, only individual project-specific expenditures may be financed out of the grant.

The settlement of eligible costs may be based on any or a combination of the following forms:

- actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies).
- one or more simplified cost options.

Simplified cost options may take the form of:

- unit costs: covering all or certain specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance by reference to an amount per unit.
- lump sums: covering in global terms all or certain specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance.
- flat-rate financing: covering specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance by applying a percentage fixed ex-ante.

The amounts or rates must be based on estimates using objective data such as statistical data or any other objective means or with reference to certified or auditable historical data of the applicants or the affiliated entity(ies). The methods used to determine the amounts or rates of unit costs, lump sums or flat-rates must comply with the criteria established in Annex G and associated annexes, and especially ensure that the costs correspond fairly to the actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies), are in line with their accounting practices, no profit is made and the costs are not already covered by other sources of funding (no double funding). Refer to Annex G and associated annexes for directions and a checklist of controls to assess the minimum necessary conditions that provide reasonable assurance for the acceptance of the proposed amounts.

The **total amount of financing for the following budget categories:**

- **1.3. Per diems for travel**
- **2. Travel**
- **5. Other costs, services**
- **6.2. Business Support Services**

that can be authorised by the GIZ as the Contracting Authority under this Call for Proposals **cannot exceed 20% of the total grant amount requested.**

Travel expenses shall be reimbursed only if the expenses claimed for and the duration of the business trip were necessary for implementing the project and the expenses incurred were appropriate. Lump-sum subsistence and overnight accommodation allowances are provided in the country table in Annex H.

Cost for construction works (budget item 6.1) such as construction of production/storage facilities, installation of movable equipment purchased under the call, etc., must not exceed 25% of the total grant requested.

The Applicant must provide supporting documents related to construction works as specified in the Section VI.2.6.1. Supporting documents. Failure to submit the document may lead to rejection of the proposal. Additionally, in the Budget (Annex B.1), in the worksheet no.2, "Justification of the estimated costs" per each of the corresponding budget item or heading, the Applicants must:



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- describe the information and methods used to establish the amounts of unit costs, lump sums and/or flat rates, to which costs they refer, etc.
- clearly explain the formulas for calculation of the final eligible amount¹⁰;

The budget must show each component of the overall financing arrangement and the allocation of costs to each financier so that the proportion attributable to GIZ can be identified clearly at the point of settlement. They must fall between the maximum percentages of total eligible costs of the action as specified in Section III. The Applicant shall assume an agreed share of the project's expenditures (up to the specified percentage).

Overview of the sources of financing must be provided in the section 2.1.6 of the Full Application, as well as in the worksheet 3 of the budget (Annex B.1), and in particular must clearly indicate the amount requested from the GIZ as the Contracting Authority and Own funds/ third party financing for the action for its total duration.

At contracting phase, the GIZ as the Contracting Authority decides whether to accept the proposed amounts or rates on the basis of the provisional budget submitted by the Applicants, by analysing factual data of grants carried out by the applicants or of similar actions and by performing checks.

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checks preceding the signing of the grant contract do not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (such as arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, unrealistic costs and ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the Contracting Authority to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. It is not possible to increase the grant or the percentage of donor co-financing as a result of these corrections.

It is therefore in the applicants' interest to provide a realistic and cost-effective budget.

If the actual costs for the Project are to be financed by the various parties amount to less than the estimated costs, GIZ is entitled to reduce its grant in the same proportion as the actual costs are reduced in relation to the estimated costs.

IV.3.1. Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under this Call for Proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of the standard GIZ Grant Agreement (see Annex G of the Guidelines)

The following costs are eligible under this Call for Proposals:

- Procurement of goods (e.g. new and modern machinery and equipment, production lines, tools and measurement instruments, etc.);
- Construction works (e.g. reconstruction of production/storage facilities, installation of movable equipment purchased under the call, etc.); Note: must not exceed 25% of the total grant requested;

¹⁰ Examples: for External expert/ Consultant costs: number of hours or days of work * hourly or daily rate pre-set according to the category of personnel concerned;- for Transportation/ travel expenses: distance in km * pre-set cost of transport per km; number of days * daily allowance pre-set according to the country;- for specific costs arising from the organization of an event (e.g. Training costs): number of participants at the event * pre-set total cost per participant etc.



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- External experts / Consultants (e.g. fees for the engaged trainers, moderators and experts for implementing the activities from the grant);
- Training costs (e.g. costs for specialised trainings only if related to the investments foreseen by the project proposal: travel of all participants including the Applicant's staff, hotel costs, materials and other logistical items);
- Transportation (e.g. travel costs for the Applicant's staff for individual activities, e.g. meetings, visit to fairs when purchasing machine/equipment, etc. but only if related to the investments);
- Other costs:
 - Promotion and visibility
 - Bank fees; etc

IV.3.2. Contingency reserve

The budget may NOT include a contingency reserve of the estimated direct eligible costs.

IV.3.3. Eligible indirect costs

Indirect costs will NOT be covered under this Call for Proposals.

IV.3.4. Contributions in kind

Contributions in kind mean the provision of goods or services to beneficiaries free of charge by a third party. As contributions in kind do not involve any expenditure for beneficiaries, they are not eligible costs.

IV.3.5. Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible (the list is not exhaustive):

- a) salary costs of the staff of the Applicant
- b) office costs for the premises of the Applicant
- c) utility costs (electricity, heating, water supply, Internet...)
- d) administrative/ operating/ indirect costs of the Applicant
- e) debts and debt service charges (interest)
- f) provisions for losses or potential future liabilities
- g) costs declared by the Beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action or work programme receiving EU (including through EDF) grant, support from the German Government or any other donor (no double funding)
- h) purchases of land or buildings
- i) cost of rent of land, buildings and offices
- j) costs of works, infrastructure and renovation/refurbishment of buildings if not related to the investment under the Call
- k) currency exchange losses
- l) credits to third parties
- m) taxes, including value added taxes (VAT)
- n) financial penalties and litigation expenses
- o) costs for repair and maintenance of used items or equipment
- p) purchase of second-hand machines and equipment
- q) contributions in kind
- r) costs for preparatory studies or the preparation of preliminary / main designs for works
- s) contingency reserve.



V. VISIBILITY AND PROMOTION

The EU4EG project is co-funded by the European Union Delegation to North Macedonia and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK). The Applicant/Co-applicants/ Affiliated entities are obliged to publicize the funding provided by the donors, namely EU and BMWK. All deliverables, documents developed during the action, as well as reports, must comply with the objectives and priorities, and guarantee the visibility of the donors EU and BMWK. In doing so, they must follow strictly the instruction that will be provided by EU4EG Project, deriving from the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Project.

VI. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

VI.1. Number of applications

Under the this Call for Proposals a legal entity of the:

- The Applicant may submit more than one (1) application under this Call for Proposals.
- However, the Applicant may NOT be awarded more than one (1) grant under this Call for Proposals.

VI.2. Application

VI.2.1. Application package

The text of the Call for Proposals is published on several platforms:

- EU4EG Academy page: [LINK](#)
- GIZ North Macedonia Facebook page: [GIZ North Macedonia | Facebook](#)
- GIZ North Macedonia LinkedIn page: [GIZ North Macedonia: My Company | LinkedIn](#)
- the EU Delegation to North Macedonia web page: [Republic of North Macedonia | EEAS Website \(europa.eu\)](#)

The Guidelines for Applicants (GfA) and the Application Package are published on the EU4EG Academy page: [LINK](#).

Potential applicants (MSMEs) have thus several options to acquire the Guidelines for Applicants (GfA) and the Application Package:

- 1) Request from local BSOs which can download for them from the EU4EG Academy page¹¹; OR
- 2) Request can be made on the following e-mail: EU4EG@giz.de with Subject: Request for obtaining at the GfA and Application Package;
OR
- 3) Request can be made by contacting GIZ Regional Adviser on the following e-mails:
 - North-East planning region: filip.nelkovski@giz.de

The Application by MSMEs shall be made in ONE step:

Step 1: Full Application.

¹¹ This option is in line with the objectives of this Call to foster interaction between the MSMEs and local BSOs.



VI.2.2. Full Application

Applicants must submit a Full Application by using the Full Application form annexed to these Guidelines (Annex A.1).

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the Full Application instructions provided in the Annex A.1. Applicants must submit their Full Applications in English language.

The Full Application (Annex A.1) should be accompanied with:

- Supporting document prepared by a local BSO according the BSSs provided (the template is pre-specified with the used tool/methodology for provision of the BSS as published in the EU4EG catalogue of advanced services for SMEs - [LINK](#));
- Self-declaration (Annex A.2);
- Detailed budget (Annex B.1);
- Business Plan (Annex B.2);
- Logical Framework Matrix (Annex C);
- Other supporting documents (see Section VI.2.2.1. for description).

The Applicants shall provide obligatory as an annex to the Full Application a Supporting document prepared by a local BSO where it will be clearly indicated that the action is identified/recommended in a process for identification of growth opportunities (e.g. investment plan, growth plan, action plan, etc.) of the Applicant as a result of its interaction with a local BSOs and/or is a result of the use of BSSs provided by the local BSOs (e.g. (e.g. innovation audit, EE audit for industrial processes, Circular business model assessment, Product development roadmap, Export Audit, Export Plan, Quality readiness assessment, etc.).

The Applicants must also submit signed Self-declaration (Annex A.2) accompanied with the following documents in pdf format not older than 6 months from the submission deadline:

- a) Copy of the legal representative's identification documents (signed and stamped);
- b) Copy of the Registration certificate issued by the Central Registry of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Further information about the Full Applications

Information events related to this Call for Proposals will be held as follows:

- Online event on 25.04.2023, 11 h using MS Teams platform on the following link: [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- Physical events in the target areas:
 - North-East region:
 - 04.05.2023 in Kumanovo, 11.00 h.

The locations of Information events will be also published in advance on the following [LINK](#) at the EU4EG Academy page and will be also sent via e-mail to the potential applicants which requested the GfA and Application Package.

VI.2.2.1. Other supporting documents

The following supporting documents (Originals or certified copies) must be submitted together with the Full Application in order to allow the Contracting Authority to verify the eligibility of the Applicant:



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1. The statutes or articles of association of the Applicant. Registration documents shall also be submitted as proof of establishment.
2. Applicant's accounts (the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last three (3) financial years for which the accounts have been closed) issued by the Central Registry of the Republic of North Macedonia.
3. Acknowledgement on the number of employees issued by the Pension and Disability Fund of North Macedonia or Employment Service Agency, not older than 3 months, from the deadline for submission of Full Applications;
4. Order form for registration (see Annex D of these guidelines) duly completed and signed by the Applicant.
5. Confirmation of bank details of the Applicant (Annex E of these Guidelines), certified by the bank to which the payments will be made. This bank should be in the country where the Applicant is established. If the Applicant has already submitted the same form in the past for a contract where the GIZ was in charge of the payments and intends to use the same bank account, a copy of the form may be provided instead.

Important note:

All funds made available under the Grant Agreement (when awarded) must be accounted separately from any funds provided by other donors. The Recipient shall open a separate sub-account with its bank or a separate cost unit in its own accounts to settle the financial transactions involved in this Agreement and shall confirm to GIZ that this has been done when submitting its first request for pre-financing instalments. GIZ shall issue all payments to the Recipient's account. The Recipient shall submit confirmation from the bank verifying the account number at the latest together with the first request for the pre-financing instalment and every time a different account number is used.

6. Documentation evidencing the true and accurate nature of the information provided in the Declaration of honour not older than 6 months:
 - 6.1. Certificate for paid taxes and contributions from the Tax Authority of the Republic of North Macedonia;
 - 6.2. Certificate of the registered activity (DRD) issued by the Central Registry of the Republic of North Macedonia;
 - 6.3. Certificate for liquidation procedure for the entity issued by the Central Registry of the Republic of North Macedonia;
 - 6.4. Bankruptcy procedure certificate for the entity issued by the Central Registry of the Republic of North Macedonia;
 - 6.5. Confirmation of a pronounced ancillary punishment - temporary prohibition to perform a certain activity, b) Confirmation of a pronounced ancillary punishment - permanent ban on performing a certain activity, and c) Confirmation of ancillary penalty - prohibition to participate in public call procedures, award of public procurement contracts and public-private partnership contracts, all issued by the Central Registry of the Republic of North Macedonia;
 - 6.6. a) Confirmation of a pronounced misdemeanour sanction - prohibition to perform a profession, activity or duty, b) Confirmation of pronounced misdemeanour sanction - temporary prohibition to perform a certain activity, and c) Confirmation of pronounced misdemeanour sanction - prohibition to perform a profession, activity or duty for a natural person, all issued by the Central Registry of the Republic of North Macedonia.

7. Other supporting documentation not older than 6 months related to:



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7.1. Legal relationship to the premises/ building in which the business is/ will be located and the investment (equipment/ technology) foreseen through this Call for Proposals (copy of the deed or leasing agreement).

7.2. Specific cases mentioned in the footnotes in Section IV.1.1.

7.3. Documents for actions involving **construction works** - All Applicants whose projects include construction works, must provide the following documents in addition to the ones:

7.3.1. Positive Decision on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) OR a statement from the relevant public authority that the latter is not required for planned activities;

7.3.2. Proof of ownership or long-term lease (10 years after signing of the contract) for the land /assets in question;

7.3.3. Preliminary works design or detailed works design;

7.3.4. All necessary legal authorisations (e.g. location and construction permits);

7.3.5. Indicative Bill of Quantities (BoQ) with prices – either in MKD or in EUR

The requested supporting documents must be provided in the form of originals or certified copies, as photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals. Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the EU or in the language of the host country where the action is implemented, a translation into English of the relevant parts of these documents proving the Applicant's eligibility must be attached for the purpose of analysing the application.

Where these documents are in an official language of the EU other than English, it is strongly recommended, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the Applicant's, into English. Note: Documents related to construction works (8.3. above) shall not be translated in English if available in Macedonian language.

Applicants must take into consideration the time necessary to obtain official documents from national competent authorities and to translate such documents in the authorized languages.

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided before the deadline indicated in the request for supporting documents sent to the Applicant by the Contracting Authority, the application may be rejected.

Please note that only the Full Application form and the published annexes which have to be filled-in (Supporting document prepared by a local BSO, Budget, Business Plan, and Logical Framework Matrix) will be transmitted to the evaluators (and assessors, if used). It is, therefore, of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL the relevant information concerning the action. No additional annexes (e.g. offers, invoices, etc.) should be sent.

Any error or any major inconsistency related to the Full Application instructions (e.g. if the amounts in the Budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested when information provided is unclear and, thus, prevents the GIZ as Contracting Authority from conducting an objective assessment.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The description of the project proposal (Full Application) must provide an overview of all the measures and highlight all the technical aspects. The project proposal must be presented in such a way that the relevant



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*GIZ staff can adequately determine whether the project is eligible to receive funding. In cases involving the procurement of materials and equipment, the project proposal and consequently the Grant Agreement must also respect the rule of origin¹² and specify what will happen to the procured items at the end of the project. The Applicant and the Affiliated entity(ies) have the obligation to ensure the sustainability of the operation results in terms of preserving its conditions and ownership for **not less than 5 (five) years after completion of the implementation period of the project.***

VI.2.3. Where and how to send Full Applications

Full Application (Annex A.1.) form together with the **Self-declaration** (Annex A.2), **Budget** (Annex B.1), **Business Plan** (Annex B.2), the **LFM** (Annex C.) and the **Other supporting documents** must be submitted online on the following e-mail: EU4EG@giz.de within the given deadline by stating the Call reference in the subject: EU4EG_MSMEs_2 “Full Application – Name of the Applicant”.

In case the documents exceed the size of 15 MB please divide them in more files and name each consecutive e-mail accordingly. In example, if the documents consist of 3 parts then add in the end of the e-mail subject “1 of 3”, “2 of 3” and “3 of 3” respectively.

Upon submission of a Full Application online, the Applicant will receive an automatic confirmation of receipt via e-mail.

Full Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by hand delivery by fax) will not be accepted. Hand-written Full Applications will not be accepted.

Please note that incomplete Full Applications may be rejected. Applicants are advised to verify that their application is complete using the Checklist (Annex A.1, Section 7).

VI.2.4. Deadline for submission of Full Applications

The deadline for the submission of Full Applications is **20 June 2023, 12:00 h local time.**

Applicants are strongly advised not to wait until the last day to submit their Full Applications, since heavy Internet traffic or a fault with the Internet connection (including electricity failure, etc.) could lead to difficulties in submission. The Contacting Authority cannot be held responsible for any delay due to such afore-mentioned difficulties.

Any application submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

VI.2.5. Further information about the Full Applications

Questions may be sent in writing via e-mail no later than 7 days before the deadline for the submission of Full Applications, indicating clearly the reference of the Call for Proposals (EU4EG_MSMEs_2). Clarifications to questions received after this date will not be provided.

Questions should be sent to the following e-mail address: EU4EG@giz.de .

In order to ensure equal treatment of all applicants, individual replies will NOT be given to Questions. Questions and Answers will be published and updated regularly on the following [LINK](#) at the EU4EG

¹² Within a grant contract, the rules of origin apply only to supply purchase for an amount equal or above 100'000 EUR. For purchase bigger than 100'000 EUR, the tenderer must be requested to state the origin of the supplies, and the selected contractor will always have to prove the origin of the supplies according Common Implementing Regulation (CIR), Article 10 (IPA II).



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Academy page and will be also sent via e-mail to the Applicants on the e-mail stated as main contact address in the application.

Answers to the Questions will be given no later than 5 days before the deadline for submission of the Full Applications.

It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned sources regularly in order to be informed of the Q&A published.

LEGAL DISCLAIMER:

The submission of a project proposal under this Call for Proposals does not lead to a legal entitlement to receive any funding. Any possible funding through GIZ/ EU4EG project within the framework of this Call for proposal will be granted following and in accordance with an appropriate legal and commercial review, about the public-benefit purpose of each project and the non-violation of EU state-aid law. The legal compliance may also require adjustments in respect of the concept of the project proposal submitted as well as the inclusion of corresponding provisions into the contracts governing the use of funding.



VII. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICANTS

For this Call for Proposals, the GIZ will set up a dedicated Evaluation panel composed by international/national experts with extensive expertise in MSMEs' support actions and with specific knowledge of the national/local context, acting under GIZ responsibility for the selection of actions. The selection of the actions is based on the assessment of the received Applications following a standardized procedure, which safeguards the principles of transparency and equal treatment.

The assessment process will be conducted in three stages:

1. Administrative compliance check;
2. Eligibility check;
3. Quality assessment.

for each step, namely Step1: Full Application.

If the examination of the Application at any stage reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in Section IV., the application will be rejected on this sole basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

VII.1. Step 1: Opening & Administrative & Eligibility checks and evaluation of the Full Application

VII.1.1. Opening and Administrative check (Full Application)

Opening & Administrative check will be performed by the EU4EG project team respecting administrative compliance checklist.

Administrative compliance checklist (Full Application)

| # | Criteria | Description | YES | NO | N/A | Comments |
|------|---|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| A.1. | The Full Application has been submitted electronically to the following email address: EU4EG@giz.de | The Full Application has been submitted to the email address: EU4EG@giz.de | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| A.2. | The Full Application is submitted on time. | The Full Application is submitted within the foreseen deadline. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| A.3. | All the documents of the Full Application phase have been duly filled-in and submitted | All the respective documents of the Full Application phase are correctly filled-in (no errors or missing information) and submitted: 1. Full Application (Annex A.1.) 2. Self-declaration (Annex A.2.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |



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|------|--|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| | | 2. Detailed budget (Annex B.1); 3. Business Plan (annex B.2.) 4. Logical Framework Matrix (Annex C); 5. Supporting documentation | | | | |
| A.4. | The Declarations have been duly signed by the legally authorized representatives of the Applicant and Affiliated entity(ies) and stamped | - Self-declaration (Annex A.2.) - Applicant Declaration of honour (Annex F.1.) - Affiliated entity(ies) Declaration of honour (Annex F.2.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| A.5. | Original, official supporting documentation to the Self-declaration of the Applicant is submitted in right format (pdf). | a) Copy of the legal representative's identification documents (signed and stamped); b) Copy of the Registration certificate issued by the Central Registry of the Republic of North Macedonia. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| A.6. | Original, official supporting documentation of the Applicant is submitted and in right format (pdf). | Originals or certified copies of the supporting documents: 1. The statutes or articles of association of the Applicant; Registration documents; 2. Applicant's accounts of the latest three (3) financial years; 3. Acknowledgement on the number of employees issued by the Pension and Disability Fund of North Macedonia or Employment Service Agency (not older than 3 months); 4. Order form for registration (Annex D); | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |



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| | | | | | | |
|-------|--|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| | | 5. Confirmation of bank details of the Applicant (Annex E); 6. Documentation evidencing the true and accurate nature of the information provided in the Declaration of honour (not older than 6 months) 7. Other supporting documentation | | | | |
| A.7. | The Full Application is compiled in the required language | The Full Application is compiled in English language. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| A.8. | The length of the Full Application is according the instructions. | The following parts of the Full Application have the requested length: (i) Description of the action is not exceeding 5 pages; and (ii) the Implementation approach is not exceeding 3 pages; (iii) Indicative action plan is not exceeding 4 pages; (iv) Sustainability of action is not exceeding 2 pages. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| A.9. | Information provided in the Full Application follows the instructions in the grant application form. | Information presented in the Full Application is consistent with instructions in the grant application form (Annex A.2.) and contains all relevant sections. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| A.10. | The Budget is submitted in the required format and contains all relevant information | The Budget (Annex B.1.): (i) is presented in EUR (ii) contains the required information (cost estimates and justification) (iii) amount of requested donor contribution, (iv) percentage of this contribution in relation to the total eligible costs of the action; (v) total budget. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |



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| | | | | | | |
|-------|--|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| A.11. | The Business Plan is submitted in the required format and contains all relevant information | The Business plan (Annex B.2.) contains: - narrative part - financial part | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| A.12. | The Log Frame Matrix is submitted in the required format and contains all relevant information | The LFM (Annex C.) is submitted in the required format and contains the obligatory indicators as required in Section II. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Opening & Administrative check is based on questions which can be answered with “Yes,” “No” or “Not applicable” for particular application.

VII.1.2. Eligibility check (Full Application)

Eligibility check will be performed by the EU4EG project team respecting eligibility checklist.

Eligibility checklist (Full Application)

| # | Criteria | Description | YES | NO | N/A | Comments |
|------|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| E.1. | The Applicant fulfils the criteria for number of applications | - Applicant may submit more than one (1) application under this Call for Proposals. - The Applicant may NOT be awarded more than one (1) grant under this Call for Proposals | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| E.2. | The Applicant is eligible organisation | The Applicant fulfils the criteria in Section IV.1.1. of the GfA | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| E.3. | The Affiliated entity(ies) is eligible organisation | The Affiliated entity(ies) of the Applicant fulfils the criteria in Section IV.1.1. of the GfA | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| E.4. | Time limits for duration of project implementation are respected | The expected overall duration of the project proposals is max. 12 months. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| E.5. | The requested amount of donor contribution is within the range of allowed size of grants. | The requested amount of donor contribution is between the minimum and maximum allowed size of grants. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |



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|-------|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| E.6. | The requested donor contribution is within the range of allowed percentages of total eligible costs of the action | The requested donor contribution is between the minimum and maximum allowed percentages of total eligible costs of the action. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| E.7. | The action is implemented in the target area | North-East planning region | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| E.8. | Project proposal fits the objectives of the Call and the EU4EG project | Thematically the project proposal fits the objectives of the Call and the EU4EG project. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| E.9. | The action fulfils the obligatory requirements | The project proposal demonstrates: - benefit for the main target groups - impact on the local economy - strong commitment for the green and circular economy to prevent negative impact on the environment and climate change. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| E.10. | The action is eligible | The action fits with: - priority themes and sectors - type of actions - type of activities (criteria in Section IV.2. of the GfA) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| E.11. | The costs of the action are eligible | The costs of the action are in line with the criteria in Section IV.2. of the GfA | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| E.12. | The amounts of financing for different budget categories are respected | Budget categories 1.3), 2), 5) and 6.2) - Max. 20% of the total grant amount requested; Construction works in budget category 6) - Max 25% of the grant amount requested | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| E.13. | There is no evidence of double funding of activities | See the statement in the Declaration of honour of the Applicant. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |



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| E.14. | The Applicant is eligible to receive funding under de minimis Regulation | See the statement in the Declaration of honour of the Applicant. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
|-------|--|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|

Eligibility check is based on questions which can be answered with “Yes,” “No” or “Not applicable” for application.

Clarifications regarding Application will be requested from the Applicant only when the information provided within Full Application is unclear or missing and thus prevents the EU4EG project team from conducting an objective assessment. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the Application may be rejected on that sole basis and the Application will not be evaluated further.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Only Full Applications that satisfy all the administrative and eligibility criteria will be subject to Quality assessment.

VII.1.3. Quality assessment (Full Application)

The Full Applications that pass Opening & Administrative & Eligibility checks will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget/ business plan and the capacity of the Applicants. The evaluation criteria used are presented in the evaluation grid below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: selection and award criteria.

The selection criteria help to evaluate the applicant's operational capacity and applicant's financial capacity and are used to verify that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the proposed action and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding;
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action.

For the purpose of the evaluation of the financial capacity, Applicants must provide relevant and up to date information and documents (i.e. accounts of the latest 3 financial years and external audit report). If the provided information and documents are outdated and do not allow for a proper evaluation of the financial capacity, the Application may be rejected.

The award criteria help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives and priorities set forth in the Guidelines, and to award grants to projects which maximize the overall effectiveness of the Call for Proposals. They help to select applications which the Contracting Authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities. They cover the relevance of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the call for proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost- effectiveness. The evaluation grid is divided into sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.



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Evaluation Grid (Full Application)

| Section | Maximum Score |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Financial and operational capacity | 20 |
| 1.1. Do the applicant and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient experience of project management? | 5 |
| 1.2. Do the applicant and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient technical expertise (especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed)? | 5 |
| 1.3. Do the applicant and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient management capacity (including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)? | 5 |
| 1.4. Does the applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance? | 5 |
| 2. Relevance of the action | 30 |
| 2.1. How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the Call for Proposals? | 5x2** |
| 2.2. How relevant to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies) or region(s) is the proposal (including synergy with other EU initiatives and avoidance of duplication)? | 5 |
| 2.3. How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately? | 5 |
| 2.4. Does the proposal contain specific added-value elements, support to people below 40 years of age and/or women and/or people belonging to vulnerable groups and minorities, equal opportunities, support environmental sustainability including EU Green Deal and Circular economy, or job creation, promotion or consolidation of public-private partnerships, innovation and best practice, potential for exports and/or import substitution, [and the other additional elements indicated in the Section II. of these Guidelines]? | 5x2** |
| 3. Effectiveness and feasibility of the action | 20 |



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| 3.1. Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results? | 5 |
| 3.2. Is the action plan clear and feasible? | 5 |
| 3.3. Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable indicators for the outcome of the action? | 5 |
| 3.4. Is the Business Plan realistic and feasible? Does it lead to sustainable business? | 5 |
| 4. Sustainability of the action | 15 |
| 4.1. Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups? | 5 |
| 4.2. Is the proposal likely to have multiplier effects (including scope for replication, extension and information sharing)? | 5 |
| 4.3. Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable?: (1) financially (how will the activities be financed after the funding ends? what are the main conclusions of the Financial projections from the Business Plan?); (2) institutionally (will structures allowing the activities to continue be in place at the end of the action? Will there be local 'ownership' of the results of the action?); (3) environmentally (will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?)" | 5 |
| 5. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action | 15 |
| 5.1. Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget? | 5 |
| 5.2. Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory? Are the financial ratios based on the projections in the Business Plan positive and convincing? | 5x2** |
| Maximum total score | 100 |

**These scores are multiplied by 2 because of their importance.

If the total score for section 1 (financial and operational capacity) is less than 12 points, the application will be rejected. If the score for at least one of the subsections under section 1 is 1, the application will also be rejected.

It is advised that the Applicant provides ratio analysis based on the financial projections in the Business Plan for point 3.4.

If the total score is less than 50 points, the application will be rejected.



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After the evaluation, applications will be ranked according to their score. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this Call for Proposals is reached. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria. This list will be used if more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list.

After that, the evaluation committee will make a final recommendation to the GIZ as the Contracting Authority, which will decide on the award of grants.

Applicant whose application has been provisionally selected or placed on the reserve list will be informed in writing by the GIZ as the Contracting Authority.

LEGAL DISCLAIMER:

Please note that this information provided by GIZ as positive content-related feedback does not lead to a legal entitlement to receive any funding. Any possible funding will only be granted following and in accordance with an appropriate legal and commercial review.



VIII. AWARD AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE

VIII.1. Commercial Eligibility Check

Before the Grant Agreement between GIZ and the conditionally selected Applicant can be signed, GIZ has to perform a Commercial Eligibility Check of the Applicant.

Support of private enterprises under EU4EG aims to improve the competitiveness of local MSMEs in selected target areas of the Macedonian economy with a view to EU accession. This objective is supported by both, BMWK's and EU's development policy. Through EU4EG, BMWK and EU thus stimulate part of North Macedonia's economic and social development which the country is unable to achieve on its own. The grant scheme implemented under EU4EG is therefore clearly geared towards the objective set out in GIZ's statutes, i.e. "Promoting international cooperation for sustainable development".

The Commercial Eligibility Check may be executed at the premises of the Applicant if deemed necessary. GIZ examines whether the potential recipient of the grant is commercially, administratively and legally qualified to assume responsibility for implementing it. This evaluation is performed in line with the standard procedures that GIZ employs for this purpose. This implies checking the accounting procedures, contracting procedures, financial and administrative capacities of the Applicant, including existing manuals. Procurement and contracting procedures should be made available for GIZ. In the case the conditionally selected Applicant does not meet the commercial eligibility criteria, it will be rejected and will be replaced by the next best placed application on the reserve list that falls within the available budget for this Call for Proposals.

VIII.2. Content of the decision

The Applicants will be informed in writing of the Contracting Authority's decision concerning their application and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision. This letter will be sent by e-mail.

An Applicant believing that it has been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may lodge a complaint to the Contracting Authority.

VIII.3. Conditions for implementation after the Contracting Authority's decision to award a Grant

Following the decision to award a grant, the Beneficiary will be offered a Contract based on the Standard Grant contract (see Annex G of these guidelines). By signing the Application Form (Annex A of these guidelines), the applicants agree, if awarded a grant, to accept the contractual conditions of the standard grant contract.

Before signing the contract, GIZ as Contracting Authority may perform on-site visit to the Applicant.

Before signing the contract, the Beneficiary must present the Financial guarantee (assurance of realization) for the total amount of the grant.

DISCLAIMER:

The standard Grant Agreement (Annex G) is aimed at assisting Applicants. It shows the full range of provisions that may be applied to this type of agreement and is provided for information purposes only. The legally binding agreement will be that which is signed by the parties.



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Implementation contracts

Where implementation of the action requires the beneficiary to award procurement contracts, those contracts must be awarded in accordance with the provisions in the Article 6 of the Standard Grant contract as well as the Award Procedure / Procurement Guidelines (Annex 4a of the Standard Grant contract), which are its integral part. The contract award procedure, including but not limited to all decisions in this context, shall be documented in accordance with the template provided in the Documentation of Contract Awards (Annex 4b of the Standard Grant contract).

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The Beneficiary can award service contract from the Grant Agreement to a local BSO if it is clearly indicated in their project proposal (Full Application).

Namely, the Beneficiary can utilise the option for Discretionary award procedure to contract the BSO which supported it to identify growth opportunities and/or opportunities to become greener and more resource efficient as described in the Contract Award procedure for Supplies and Services (Annex 4a) of the Grant Agreement. However, the maximum amount must be lower than 8'000 EUR and with prior approval of the Terms of Reference (ToR) from the Contracting Authority as specified in the Article 4.1 of the Grant Agreement.

Project Audit

If GIZ commissions the certified public accountant to audit the Project as agreed, GIZ will inform the Recipient as to when the audit will take place. The Recipient will be contacted by the certified public accountant in due time and will receive further information about the audit process and the documents needed. Regarding the contractually agreed audits, the Recipient shall be able at the latest two months after each of the agreed audit period(s) to present the relevant documents well-prepared and ready for the audit. The audit report must be in place not later than 12 weeks after expiry of the agreement.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Recipient must be prepared at any time that GIZ or any third parties authorised by GIZ require access to review the books and any other records and documents relevant for the implementation of the Project.

VIII.4. Measures to prevent corruption and the financing of terrorism

In the context of the German Government's foreign trade controls, as well as those of the EU and others, regulations have been put in place which are intended, among other things, to deter the financing of terrorist organisations, to prevent conflict or to assert political demands. This is done, among other things, by the EU directives on combating terrorism, the German Foreign Trade and Payments Act and special embargo directives on specific goods.

GIZ is therefore obliged under European and German law to check sanctions lists relevant to its own commissions and financial transactions, and to act in line with the embargo directives of the German Government and others, and not contravene these regulations. The rationale of these regulations is to prevent terrorists from receiving any financing, either directly or indirectly.

Please note that as part of the eligibility checking process (see section VIII.2) manual sanctions list check is conducted in accordance with the GIZ rules and regulations.



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If the check reveals a match on the sanctions list, i.e. there is a suspicion that the potential partner is on the sanctions list: (i) the IT system generates a report during the automatic check and provisionally blocks any further processing of the transaction; (ii) the manual check may not be proceed any further.

As part of the wider effort to fight corruption in the field of development cooperation, the standard grant Agreement (Annex G) includes explicit article on Anti Money Laundering, countering the Financing of Terrorism, anti-bribery and compliance with embargoes. This article must be included in the agreement.

VIII.5. Data protection

GIZ Office in Skopje attaches great importance to responsible and transparent management of personal data. GIZ processes personal data exclusively in accordance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), EU Regulation 2016/679, the German Federal Data Protection Act (Bundesdatenschutzgesetz, BDSG) and the Law on Personal Data Protection of North Macedonia.

GIZ only processes personal data to the extent necessary following the principle of minimization of data. The Applicant's replies to the questions in the Application Package are necessary to evaluate and further process the application in accordance with the specifications of the Call for Proposals. Personal data will be processed solely for that purpose by the GIZ and ASP. Personal data may be transferred to third parties involved in the assessment process or later in the procedure for grant contract, without prejudice of transfer to the bodies in charge of monitoring and inspection tasks in accordance with EU law.

User data will not be kept any longer than is necessary for the purpose for which it is processed or as required by law.

Note: The results of this Call for Proposals are information of public nature and will be published on the on the following [LINK](#) at the EU4EG Academy and abovementioned platforms after signing the Grant Agreements with the selected Applicants.



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IX. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

| CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR EXISTING MSMEs CALL REF: EU4EG_MSMEs_3 | | |
|---|---|----------------|
| Activity | Timetable | |
| Launch of the Call for Proposals | 13 April 2023 | 12:00 h |
| Information days in Northeast planning region | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online event on 25.04.2023, 11 h using MS Teams platform on the following link: Click here to join the meeting • Physical events in the target areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Northeast region: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 04.05.2023 in Kumanovo, 11 h; <p>The locations of Information events will be also published in advance on the following LINK at the EU4EG Academy page and will be also sent via e-mail.</p> | |
| Requesting any clarifications related to this Call for Proposals | 7 days prior the submission deadline | |
| Publication of Questions & Answers | 5 days prior the submission deadline | |
| Deadline for submission of Full Applications | 20 June 2023 | 12:00 h |
| Information to Applicants on opening, Administrative and eligibility check and the evaluation of the Full Applications (Step 1) | 20 July 2023 | |
| Commercial Eligibility Check of the conditionally selected Applicants | 30 August 2023 | |
| Final selection of the Applicants | 15 September 2023 | |
| Preparation and signing of the Grant Agreements (Contracts) | 30 October 2023 | |

All dates and times are expressed in local (MK) time, where it is not specified otherwise.

This indicative timetable refers to provisional dates (**except for dates for Launch of the Call for Proposals, Info sessions and Deadline for submission of Full Application**) and may be updated by the GIZ as the Contracting Authority during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the following [LINK](#) at the EU4EG Academy and other abovementioned platforms.



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X. ANNEXES

XI.1. Application package (Documents to be completed)

Annex A: Grant Application Form

- A.1. Full Application Form
- A.2. Self-declaration of the Applicant

Annex B: Financial templates

- B.1. Budget
- B.2. Business Plan

Annex C: Logical Framework Matrix

Annex D: Order form for registration

Annex E: Confirmation of bank details

Annex F: F.1. Applicant Declaration of honour

F.2. Affiliated entity Declaration of honour

XI.2. Additional Information

Annex G: GIZ Standard Grant Agreement

- Annex 1: Approved budget
- Annex 2: Approved Project Proposal
- Annex 3: Financial Guidelines for Grant Agreements including its annexes (10/2022)
 - o Annex 3a: Financial guidelines for grant agreements (10/2022)
 - o Annex 3b: Schedule of financial requirement (10/2022)
 - o Annex 3c: Request for Disbursement (10/2022)
 - o Annex 3d/f: Financial report (10/2022)
 - o Annex 3g1: Financial Report inventory-list (10/2022)
 - o Annex 3g2: Record of surrender of equipment and material to the executing organization in the partner country
 - o Annex 3i-j: Calculation of salary costs and Timesheet (10/2022)
- Annex 4a: Procurement Guidelines (10/2022)
- Annex 4b: Procurement documentation template (10/2022)

Annex H: Regulations governing the reimbursement of travel expenses (01/2023)

XI.3. Useful links

PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/aid-delivery-methods-project-cycle-management-guidelines-vol-1_en * * *