

**PIA – INTEGRATED INCENTIVES PACKAGES**  
**(Regional Programme 2021 2027 – RP Puglia ERDF ESF+ 2021-2027)**  
**Information sheet**

## Overview

**Regione Puglia**, the regional government, has created a set of business incentive schemes that offer generous funding for investors, making Puglia one of the best places to start, finance and expand a business in Europe.

**PIA (INTEGRATED INCENTIVES PACKAGES)** is one of the business incentive schemes, managed by the regional finance agency **Puglia Sviluppo S.p.A.**, designed specifically for SMEs and innovative start-ups intending to set-up and/or carry out significant investment projects in R&D, advancing innovation, digitalization and access to research and skills, through collaboration with the research ecosystem, across major industry sectors in Puglia.

## Who can apply: beneficiaries

- Medium-sized enterprises as defined by the GBER – General Block Exemption Regulation - Appendix I of EU Regulation n. 651/2014, that have approved accounts for at least two previous financial years on the date of application;
- Small and micro-enterprises, as defined by the GBER – General Block Exemption Regulation - Appendix I of EU Regulation n. 651/2014, with an average annual turnover of no less than €1,000,000.00 for the previous three years;
- Innovative start-ups and enterprises, exclusively in association with one or more local SMEs, falling within the previous categories of SMEs;
- Innovative start-ups and enterprises, individually, only in specific circumstances related to the level of technological innovation or maturity achieved or to be achieved by the investment project;
- Inactive enterprises, wholly controlled either by a medium-sized enterprise that has approved accounts for at least two previous financial years on the date of application or by a small enterprise with an average annual turnover of no less than €1,000,000.00 for the previous three years;
- Active enterprises, wholly either by a medium-sized enterprise that has approved accounts for at least two previous financial years on the date of application or by a small enterprise with an average annual turnover of no less than €1,000,000.00 for the previous three years.

*(For further information on eligible beneficiaries, please refer to the **PIA public notice.**)*

## Eligible projects

The **PIA (INTEGRATED INCENTIVES PACKAGES)** funding scheme supports R&D investment projects to be carried out by SMEs already located in Puglia or intending to locate within the region.

Eligible R&D investment projects should be aimed at developing new technologies and business solutions or innovative products and services, addressing the main drivers of innovation identified by the Regional Smart Specialisation Strategy, relating to:

- ✓ Environmental sustainability and circular economy;
- ✓ IT for industry and society;
- ✓ Life sciences and health technologies;
- ✓ Blue growth and blue economy.

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The **PIA** scheme supports eligible R&D investment projects carried out by SMEs, individually or in association with one or more local SMEs and innovative start-ups, operating within the Puglia region or intending to set-up in Puglia, that maintain their operations in Puglia for at least three years after completion of the investment project.

The **PIA** scheme provides funding to partially cover the costs of investments for eligible industrial research and experimental development projects, which **may** be integrated with investments in:

- ⇒ innovation;
- ⇒ capital investments;
- ⇒ training initiatives;
- ⇒ environmental protection measures;
- ⇒ business consultancy services and international business promotion initiatives, including the participation in trade fairs.

### Eligible sectors

The R&D investment projects must be presented by SMEs for initiatives related to the sectors indicated in Appendix 3 of the **PIA public notice**, based on the Economic Activities Classification - ATECO 2007 – updated 2022.

Eligible sectors include:

- the manufacturing sector, classified as section “C” (exclusions apply);
- waste treatment activities, classified under division 38 (exclusions apply);
- the construction sector, classified as section “F” (exclusions apply);
- the wholesale and retail trade sector classified as section “G” (exclusions apply);
- the transportation and warehousing sector, classified as section “H” (exclusions apply);
- the information and communication services sector, classified as section “J” (exclusions apply);
- the education sector, exclusively for international schools, classified under section “P” (exclusions apply);
- the healthcare and social services sector, classified as section “Q” (exclusions apply).

*(For further information on eligible industry sectors, please refer to the **PIA public notice**.)*

### Investment limits

The **PIA (INTEGRATED INCENTIVES PACKAGES)** scheme provides funding for investment projects with overall minimum eligible expenditure of **€1,000,000.00**.

Investment limits, in terms of maximum eligible costs, are fixed at:

- €40,000,000.00 for R&D;
- €50,000,000.00 for capital investments by medium-sized enterprises;
- €40,000,000.00 for capital investments by small enterprises;
- €20,000,000.00 for capital investments by individual innovative start-ups and enterprises;
- €500,000.00 and €5,000,000.00 for capital investments by innovative start-ups and innovative enterprises, associated to an investment project;
- €3,000,000.00 for innovation;
- €5,000,000.00 for business process and organizational innovation;

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- €2,000,000.00 for training initiatives;
- €10,000,000.00 for environmental protection investments;
- €500,000.00 for business consultancy services and international business promotion initiatives, in addition to up to €500,000.00 for the participation in trade fairs.

### Eligible expenditure

Eligible investment costs refer primarily to:

- tangible assets, including: machinery and production plant facilities, office furniture and commercial vehicles, land purchase, construction works and similar, feasibility studies and planning costs;
- intangible assets, including: software licenses or development, acquisition of operating licenses and patents, patented or unpatented technologies and know-how, research contracts;
- salaries of employees, involved in the investment project, for a period of two years;
- environmental protection measures, involving measures for improving energy efficiency and/or introducing clean hydrogen or high-yield renewable energy production systems for self-generation and consumption.

Eligible operating costs are related to the following categories:

- training costs relating to employees, involved in the investment project, for courses covering areas identified by the Regional Smart Specialisation Strategy (such as innovation management, digitalization, international business promotion);
- general costs and operational costs, including utilities, materials and supplies, directly associated with the investment project for R&D and Innovation;
- consultancy services for the development of new business models, digital strategies, new e-business and management systems leading to product certification, environmental certification, corporate social responsibility management and ethical and social reporting, based on international standards, marketing strategies and international business promotion plans;
- costs for the participation in trade fairs and related business events, including temporary showrooms in Italy or abroad for international business promotion.

### Levels of funding available

The **PIA (INTEGRATED INCENTIVES PACKAGES)** scheme provides significant levels of funding for eligible investment projects. The levels of funding available, within the limits indicated in the **PIA public notice**, are based on the type of investment as follows:

- Capital investments:
  - 40-50% of eligible costs for medium-sized enterprises;
  - 50-60% of eligible costs for small enterprises;
- Investments in industrial research\*:
  - 60% of eligible costs for medium-sized enterprises;
  - 70% of eligible costs for small enterprises;
- Investments in experimental development\*:
  - 35% of eligible costs for medium-sized enterprises;
  - 45% of eligible costs for small enterprises;

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- Investments for innovation, including business process and organizational innovation: 50% of eligible costs;
- Investments for training initiatives:
  - o 60-70% of eligible costs for medium-sized enterprises;
  - o 70% of eligible costs for small enterprises;
- Investments for environmental protection measures:
  - o 55% of eligible costs for medium-sized enterprises;
  - o 65% of eligible costs for small enterprises;
- Investments in business consultancy services and international business promotion initiatives: 50% of eligible costs.

*\*In certain conditions, additional funding of up to 15% is available for investments in R&D, for an overall maximum of 80%.*

### How to apply

Applications must be submitted online, in Italian, through the platform PugliaSemplice:

<https://pugliasemplice.sistema.puglia.it>

following the procedure in the dedicated section “**PIA**”

*On submitting an application, a protocol number and CUP (Unique Project Code) will be assigned to the application. The CUP must be quoted in all of the invoices and administrative documentation related to costs and expenses for investments included in the PIA project.*

*The initial application, including a description of the investment project, the financial plan and the proposing company's profile will be assessed by Puglia Sviluppo.*

*Regione Puglia will formally communicate the assessment outcome to the proposing company and, for successful applications, invite the proposing company to present a final draft of the investment plan within 60 days of the application's approval, using the platform PugliaSemplice.*

*The final draft and supporting documentation will be evaluated by Puglia Sviluppo in order to determine eligible funding.*

*Regione Puglia will deliberate the overall funding assigned to the project and set out the terms for signing the PIA agreement with the beneficiaries.*

### Where to find the public notice

The **PIA public notice** and all of the official documentation relating to the **PIA** funding scheme, including the templates for both the initial application procedure and the final draft proposal are available online at:

<https://www.regione.puglia.it/web/competitivita-e-innovazione/-/avviso-pubblico-pia-programmi-integrati-di-agevolazione>

### Deadline for applications

There are **no fixed deadlines for proposals**, subject to the availability of funds.

### For additional information

[www.pugliasviluppo.eu](http://www.pugliasviluppo.eu) - [www.regione.puglia.it](http://www.regione.puglia.it)

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