



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) TO USE BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES (BSSs) CALL REF: EU4EG_MSMEs_4

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS (GfA)

This CfP is managed on first come – first serve basis observing selection criteria and will be opened until all allocated resources are spent.

1st cut-off date for providing information to successful Applicants: 31 May 2024

2nd cut-off date for providing information to successful Applicants: 1 July 2024

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/ EU4EG web page containing the Application Package with the mandatory application templates¹.

Version 4.0
09 April 2024

NOTICE: This is an open Call for Proposals. **This Call for Proposals has a specific geographic focus on North-East, Polog, Prespa (Municipality of Resen) and South-West regions as project target areas.**

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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Federal Ministry
for Economic Affairs
and Climate Action

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für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

AREA
SCIENCE PARK

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AREA
SCIENCE PARK

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
EoI	Expression of Interest
EU	European Union
EU4EG	EU for Economic Growth project
EUR	Euro
FMEA	Failure Mode and Effects Analysis
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GfA	Guidelines for Applicants
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
IT	Information Technology
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IWI	Inclusive Workplace Integration
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MS	Microsoft Teams
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
PESTLE	Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal and Environmental Analysis
PP	Project Proposal
Q&A	Questions and Answers
RES	Renewable Energy Sources
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis
TO	Target Organisation
ToR	Terms of Reference
VAT	Value Added Tax
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 achieves its objective by implementing Work Packages (WPs) 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.

EU4EG project Component 1 (C1) “Improve business support services for start-ups and MSMEs” has an objective to provide access to high-quality business support services (BSSs) for MSMEs² as target organisations (TOs) with a special focus in areas related to green and circular economy, innovation, IT, marketing, export, business financing, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), standardization, environment and climate friendly technologies and processes, etc.

In the period April – August 2021, the first version of the Catalogue of advanced BSSs for MSMEs was developed based upon findings from the needs analysis, while in the period July – October 2022, its second version was developed, later in the period July – August 2023 its third version was developed and finally in the period November 2023 – January 2024, its fourth version was developed integrating the tools / methodologies provided through three cycles of delivery.

The purpose of the Catalogue and of the subsequent capacity building programme is to provide a comprehensive set of new or upgraded BSSs which BSOs operating in target regions will be able to provide to TOs.

The Catalogue includes the following themes and sectors of reference identified based on a needs analysis:

- 1) Innovation & ICT/digitalization
- 2) Entrepreneurship culture, management skills, company competitiveness & productivity

² Start-ups are the other target organization for which specific support have been provided through regional acceleration programmes hosted by local BSOs.

- 3) EU Green Deal
- 4) Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)
- 5) EU funding (specific for companies)
- 6) Quality and safety
- 7) Export and access to external markets
- 8) Standardization
- 9) Design of new products and improvement of existing ones (including electronic design)
- 10) Marketing, promotion and communication of products and services
- 11) Finance and financial services, access to funds and financial facilitation
- 12) Inclusive entrepreneurship
- 13) Tools to support BSOs' activity
- 14) Change management.

The Catalogue was validated by project partners and quadruple helix actors including representatives of BSOs. The Catalogue was made public through awareness raising events and other communication actions. The Catalogue is published in a dedicated platform ("EU4EG Academy"), used for all CD measures in the frame of the project.

In February 2024, the EU4EG launched a Call for Expression of Interest (EoI) for BSOs for delivery of Business Support Services (BSSs) from the Catalogue of advanced BSSs published by the project at the EU4EG Academy. Namely a short-list with qualified BSOs has been established (Annex B) based on their application. Only short-listed ones are eligible to be engaged by the MSMEs under this Call for MSMEs to deliver the BSSs.

Through this Call for Proposals (CfP), EU4EG project shall identify MSMEs with growth potential established in the four target areas which shall be provided with non-reimbursable financial support to use business support services (BSSs) provided by local BSOs. The support shall be exclusively used by MSMEs for business supports services from the EU4EG Catalogue of advanced services for MSMEs.

The Call for Proposal will be managed on first come – first serve basis observing selection criteria and will be opened until all allocated resources are spent. However, the successful applicants will be informed according the following schedule:

- 1st cut-off date for providing information to successful Applicants: 31 May 2024
- 2nd cut-off date for providing information to successful Applicants: 1 July 2024

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

II.1. Objectives

The **Overall Objective** of this CfP is to contribute in increasing the local economic activity and competitiveness in the four target areas of the Republic of North Macedonia by improving access of existing MSMEs to high value-added business support services.

The **Specific Objectives** of this CfP are to:

- support the MSMEs with growth potential to use BSSs provided by local BSOs.
- identify growth opportunities resulting from local BSOs' support.

- increase competitiveness of MSMEs by introducing new and improving existing products/ services, business processes, and production efficiency.
- identify high value-added business initiatives including those related to the digitalisation, green and circular economy.

This Call for Proposals has a **specific geographic focus** on the target areas of the North-East, Polog, Prespa (Municipality of Resen) and South-West regions in the Republic of North Macedonia.

The Call for Proposals targets **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with growth potential established in the four target areas.**

The North Macedonia market is relatively small and dominated by MSMEs with low competitiveness and innovation capacity, and low export potential. There is high disparity in development between the capital and the target regions. There is no systematic provision of business support services, and what does exist is fragmented and of varying quality. On the other hand, there is no developed culture to pay for the offered advisory services by the MSMEs vis-à-vis the quality of the BSSs offered by BSOs.

This CfP aims at tackling the above constraints except for investments. MSMEs will have the following benefits from this CfP: support for purchase of BSSs (increase in number/quality) delivered by local BSOs, which will lead in mid- to long-term 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.

The objectives of all proposals as a whole shall be evaluated in terms of the potential they provide for the target group (MSMEs), after participation in such an initiative, to undergo positive changes at organisational and individual level and to capitalize them in the mid to long-term (impact).

The measures which could make this impact possible are completely “soft” measures. Some of those measures are of higher priority and thus obligatory (digitalisation, introduction of green and circular economy measures, protection of IPR and product development). Support will be also provided for other BSSs (e.g. the standardisation of existing processes; marketing, exports, etc.).

The beneficiaries of the financial support under this CfP will be MSMEs that are identified through the network of advanced BSSs but have NOT benefited yet of the proposed services. Thus, the provided advisory support will increase significantly the chances for those companies to raise additional funding in mid- to long-term which is crucial for their survival and growth.

IMPORTANT NOTE: It is thus important that MSMEs interact with the local BSOs (those short-listed by the EU4EG project in a separate open procedure) and engage them to provide BSSs which could help them to identify their growth opportunities. In doing so, they shall request from local BSOs to present the offer of BSSs (Note: [LINK](#) to the Catalogue of BSSs at the EU4EG academy³).

³ Access to the EU4EG Academy is granted only to registered users from the local BSOs.

In this regard, the MSMEs which intends to apply to this Call, shall provide in their Application Form (AF) a preference for: (i) BSSs originating from the EU4EG Academy/ Catalogue of BSSs (obligatory ones as well the other optional) and (ii) local BSOs from the short-list which will deliver those BSSs (provided in Annex B). **Clearly, the value of the support for the MSMEs is not in the provided financial contribution, but rather in the access to BSSs, information and networking.**

II.2. Target Group

The **Target Group** of this Call for Proposals are Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) established in one of 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.
- Polog planning region
 - Manufacturing
 - IT
 - Food and agricultural production
- South-West planning region and Prespa area (Municipality of Resen)
 - Manufacturing
 - ICT
 - Sustainable tourism
 - Food and agricultural production.

This CfP is targeting individual active companies (MSMEs) in the abovementioned target areas, 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). Project Proposals (PP) in other productive sectors (those which bring/create income in the target regions) 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 four target areas 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 **60.000 EUR** (4 target areas x 100 expert days x 150 EUR/day). 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 support

Any support requested for BSSs under this Call for Proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum number of expert days:

- **Minimum: 5 expert days and**
- **Maximum: 10 expert days.**

The maximum acceptable expert fee is **150 EUR gross/day**, all costs inclusive.

Any support requested under this Call for Proposals must be up to **max. 50%** of total costs.

The total costs shall be calculated as a product of the total number of expert days (donor contribution and own contribution) and the expert fee. The total max. support per company is **1.500 EUR**.

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 Fund⁴ or BMWK.

IV. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

(1) the Actors:

- The Applicant, i.e. the entity submitting the Application Form (IV.1.),

(2) the Actions:

- Actions for which a support may be awarded (IV.2.);

(3) the Costs:

- Types of cost that may be considered in setting the amount of the support (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
- be established⁵ as per the Law on trade companies in the North-East, Polog, Prespa (Municipality of Resen) and South-West regions in the Republic of North Macedonia at least 36 months⁶ before the date of launching of this CfP; and
- fall under the EU "Small and Medium Enterprise" definition⁷: 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 EUR⁸; and

⁴ Where a grant is financed by the European Development Fund, any mention of European Union financing must be understood as referring to a legal person; and European Development Fund financing.

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 been established 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 reports for at least 3 financial years (2021, 2022, 2023)

⁷ Applicants should provide a Self-declaration (Annex A.3) concerning the number of employees and financial data

⁸ COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium- sized enterprises (2003/361/EC):

- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action, not acting as an intermediary, and
- are not users of previous support in the frame of the EU4EG project (e.g. grants).

(2) 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 the four target areas in the Republic of 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 Germany⁹.
- It has not paid taxes and contributions towards the Tax Authority of the Republic of North Macedonia.
- Allegations have been made or investigations have been carried out in the last five years in relation to the Applicant, members of its executive bodies or executive managers concerning breaches of the law, corruption or other offences (e.g. fraud, misappropriation, breach of trust).
- If the manual check conducted in accordance with the GIZ rules and regulations 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.

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

Participation of Affiliated entities is NOT foreseen under this Call for Proposals.

IV.1.3. Associates and Contractors

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

- Associates

Participation of Affiliated entities is NOT foreseen under this Call for Proposals.

- Contractors

The Beneficiaries shall award contracts to local BSOs as Contractors. The Service Agreement (Contract) can be prepared with a local BSO if it is clearly indicated in the project proposal (Application) of the Beneficiary. Namely, the Beneficiary can utilise the option for Discretionary award procedure to contract that specific BSO mentioned in the Application Form (Section 4.6).

The contract award procedure, including but not limited to all decisions in this context shall be documented.

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

⁹ Foreign corporations are subject to limited tax liability in Germany if they generate taxable income in Germany (§ 49 German Income Tax Act (EStG))

In order to engage the local BSO to deliver the BSSs, the Beneficiary as a Contracting Authority shall prepare a draft ToR using the template provided in Annex D1. The GIZ shall provide a consent on the ToR before proceeding with the contracting procedure as stipulated in the Article XYZ of the Service Agreement. The beneficiary shall obtain Financial offer from the contractor via e-mail using the template (Annex D.2). All general conditions of the contract are regulated General terms of the Contract (Annex D.3) which is integral part of Service Agreement (Annex D).

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:

- Applicant has selected **at least one obligatory BSSs from the EU4EG catalogue** of advanced BSSs for MSMEs (see section 4.4.1. of the Application Form).
- Support adoption of **green/ circular and/or digital practices** (see section 4.5. of the Application Form)
- The **proposed BSO for delivery of BSSs is from the short-list** (see section 4.6. of the Application Form).

Important note: Each project proposal must contribute (OBLIGATORY) to the achievement of some 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 products/services developed by supported MSMEs
3. Number of business support services used by MSMEs from BSOs (of which number of advanced services).

Those indicators must be considered when defining the results and the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the action (See Sections 4.2. and 4.3. of the Application Form (Annex A.1.)). Those KPIs should be clearly stated in the section 4.3. of the Application Form.

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

- Self-declaration (Annex A.2);
- Other supporting documents (see Section VI.2.2.1. for description).

IV.2.1. Duration

The implementation of the Project Proposals must be finished **until 30.11.2024**.

IV.2.2. Location

The actions must be implemented in the four target areas of the Republic of North Macedonia.

IV.2.3. Priority sectors and themes

The actions shall support specific types of economic activities of the MSMEs stated in Section II.2.

IV.2.4. Type of Actions

Types of actions which may be supported under this CfP shall include those creating pre-conditions for the sophistication and innovation of MSMEs' processes, systems and products. The actions shall be related to the abovementioned thematic areas (1-14) to be considered for support.

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 trainings, conferences, round tables, seminars and similar events;
- 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;
- 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 business support services from the EU4EG catalogue of BSSs and in particular:
 - At least one obligatory BSSs and
 - Other BSSs (optional).

The **obligatory BSSs** are:

- Digital Maturity Assessment
- Business Model Design (Circular business model Canvas)
- Energy Efficiency Audit of industrial processes (PInE Audit Tool)
- Patent Prior-Art Search
- Market Scenario
- Product development roadmap.

Other **optional BSSs** are:

- Technology audit (Analysis of business context and identification of innovation needs)
- Value Proposition & Business Model Design
- Business Model Design (Business Model Canvas, Triple – Layered Business model canvas)
- Patent Landscape
- Quality and safety context of organization (SWOT, PESTLE, Interested parties)
- 5-Why-Analysis
- FMEA
- Export Audit
- Export Plan
- Check list for internal audit for business standardisation
- Non-conformance protocol for business standardisation
- Procedure for performing internal audit for business standardisation
- Program for internal audit for business standardisation

- Report for internal audit for business standardisation
- Digital Marketing Company Audit
- Digital strategy and Digital marketing plan
- Market Strategy
- Marketing Brand Plan
- Marketing Plan
- Cashflow Statement for an existing company
- Financial Ratios for an existing company
- Investment Payback Calculation for an existing company
- Learning Journey for Inclusive Workplace Integration (IWI)
- Container Building for IWI
- INCLEAD Development of an inclusive leadership measurement for IWI
- Inclusion and diversity in Work Groups
- Stakeholder Interviews for IWI
- Ladder of Inference for IWI
- Left hand column for IWI
- Levels of listening for IWI
- Key factors for successful network
- View of the actors in the network - PIANO matrix
- Change Case
- Compelling Vision in change management
- Stakeholder Analysis and Engagement Plan in change management
- Risk Assessment in change management
- Change Readiness Assessment
- Change Communication Plan.

IV.2.6. Financial support to third parties

Applicants shall NOT propose financial support to third parties¹⁰ in order to help in achieving the objectives of the action.

Only “eligible costs” can be covered with the support. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below.

When signing the Service Agreement, the GIZ as the Contracting Authority decides whether to accept the proposed daily fees on the basis of the provisional cost estimate submitted by the Applicants (Section 4.7. of the Application Form), by analysing factual data of actions carried out by the applicants or of similar actions and by performing checks.

If the actual costs for the project are to be financed by the Applicant amount to less than the estimated costs, GIZ is entitled to reduce its contribution in the same proportion as the actual costs are reduced in relation to the estimated costs.

IV.3.1. Eligible direct costs

The following costs are eligible under this Call for Proposals:

¹⁰ These third parties are neither Associates nor Contractors

- External experts / Consultants (e.g. gross fees for the engaged experts/advisors for implementing the BSSs).

IV.3.2. Contingency reserve

The cost estimate may NOT include a contingency reserve.

IV.3.3. Eligible indirect costs

Indirect costs may NOT be covered under this CfP.

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

All other costs are ineligible.

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 is obliged to publicize the funding provided by the donors, namely EU and BMWK. All deliverables, documents developed during the action, 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:

- Applicant may submit only one (1) application.
- Applicant may be awarded only once.

VI.2. Application

VI.2.1. Application package

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

- EU4EG Academy page: [LINK](#)
- EU4EG web 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](#) and the EU4EG web 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) Download from the EU4EG web page: <https>
- 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
 - Polog planning region: evzi.hani@giz.de
 - South-West planning region and Prespa area (Municipality of Resen):
jovan.gavrilovski@giz.de

VI.2.2. Application

Applicants must submit an Application by using the Application Form annexed to these Guidelines (Annex A.1). Application Form must be submitted in accordance with the instructions provided in the Annex A.1. Applicants must submit their Applications in English language.

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

- Self-declaration (Annex A.2);
- Other supporting documents (see Section VI.2.2.1. for description).

The Self-declaration (Annex A.2) must be submitted signed and 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 Applications

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

- Online event on 18.04.2024, 11 h using MS Teams platform on the following link: [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- Physical events in the target areas:
 - Polog planning region
 - 22.04.2024 in Tetovo, 11.00 h.
 - South-West planning region and Prespa area (Municipality of Resen)
 - 23.04.2024 in Ohrid, 11.00 h.
 - 23.04.2024 in Resen, 14.00 h.
 - North-East region:
 - 25.04.2024 in Kumanovo, 11.00 h.

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

The locations of Information events will be also published in advance on the following [LINK](#) at the EU4EG Academy page/ and the [LINK](#) on the EU4EG web 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 Application in order to allow the Contracting Authority to verify the eligibility of the Applicant:

1. Certificate for paid taxes and contributions from the Tax Authority of the Republic of North Macedonia.

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 into English.

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.

Please note that only the Application Form and the published annexes 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.

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 (Application) must provide an overview of all the business support services that will be implemented. The project proposal must be presented in such a way that the relevant GIZ staff can adequately determine whether the project is eligible to receive funding.

VI.2.3. Where and how to send Applications

Application Form (Annex A.1.) together with the **Self-declaration** (Annex A.2) and the **Other supporting documents** must be submitted online on the following e-mail: EU4EG@giz.de by stating the Call reference in the subject: EU4EG_MSMEs_4 "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. Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by hand delivery by fax) will not be accepted. Hand-written applications will not be accepted. Please note that incomplete Applications may be rejected.

VI.2.4. Deadline for submission of Applications

This CfP is managed on first come – first serve basis observing selection criteria and will be opened until all allocated resources are spent. However, the successful applicants will be informed according to the following schedule:

- 1st cut-off date for providing information to successful Applicants: 31 May 2024
- 2nd cut-off date for providing information to successful Applicants: 1 July 2024

Applicants are strongly advised not to wait until the last day to submit their 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 aforementioned difficulties.

VI.2.5. Further information about the Applications

Questions may be sent in writing via e-mail no later than 7 days before the deadline for the submission of Applications, indicating clearly the reference of the Call for Proposals (EU4EG_MSMEs_4). 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 (Q&A) will be published and updated regularly on the following [LINK](#) at the EU4EG Academy page / EU4EG web site 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 Applications.

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

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.

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.

More info on the evaluation process and the related checklists is provided in Annex C.

VIII. AWARD AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE

VIII.1. 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.2. Conditions for implementation after the Contracting Authority's decision to award a support

Following the decision to award a support, the Beneficiary will be offered a Service Agreement (see Annex D). By signing the Application Form (Annex A.1), the applicant agrees, if awarded a support, to accept the contractual conditions of the Service Agreement and the General terms of the Contract.

Before signing the Service Agreement, GIZ as Contracting Authority may organise (online) meeting and/or perform on-site visit to the Applicant.

DISCLAIMER: *The Service Agreement (Annex D) 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.*

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Selected Applicants will sign tri-partite Service Agreement (Annex D) with the GIZ and the BSO which shall stipulate the roles and responsibilities of the Applicant and the GIZ including their respective financial contribution as well as of the BSO in terms of service delivery. 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 Service Agreement. Disbursement in the frame of this support will take the form of final instalment by GIZ for its contribution towards the BSO, but only after evidence is provided by the Beneficiary (deliverables produced and bank statement as a proof that the payment to the BSO as a Contractor for their part of the contribution has been made).

The tri-partite Service Agreement does not involve any direct financial transaction from GIZ to the Applicant as a beneficiary.

Project Audit

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.

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 at the LINK on the EU4EG web site and abovementioned platforms after signing the Service Agreements with the selected Applicants.

IX. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR EXISTING MSMEs CALL REF: EU4EG_MSMEs_4		
Activity	Timetable	
Launch of the Call for Proposals	16 April 2024	12.00 h
Information days in Northeast planning region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online event on 18.04.2024, 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"> North-East region: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25.04.2024 in Kumanovo, 11 h; Polog region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22.04.2024 in Tetovo, 11 h; Prespa region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23.04.2024 in Resen, 14 h; South-West region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23.04.2024 in Ohrid, 11 h; <p>The locations of Information events will be also published in advance on the following LINK at the EU4EG Academy page/ and the LINK on the EU4EG web 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	
1st cut-off date for providing information to successful Applicants	31 May 2024	
2 nd cut-off date for providing information to successful Applicants	01 July 2024	
Preparation and signing of the Service Agreements	30 days after provision of information to successful Applicants	

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 Deadlines for submission of 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 the [LINK](#) on the EU4EG web page and other abovementioned platforms.



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X. ANNEXES

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

Annex A: Application Form

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

XI.2. Additional Information

Annex B: Short-listed local BSOs for delivery of BSSs

Annex C: Evaluation and selection of applicants

Annex D: Sample Service Agreement

- Annex D1: Template ToR for BSSs
- Annex D2: Template Financial Offer
- Annex D3: General terms of the Contract