

PROGRAMME CONTRACTS

(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.

Programme Contracts is one of the business incentive schemes, managed by the regional finance agency **Puglia Sviluppo S.p.A.**, designed specifically for large-sized enterprises, intending to set-up and/or carry out significant investment projects in R&D, in collaboration with start-ups and SMEs, advancing innovation, skills and qualified employment across major industry sectors in Puglia.

Who can apply: beneficiaries

- Large 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;
- Large inactive enterprises, wholly controlled by a large enterprise that has approved accounts for at least two previous financial years on the date of application;
- Large enterprises that do not have approved accounts for at least two previous financial years on the date of application but are wholly controlled by a large enterprise that does;
- SME's and innovative start-ups that participate in a regional Programme Contract initiative presented by a large enterprise.

Eligible projects

The **Programme Contracts** scheme supports R&D investment projects to be carried out by existing businesses already located in Puglia or new businesses to be located 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.

Programme Contracts support eligible R&D investment projects carried out by large enterprises, in collaboration 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 five years after completion of the investment project (minimum three years for the collaborating SMEs).

Programme Contracts provide 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 (exclusively for participating SMEs and start-ups).

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Eligible sectors

The R&D investment projects must be presented by large companies, in collaboration with start-ups and SMEs, for initiatives related to the sectors indicated in Appendix 3 of the **Programme Contracts** 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 transportation and warehousing sector, classified as section “H” (exclusions apply);
- the information and communication services sector, classified as section “J” (exclusions apply).

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

Investment limits

The **Programme Contracts** scheme provides funding for investment projects with overall minimum eligible expenditure of **€5,000,000.00**.

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

- €60,000,000.00 for R&D;
- €110,000,000.00 for capital investments by large enterprises;
- €40,000,000.00 for capital investments by medium-sized enterprises;
- €20,000,000.00 for capital investments by small enterprises;
- €5,000,000.00 for capital investments by start-ups (based on a minimum investment of €500,000.00);
- €2,000,000.00 for innovation by SMEs;
- €10,000,000.00 for business process and organizational innovation by large enterprises and up to €2,000,000.00 for SMEs;
- €4,000,000.00 for training initiatives by large enterprises, and up to €2,000,000.00 for SMEs;
- €20,000,000.00 for environmental protection investments by large enterprises, and up to €10,000,000.00 for SMEs;
- €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 (exclusively for participating SMEs and start-ups).

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;
- intangible assets, including: software licenses or development, acquisition of operating licenses and patents, patented or unpatented technologies and know-how, research contracts;
- feasibility studies and planning costs relating to capital investments (exclusively for participating SMEs and start-ups);
- salaries of employees, involved in the investment project, for a period of two years;

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- 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.

In addition, exclusively for participating SMEs and start-up, costs relating to:

- 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
- 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 **Programme Contracts** scheme provides substantial levels of funding for eligible investment projects, both for large enterprises and participating SMEs.

The levels of funding available, within the limits indicated in the **Programme Contracts** public notice, are based on the type of investment as follows:

- **Capital investments**, involving overall eligible investments <€55,000,000.00:
 - o 30-40% for large enterprises;
 - o 40-50% for medium-sized enterprises;
 - o 50-60% for small enterprises;
- **Capital investments**, involving overall eligible investments ≥€55,000,000.00: maximum 30%;
- Investments in eligible **industrial research***:
 - o 50% for large enterprises;
 - o 60% for medium-sized enterprises;
 - o 70% for small enterprises;
- Investments in eligible **experimental development***:
 - o 25% for large enterprises;
 - o 35% for medium-sized enterprises;
 - o 45% for small enterprises;
- Investments for **innovation** by SMEs: 50%;
- Investments for **business process and organizational innovation**: maximum 15% for large enterprises, based on joint collaboration with SMEs, and 50% for SMEs;
- Investments for **training initiatives**:
 - o 50-60% for large enterprises;
 - o 60-70% for medium-sized enterprises;

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- o 70% for small enterprises;
- Investments for **environmental protection measures**:
 - o 45% for large enterprises;
 - o 55% for medium-sized enterprises;
 - o 65% for small enterprises;
- Investments in **business consultancy services** and **international business** promotion initiatives, exclusively for participating SMEs and start-ups: 50%.

**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 “**CONTRATTI DI PROGRAMMA**”

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 Contract Programme.

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 Contract Programme agreement with the beneficiaries.

Where to find the public notice

The **Programme Contracts** public notice and all of the official documentation regarding the **Programme Contracts** scheme, including the templates for both the initial application procedure and the final draft proposal are available online at:

www.regione.puglia.it/web/competitivita-e-innovazione/-/avviso-pubblico-contratti-di-programma-1

Deadline for applications

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

For additional information

www.pugliasviluppo.eu - www.regione.puglia.it

E-mail: fdi@pugliasviluppo.regione.puglia.it