



**EUROPEAN ENTERPRISE
PROMOTION AWARDS
COMPETITION RULES**

Contents

DEFINITION AND RATIONALE	3
1.1. Recognising Excellence in Entrepreneurship	3
1.2. Objectives	3
1.3. Importance of Entrepreneurship	3
1.4. Benefits to Participants	3
METHODOLOGY	4
2.1. Target Audience	4
2.2. Categories.....	4
2.3. Two-Step Selection Process	5
2.3.1. National Level	5
2.3.2. European Level.....	5
2.4. Eligibility Criteria	5
2.4.1 Public-private partnerships comprise the following:	6
2.4.2 Previous EEPA entrants	6
2.4.3 Project Duration	6
2.5 Nominee Selection	6
2.6 Entry Procedure	6
EVALUATION & SELECTION CRITERIA	7
3.1. Entry Eligibility	7
3.2. Evaluation Criteria	7

DEFINITION AND RATIONALE

1.1. Recognising Excellence in Entrepreneurship

The European Enterprise Promotion Awards (EEPA), instigated by the European Commission, honour exceptional projects that promote and support entrepreneurship. Beyond a competition, the awards celebrate successful enterprise policies and activities, inspiring others across Europe.

The competition spans the 27 EU member states¹ and associate countries within the SME pillar of the Single Market Programme².

1.2. Objectives

1. Highlight successful projects promoting entrepreneurship.
2. Share best practices and policies.
3. Raise awareness of entrepreneurs' societal contributions.
4. Inspire potential entrepreneurs.

1.3. Importance of Entrepreneurship

SMEs, representing over 99% of European businesses, drive innovation, competition, labour market flexibility, and job creation. Recognising projects that support entrepreneurship is vital for fostering SME growth across diverse regions and cultures in Europe.

1.4. Benefits to Participants

Entrants gain visibility through the EEPA website, media campaigns, and social media. Winners, selected for creativity and impact, inspire others as role models. Recognition occurs at national and European levels, ensuring widespread publicity.

There are two types of award winners: category award winners and one overall winner for the Grand Jury prize.

¹ Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

² [Support to SMEs - European Commission](#)

METHODOLOGY

2.1. Target Audience

The competition is open to public authorities, public-private partnerships, educational institutions, and NGOs from EU Member States as well as associate countries of the SME pillar of the Single Market Programme.

For the category of Responsible and Inclusive Entrepreneurship, SMEs, which fall under the SME definition³ are eligible to apply in their own right, provided that the project is not the core business activity of the SME.

2.2 Categories

There are six categories of awards, and each will recognise the local, regional or national projects that are successfully driving forward their enterprise performance:

1. **Improving the Business Environment and Promoting the Entrepreneurial Spirit:** recognises projects that promote an entrepreneurial mindset.

Examples: Events and campaigns to promote entrepreneurship and a culture that encourages creativity, innovation and risk acceptance, along with measures to cut red-tape, get new businesses off the ground, support the transfer of business ownership, facilitate access to public procurement markets for SMEs.

2. **Investing in Entrepreneurial Skills:** recognises projects to improve entrepreneurial, managerial and employee skills.

Examples: Promotion of specific skills such as technical skills needed in the craft sector, language capabilities, digital skills; mobility and mentoring schemes for entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship education in schools and universities

3. **Supporting the Digital Transition:** recognises projects that support the digital transition of enterprises enabling them to develop, market and use digital technologies, products and services.

4. **Supporting the Internationalisation of business:** recognises innovative policies and projects, which help SMEs to expand to new markets, support cross-border trade and help to internationalise.

Examples: Projects to support international business cooperation, information or match-making tools, support services or schemes that help SMEs go abroad

5. **Supporting the Sustainable Transition:** recognises policies and projects that support the sustainable transition and support environmental aspects such as the circular economy, climate neutrality, clean energy, resource efficiency or biodiversity through, for example, sustainable skills development and matchmaking as well as funding.

6. **Responsible and Inclusive Entrepreneurship:** recognises projects that promote corporate social responsibility among small and medium sized enterprises. This category also recognises efforts to promote entrepreneurship among disadvantaged

³ as set out in the [SME definition \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/sme_definition_en)

groups such as unemployed, especially long term unemployed, legal migrants, disabled or people from ethnic minorities.

Examples: Social or non-profit enterprises serving societal needs through entrepreneurship.

The Grand Jury Prize is awarded to the most inspiring project across all categories.

2.3. Two-Step Selection Process

2.3.1. National Level

Each country appoints an EEPA Coordinator to manage entries and select up to two projects to enter in different categories. Coordinators ensure transparent selection processes and submit entries electronically to the European Commission.

2.3.2. European Level

Entries at the European level can be submitted online in any one of the official EU languages. The deadline for the Coordinators to electronically submit their national candidates for the second and final stage of the European Enterprise Promotion Awards can be found on <https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/en/promoting-enterprise/european-enterprise-promotion-awards>.

National Coordinators should inform the Secretariat by email (ann.garrott@loweurope.eu) of the selected entries for their country.

2.4. Eligibility Criteria

The competition is open to all local, regional and national authorities in the EU or associate countries of the SME pillar of the Single Market Programme⁴. This includes towns, cities, regions communities, and other local public institutions such as research and educational institutions as well as public-private partnerships between public authorities and entrepreneurs, educational programmes, and business organisations.

Projects stemming **solely from private businesses or individuals are only eligible for the category Responsible and Inclusive Entrepreneurship** where Private Entities which fall under the SME definition⁵, provided that the project, with which the SME applies is not the core business of the company.

Joint nominations from more than one country for cross-border projects will also be accepted, as long as they are supported by all countries involved.

The objective of the European Enterprise Promotions Awards is to reward policies that promote entrepreneurship at local, regional or national level. Therefore, the Awards are open to all public authorities that are in charge of policy making.

Public authorities are defined according to each participating country's national context and may include policy-making institutions, funding bodies and implementing organisations.

⁴ [Support to SMEs - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁵ [SME definition \(europa.eu\)](#)

The Awards are also open to public-private partnerships, i.e. “forms of co-operation between the public authorities and the private sector which aim to ensure the funding, construction, renovation, management or maintenance of an infrastructure or the provision of a service”.⁶

2.4.1 Public-private partnerships comprise the following:

- A financial agreement for which the private partner is charged with the implementation of a policy crafted by the public authority;
- An agreement between the private partner and the public authority for which the private partner is involved – due to its expertise, knowledge or resources – in the policy-making process; and
- An explicit support, not necessarily of a financial nature, that the public authority grants the private sector partner in the framework of a specific project.

2.4.2 Previous EEPA entrants

Organisations which have previously entered EEPA are eligible to apply with a new project or with the project that was previously entered if the project was not a category winner and significant changes/improvements have been made to the project.

2.4.3 Project Duration

Projects must have been in existence for a minimum of 15 months.

2.5 Nominee Selection

Each country submits up to two entries from different categories for European-level consideration.

2.6 Entry Procedure

Entries must be uploaded to the EEPA application platform and adhere to the rules therein. Entries can be submitted in any one of the official EU languages. Entries must be uploaded by the deadline date.

Deadline for receipt of online European entries can be found on <https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/en/promoting-enterprise/european-enterprise-promotion-awards>

⁶ Green Paper on public-private partnerships and Community law on public contracts and concessions, COM(2004) 327 final, Brussels, 30.04.2004

EVALUATION & SELECTION CRITERIA

3.1. Entry Eligibility

Entries must meet criteria such as submission deadlines, complete forms, and adherence to competition rules.

3.2. Evaluation Criteria

A jury, comprising of experts from academia, a business organisation representative, and EU bodies, evaluate entries based on originality, impact, stakeholder relations, and transferability.

Each entry will be evaluated by comparing it with the other entries in the same award category and the jury will use the following as a basis for their scoring.

Criteria	Maximum marks
Originality and feasibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Was the project original and innovative?• Why is it considered successful?	20 points
Impact upon the local economy: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the impact of the project on the local economy?• Did it create jobs?• Is the project sustainable in the future?• What positive long-term effect will it have?	30 points
Improvement of local stakeholder relations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Was the local population involved in the project?• Did the disadvantaged communities benefit?• Were local cultural, environmental and social characteristics respected?	25 points
Transferability: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Could the approach be repeated in the region?• Could the approach be repeated elsewhere in Europe?• Is the project inspiring?• Are there any relationships/partnerships being developed to share lessons learnt?	25 points

The jury may decide to assign an entry to a different award category than originally applied for.

Final winners are selected by the European Jury and announced at during the EEPA ceremony at the SME Assembly.