



**European Committee
of the Regions**



European Entrepreneurial Region Award 2019

How to apply?

What is the EER?

The European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) Award is an initiative of the Committee of the Regions identifying and rewarding EU regions and cities with outstanding, **future-oriented entrepreneurial strategies**, regardless of their size, wealth or specific competences. The territories with the most credible, visible, forward-looking and promising political strategy are granted the label “European Entrepreneurial Region” (EER) for a specific year.

The aim of this initiative is twofold:

- to contribute to the implementation of the **Small Business Act** (SBA) in partnership;
- to demonstrate **optimal use of EU and other public funds** oriented towards the development of an entrepreneurial policy within the region.

Through the EER initiative, the Committee of the Regions (CoR) contributes to mainstreaming the SBA principles at regional and local level and to achieving the **Europe 2020 goals**. The EER label is an opportunity for local and regional actors to demonstrate the crucial role SMEs and entrepreneurs play in strengthening the resilience of the economy. By harnessing their potential to create growth and jobs, the EER label enables EU regions to move further along the path of economic recovery.

The EER scheme follows a **multi-level governance** approach by promoting regional EER communities, in which both regional and local actors are represented. The EER gives policy makers and stakeholders a strong impetus to jointly develop strategies for the implementation of SBA principles such as "Create an environment in which entrepreneurs can thrive", "Think Small First", "Make public administrations responsive to SMEs' needs", and "Support SMEs to benefit from the growth of markets". The EER thus helps create entrepreneurial, dynamic and green regions throughout Europe.

Twenty-four European territories have been awarded the EER label so far:

- **2011:** Brandenburg (Germany), County Kerry (Ireland) and Murcia Region (Spain);
- **2012:** Catalonia (Spain), Helsinki-Uusimaa (Finland) and Trnava (Slovak Republic);
- **2013:** Nord-Pas de Calais (France), Southern Denmark and Styria (Austria);
- **2014:** Flanders (Belgium), Marche (Italy) and North Brabant (Netherlands);
- **2015:** Lisbon (Portugal), Northern Ireland (United Kingdom) and the Valencian Region (Spain);
- **2016:** Glasgow (United Kingdom), Lombardia (Italy) and Małopolska (Poland);
- **2017:** Extremadura (Spain), Lower Austria (Austria), Western Greece (Greece);
- **2018:** Central Macedonia (Greece), Ile-de-France (France) and Northern and Western Region (Ireland).

The EER label has been set up by the **Committee of the Regions** in partnership with the **European Commission** and is supported by the **European Parliament**, the **European Economic and Social Committee** and EU-level stakeholders such as **UEAPME**, **Eurochambres** and **Social Economy Europe**.

The Committee of the Regions launched the **EER 2019 call for applications** on 23 November 2017. The deadline for the submission of applications is **17 April 2018**.

How to apply?

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

Assessment criteria

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

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**.

Eligibility

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. Cities and cross-border regions are particularly encouraged to submit applications.

Schedule

- 23 November 2017: Launch of the EER 2019 call for applications.
- 17 April 2018: Deadline for submission of applications.
- 4/5 July 2018: EER 2019 award ceremony.

*Please submit your application for the EER 2019 label, together with a written declaration of political commitment, by email to: eer-cdr@cor.europa.eu
Deadline for applications: Tuesday, 17 April 2018*

More information: www.cor.europa.eu/eer
eer-cdr@cor.europa.eu
