

SUBJECT: OPEN CALL FOR BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS IN MODERATE AND EMERGING INNOVATORS

INTRODUCTION

ACCELERO – Accelerating Local Innovation Ecosystems in Europe aims at contributing to reverse the unbalanced business activity in Europe by increasing the attractiveness of (less advanced) ecosystems: making ‘modest’ and ‘moderate’ innovation ecosystems more attractive to local start-ups that will benefit from a strong local support and avoid relocation to EU hubs as well to international companies interested in setting up their businesses outside the established and well-known centres.

ACCELERO has the ambition of creating a pan-European community of business support organisations (BSOs) as the one-stop shop for all BSOs and its “customers”, the start-ups and SMEs, as well as for peer-to-peer exchange, networking and connectedness for all stakeholders engaged in the broader innovation ecosystem. This will be achieved with an initial ACCELERO extended community that will collaborate to co-create and pilot-test high-quality business acceleration services with European Business Support Organizations from emerging and moderate innovation regions together with experts from strong and leader innovation regions or Member States, followed by the activities organized within ACCELERO community in the [Euroquity platform](#).

Further information about the project can be found at [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

WHAT IS ACCELERO LOOKING FOR?

ACCELERO is selecting 10 Business Support Organisations, in moderate and emerging innovating regions to participate in an ambitious programme consisting in four main phases based on the service design process that consists of:

- (i) Discovery: Needs analysis of the selected Business Support Organizations
- (ii) Definition: Identifying a set of key services already developed and implemented in regions labelled as "Innovation leaders" and "Strong innovators" to be implemented by the selected BSOs in their regions.
- (iii) Development: Co-creation of business acceleration services according to the results of the needs-analysis.
- (iv) Delivery: Piloting and testing of the services co-created.

The final aim of this programme is to support emerging/moderate innovator intermediaries to improve the quality of business acceleration services by providing top services and co-creating specific services based on local needs and pilot-testing them.

At least 7 of the selected BSOs will be located in emerging innovation regions.

WHAT DOES ACCELERO OFFER TO THE SELECTED BSOs?

- A needs and gaps mapping report based on a questionnaire/interview.
- Engagement in a best practices exchange activities such as personal coach and training sessions with experts and representatives of Business Support Organizations from Innovative regions.

- Implement at least one service that will be delivered by partners or European Hubs with full guidance and networking support.
- Co-create at least one exclusive service with project partners and Business Support Organizations from Innovative regions experts based on the needs analysis results and receive individualised support on a roadmap for the service implementation.
- Receive mentoring for the pilot-testing of the co-created service to its local start-ups/SMEs.
- Receive training on Business Support certification and services quality systems.
- Possibility to obtain an official EBN certification of EU | BIC (EU Business Innovation Centre) that are quality-certified business support organisations.
- Engage 1 member of the selected Business Support Organisation staff and up to 2 client start-ups in a pan-European peer-to-peer exchange programme.

WHAT WILL ACCELERO EXPECT FORM THE BSOs?

- Implement/pilot test one of the best practices selected from the business Support Organizations from Innovative regions¹.
- Implement/pilot test the co-created service.
- Select through an open call or direct invitation a pool of start-up/SMEs within your ecosystem to attend the services implemented by ACCELERO.
- Participate in the staff exchange programme.
- Commitment to participate/implement the activities listed above within the ACCELERO timeline.

ACCELERO TIMELINE:

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| February´23 | Join the ACCELERO community at the Euroquity platform |
| 24 February´23 | ACCELERO Kick off session |
| 30-31 March´23 | Onboarding of the ACCELERO Community in Paris |
| February´23 – March´23 | Needs analysis on service performance to start-ups/SMEs and connection to EU ecosystem |
| April-July´23 | Implementation of one best practice service already developed and implemented in regions labelled as "Innovation leaders" and "Strong innovators". |
| 11-15 September´23 | 5-day online bootcamp on co-creation |
| July´23 | 1-1 online mentoring sessions on co-creation |
| October´23 – April´24 | Pilot-test the co-created services/activities to a set of local start-ups |

¹ Please, take into account that you will offering new services and although they must be free of charge for the entrepreneurs and companies receiving them, your organisation may be subjected to new national/regional taxes. If in doubt, please check your national/regional tax regulation.

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| November´23 August´24 | – | Impact assessment of the pilot testing |
| March´24 May´24 | – | EU BIC certification process ² |
| February´24 June´24 | – | Exchange programme: A peer-to-peer exchange programme between the emerging & moderate innovation regions and the Innovation leaders & strong innovators, both for promising start-ups and staff of the BSOs, will be carried out both online and offline with specific dedicated activities for each target group. |
| January´24 | | ACCELERO Workshop #1: focusing on the community building and engagement creation / local ecosystem transformation. It is expected that this roundtable will enable to expose some common constraints and opportunities shared by the LEBs of each region as well as develop solutions and ideas. |
| May´24 | | ACCELERO Workshop #2: regional workshop organised by each of the selected BSOs and including actors (public authorities, innovation agencies, universities, research institutes, investors, among others, civil society representatives). The objective of this sessions will be to bring the lessons learned from the first one and discuss at a local level how they can work together to leverage their innovation ecosystem. |

APPLICATION SUBMISSION³

- Applicants can submit their application through the form⁴ on this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/acceleroproject>.
- Deadline for applications: 16th of January 2023.

ELEGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Business Support Organisations (BSOs) including acceleration services among their service portfolios or wiliness to include them through the ACCELERO programme.
- Be headquartered in any emerging or moderate innovator region or Member State or third countries associated to Horizon Europe (according to the most recent classification of the European Innovation Scoreboard, 2022)⁵.
- Quality procedures implemented for their acceleration services.
- Capacity to interact and provide high-quality services in English.
- Connection with local / regional policymakers / alignment with local / regional policies in the field of entrepreneurship support.
- Connections to other BSOs in order to expand the impact of the project findings by sharing their knowledge with peers.

² Only applicable to those BSOs not certified with the EU|BIC label.

³ Please, take into account that the data included in the form will be available for all the ACCELERO partners during the evaluation process.

⁴ You cand find the information required in the form in [Annex 2](#).

⁵ Please check [Annex 1](#): list of eligible regions.

EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation process will be developed through a period of 3 weeks and will consist of 3 phases:

1. Eligibility check: Only those proposals meeting all the eligibility criteria above mentioned will be considered for the second internal evaluation.
2. Evaluation: Proposals will be evaluated within the following awarding criteria:

IMPACT: Extent to which, the BSO has credible pathways and quality of the measures to achieve the expected outcomes set by ACCELERO and how it would contribute to the suitability of each of the expected impacts. Namely the BSOs' capacity to improve the quality of business acceleration services, the complementarity of other business support services, their network outreach and scale-up support, their capacity to improve the connectedness to other local BSOs in order to expand the impact of the project findings in the regions and engage and align with stakeholders in the local innovation ecosystem.

IMPLEMENTATION: These criteria evaluate the overall BSOs maturity and capacity to participate and carry out the work to strengthen their acceleration services, including the appropriateness of the management structures and procedures and the complementarity of other business support services and staff expertise.

3. Consensus: the consortium will meet to select among the 20 best ranked candidates 10 that will represent a balanced group taking into account: geographical representation, the set of services and programmes offered and gender balance.

EVALUATION TIMELINE:

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| 17-20 January | Eligibility check |
| 23-03 February | Evaluation |
| 06-10 February | Consensus |
| 13 February | Announcement of the selected BSOs |

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you are interested in the ACCELERO open call and missed the informative webinar that took place on the 5th of December, you can watch the recording on this [link](#) and check the presentations [here](#).

Should you have any questions or doubts on the process, please contact us at: ACCELERO@ebn.eu