



**European Committee
of the Regions**



European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) Award 2019 Call for applications

The Secretary-General of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) invites EU territories to submit their applications for the 2019 edition of the European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) Award.

In accordance with decision 4057/2014 of the CoR Bureau, the EER label is open to all EU territories below the level of the Member State that are endowed with competences at a political level and able to implement an overall entrepreneurial vision, regardless of their size, wealth or specific competences. It does not matter whether a territory has legislative competences or not. Each applicant's budget, specific structural or territorial challenges and economic starting point are taken into account by the EER jury. The label remains open both to territories that are already successful and to those that, while currently lagging behind, are committed to implementing the changes necessary to develop their entrepreneurial potential.

Regions are defined in the broadest sense, including communities, autonomous communities, departments, Länder, provinces, counties, metropolitan areas, large cities, as well as cross-border territories with legal personality such as EGTCs and Euroregions. In order to be eligible, the applicant must have the necessary political competence to implement a comprehensive policy strategy aimed at mainstreaming some or all SBA principles. Cross-border regions are particularly encouraged to submit applications.

Applications will be evaluated according to the criteria set out in Bureau decision 4057/2014:

1) Political vision and commitment

- The application demonstrates a future-oriented political vision for implementing the **Small Business Act for Europe** in the territory, focusing, where appropriate, on the current SBA priorities and on the principles of related policy initiatives, such as the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan and the Green Action Plan for SMEs.
- The application is based on a **realistic assessment** of the territory's strengths and weaknesses (**SWOT analysis**) and its direct competences with respect to the ten SBA principles. The **context and unique starting point** of each applicant are taken into account by the members of the jury.
- The political vision demonstrates a **clear added value of the EER award** for the territory, including for its own policy-making.

- The territorial EER objectives are embedded in a **regional development strategy** and contribute to achieving the **Europe 2020 goals**.
- The competent political authorities demonstrate a **strong and credible commitment** to implementing the EER strategy in the territory.

2) Multi-level governance, partnership and cooperation

- The EER strategy is prepared and implemented following a **multi-level governance** approach involving both the lower levels (municipalities etc.) and, where possible, the national level.
- A broad range of **relevant actors** is involved in the design and implementation of the EER strategy, including economic and social partners, learning and research institutions, and civil society.
- There is a demonstrated will to **exchange good practices with other regions** and to develop specific **cooperation initiatives with other EER regions**.

3) Delivery

- The strategy includes **concrete actions** to implement SBA principles that fall within the territory's competences through the EER scheme and **does not merely synthesise existing policies**.
- The implementation of EER actions follows the principles of good governance and includes effective **mechanisms for monitoring and follow-up**.
- **Indicators** are foreseen against which the progress of the implementation can be measured.
- The application includes measures to ensure **optimal use of European Structural and Investment Funds** and other public funding.
- The application demonstrates how the EER actions will be **sustainable beyond the EER year**.
- The projected actions take the **social, environmental, innovative and durable growth enhancing dimensions** of SME policy into account whenever possible.

4) Communication

- The application includes an ambitious and convincing **communication plan** with specific actions **at the highest level** that are directed at all **key target groups** (including SMEs and other relevant actors).
- The **EER label** will be used to publicise the territory's policy both within the territory and at EU level.
- The planned communication actions will enhance the **visibility of the EU and of the CoR**.

Applicants are asked to submit an application consisting of the following items:

- an **application form**, including a fact sheet on the applicant territory, an outline of its political vision, a description of foreseen governance mechanism to ensure efficient implementation of the EER actions, as well as an action plan and a communication plan;
- a **declaration of political commitment** demonstrating that the territory's EER strategy is endorsed by its political leadership (e.g. the regional assembly, the regional government or other authorised political bodies).

The application form can be downloaded from the EER web page: www.cor.europa.eu/eer

The deadline to submit applications is set at **17 April 2018**. Applications not received within this deadline are deemed not eligible.