

«INNOVATIVE BUSINESS INFORMATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS  
IN HERBS PRODUCTION AND ECO-TOURISM»

**PORTFOLIA OF ATTRACTED 35 PARTICIPANTS  
AND 12 TRAINERS/MENTORS; MEETING  
PROTOCOLS  
DEL. 3.1.1, 3.2.1,3.3.1  
(Review and evaluation of existing  
entrepreneurship support policies and needs  
identified)**

Responsible beneficiary:

Zdravetz Assosiation

HELLENIC DEVELOPMENT CITY NETWORK

Cluster Varna Business Consult

Project website:

<https://floreo-gr-bg.eu/>

*The Project is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and by national funds of the countries participating in the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020".*

*The contents of this document are sole responsibility of the Hellenic Development City Network and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union, the participating countries, the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	2
1. Introduction	3
1.1. About the Project	3
1.2. Project's partnership and duration	4
2. Needs Identified	5
3. Review and evaluation of existing entrepreneurship support policies	6
3.1. Review and evaluation of existing entrepreneurship support policies Bulgaria	6
3.2. Review and evaluation of existing entrepreneurship support policies Greece	20

## Executive Summary

The Project with the acronym “FLOREO” aims to increase motivation, knowledge and skills of entrepreneurs, to innovate, create and take risks in starting business, as well as will facilitate the business of existing SMEs in the cross-border region. It will launch new paths for startups and organize support actions for existing enterprises with special focus on herb production and ecotourism.

This deliverable is carried out by the partners Zdravetz Association, DEPAN and Cluster Varna Business Consult within the framework of the project “Innovative Business Information and Support Services for Young Entrepreneurs in Herbs Production and Eco-Tourism” with the acronym “FLOREO”, that is funded under Priority Axis 1. - A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area of the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A “Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020”.

The present Deliverable aims to assist the Project partners with the Preparation & Recruitment Activities of the “FLOREO” Project.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. About the Project

FLOREO's **main objective** is to increase motivation, knowledge and skills of entrepreneurs, to innovate, create and take risks in starting business, as well as will facilitate the business of existing SMEs in the cross-border region. It will launch new paths for startups and organize support actions for existing enterprises with special focus on herb production and ecotourism. This will take place through joint actions for establishment of an appropriate business infrastructure and information center, both to serve the cross-border area after rehabilitation and equipping of a degraded plot and rented covered premises. Here, future entrepreneurs can develop and test their business ideas in a simulative and real environment, use business support services, related to the growing and offering unique herbs and flowers, which are to be found only in the GR-BG cross-border region as well as develop and test ideas in alternative tourism such as herbal and eco-tourism packages.

A cross-border portfolio of skilled and experienced trainers and mentors will be created. Large communication and awareness raising campaign will support further dissemination of results.

The highest project added-value will be the better geographic concentration of resources, and the intangible benefits from the CB cooperation - exchange of good practice, capacity building, joint strategies, as well as gaining respect and trust between the partners and access to wider networks of cooperation.

Special benefits and price discount scheme for using the FLOREO business support and information services will be provided for the participants after project end.

FLOREO contributes to achievement of specific objectives of macroregional (Black Sea, Mediterranean and Danube), national and regional strategies by jointly promoting business and entrepreneurship and increasing cross-border trade opportunities and modernization in the agricultural and connected sectors.

The FLOREO project is jointly developed by the ZDRAVETS ASSOCIATION - Bulgaria, Trigrad village, (Lead Beneficiary), Hellenic Development City Network (D.E.P.AN. – City Network) - (PB2) and CLUSTER VARNA BUSINESS CONSULT (PB3) - Bulgaria, Varna.

## 1.2. Project's partnership and duration

Project partnership consists of 3 project partners (PPs):

<i>Name</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Country</i>
ZDRAVETS ASSOCIATION	Lead Beneficiary	Bulgaria
HELLENIC DEVELOPMENT CITY NETWORK	Partner Beneficiary 2	Greece
CLUSTER VARNA BUSINESS CONSULT	Partner Beneficiary 3	Bulgaria

**Table 1. Partnership.**

The Project duration is 29,61 months, from April 2021 until September 2023.

“FLOREO” Project has a total budget of 507.553,00 € and is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and by national funds of the countries participating in the Interreg V-A “Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020” Cooperation Programme.

## 2. Needs Identified

According to the Project and the Work Package (WP 3) entitled "Preparation & recruitment of participants" the aim was to prepare and recruit the Greek and Bulgarian beneficiaries to be part of the envisaged activities within the "FLOREO" Project.

More specifically the envisaged activities were included under the following Deliverable:

- D.3.1.1 / Research on needs of future entrepreneurs
- D.3.2.1 / Research on needs of future entrepreneurs
- D.3.3.1 / Research on needs of future entrepreneurs

The experts from the three partners agreed on following needs of future entrepreneurs.

1. In the National Strategy for Small and Medium Enterprises" 2021-2027, the following needs are identified:

- Need to support different types of entrepreneurships with a high potential for positive impact on the regional development of the Bulgarian economy, more specifically high-tech entrepreneurship, youth entrepreneurship, women's entrepreneurship and family business.
- Need for specific targeted support for social and inclusive entrepreneurship.
- Need for specific targeted support for green entrepreneurship.
- Need for specific measures to support family entrepreneurship, incl. better access to finance.
- Need for specific targeted support for craft, rural entrepreneurship and creative industries.
- Need for specific targeted support for entrepreneurship at regional level.
- Provision of specific financial instruments for start-ups

2. Identified individual needs for the Smolyan region

- Need of training on herbs harvesting and the possibilities for their processing by the small business.
- The need for training on the opportunities for eco-tourism.
- Need for entrepreneurship education
- Need for mentorship during starting a business
- Need for support from business consulting services when starting the business, including the choice of an appropriate legal form

- Need for support in developing the business plan of the start-up
- Need for support in securing business start-up financing.
- Need for support in the development of a marketing strategy of the start-up business.  
Determining the cost of the product, determining a fair selling price.
- The need for support in hiring staff in compliance with labor and social legislation, as well as legislation in the field of ensuring safe and healthy working conditions.
- Need for support to ensure compliance with accounting and tax legislation.
- Need for training support on cash flow management
- Need for training support on periodic analysis of results

### **3. Review and evaluation of existing entrepreneurship support policies**

According to the Project and the Work Package (WP 3) entitled “Preparation & recruitment of participants” the aim was to prepare and recruit the Greek and Bulgarian beneficiaries to be part of the envisaged activities within the “FLOREO” Project.

More specifically the envisaged activities were included under the following Deliverable:

- D.3.1.1 / Review and evaluation of existing entrepreneurship support policies in Bulgaria
- D.3.2.1 / Review and evaluation of existing entrepreneurship support policies in Greece
- D.3.3.1 / Review and evaluation of existing entrepreneurship support policies in Bulgaria

#### **3.1 Review and evaluation of existing entrepreneurship support policies Bulgaria**

The following documents were considered for the preparation of this report

1. Regional development strategy of Smolyan Region 2014-2020.
2. Municipal Development Plan of Devin Municipality 2014-2020.

3. Municipal Development Plan of Smolyan Municipality 2014-2020.
4. National strategy for the development of SMEs 2021-2027
5. Plan for integrated development of the municipality of Smolyan 2021-2027
6. Plan for integrated development of the municipality of Devin for the period 2021-2027.
7. Operational Programme "Innovation and Competitiveness" 2014-2020
8. Operational program "Development of human resources 2014-2020
9. Rural Development Programme 2014-2020
10. Devin – Smolyan MIG Strategy 2014-2020.
11. Strategies and documents of MIRG "High Western Rhodopes: Batak - Devin - Dospat".
12. OP Development of human resources 2021-2027
13. Operational Programme "Competitiveness and Innovation of the enterprises" 2021-2027
14. Rural Development Programme 2021-2027
15. Disabled Persons Act
16. Employment Promotion Act

The development of entrepreneurship has been set as a priority area in the national and regional development strategies for the period 2021-2027, and accordingly measures and specific actions have been identified, which we will consider below and summarize the opportunities for start-up entrepreneurs in the next few years. The envisaged opportunities continue the policies that were implemented during the period 2014-2020.

The "National Strategy for Small and Medium Enterprises" 2021-2027 includes six areas of impact, each of which contains specific strategic goals to support SMEs on the way to making Bulgaria a more attractive place to start a small business, the development and its rapid growth. The first area is **Entrepreneurship**, with the following goals:



Goal 1.2 The entrepreneurial ecosystem provides conditions for quick and easy business start-up and satisfaction from the realization of entrepreneurial ideas.

Goal 1.3 Promotion of entrepreneurial activity with a potentially large impact on economic and social development and environmental sustainability.

The measures and specific actions in the field of entrepreneurship are:

Area of impact: Entrepreneurship

Measure 1.3 Support for start-ups

<b>Identified needs</b>	<p><b>Need to improve the business environment for the creation and functioning of new enterprises.</b></p> <p><b>Need to improve the business environment for enterprise growth.</b></p>
<b>Strategic goal</b>	<p>The entrepreneurial ecosystem should provide conditions for quick and easy business start-up and satisfaction from the realization of entrepreneurial ideas.</p>
Specific goals	<p>Increasing the share of start-ups and the investments they attract.</p> <p>Increasing the share of newly created high-tech enterprises.</p> <p>Increasing the share of newly created innovative enterprises.</p> <p>Increasing the share of knowledge-intensive start-ups.</p>
<b>Expected results</b>	<p>Increasing the share of start-ups.</p> <p>Increasing the share of fast-growing SMEs.</p>

Specific actions:

- 1) Overview of the regulatory framework for starting a business.
- 2) Review the complexity of the regulatory framework and restrictive licensing requirements in order

to facilitate the entry of new businesses and increase competition.

3) Introduction of measures for start-ups that seek to expand their activities in international markets - providing information on markets, consulting, marketing and mentoring services on internationalization issues.

4) New product development and prototype testing in laboratories.

5) Provision of technical due diligence services with a view to more precisely evaluating high-tech start-ups in order to prepare them for potential investor interest.

6) Provision of technical assistance for registration of intellectual property, incl. for the preparation process and for the application procedure for registration of intellectual property - consultations with specialists, legal assistance, etc.

7) Improving the conditions for doing business for start-ups. Improving regulations related to occupational medicine. Simplification of company liquidation procedures.

**Measure 1.4 Promotion of key types of entrepreneurship**

<p><b>Identified needs</b></p>	<p><b>Need to support different types of entrepreneurship with a high potential for positive impact on the regional development of the Bulgarian economy, more specifically high-tech entrepreneurship, youth entrepreneurship, women's entrepreneurship and family business.</b></p> <p><b>Need for specific targeted support for social and inclusive entrepreneurship.</b></p> <p><b>Need for specific targeted support for green entrepreneurship.</b></p> <p><b>Need for specific measures to support family entrepreneurship, incl. better access to finance.</b></p> <p><b>Need for specific measures to support the succession process in family businesses.</b></p>
<p><b>Strategic goal</b></p>	<p>Encouraging entrepreneurial activity with a potentially large impact on economic and social development and environmental sustainability.</p>
<p>Specific goals</p>	<p>Increasing the share of second and third generation family businesses.</p>
<p><b>Expected results</b></p>	<p>Increasing entrepreneurial activity.</p> <p>Number of supported enterprises/entrepreneurs.</p>

**Specific actions:**

- 1) Support for the succession of family businesses by holding seminars, trainings and consultations on matters of family business succession. Financial instruments (eg loan guarantee schemes, micro-credits, hybrid instruments) to ensure access to finance for family businesses.
- 2) Support for those wishing to start a business as self-employed persons and SMEs in key types of entrepreneurship (women, youth, elderly, unemployed and immigrants) to provide training, consulting and mentoring services.
- 3) Financial instruments (eg loan guarantee schemes, micro-credits, hybrid instruments) in addition to mentoring, coaching and consultancy services to meet the various needs of social entrepreneurs.
- 4) Encouraging the use of the EC/OECD Instrument for Improving Entrepreneurship Policy by local and regional authorities.

**Measure 1.5 Support for crafts, entrepreneurship in rural areas and creative industries, incl. at the regional level**

<b>Identified needs</b>	<b>Необходимост от специфична целева подкрепа за занаятчийството, предприемачеството в селските райони и творческите индустрии.</b> <b>Необходимост от специфична целева подкрепа за предприемачеството на регионално ниво.</b>
<b>Strategic goal</b>	Предприемаческата екосистема да насърчава конкурентоспособността и да спомага за преодоляване на регионалните различия, като същевременно насърчава растежа и последващото развитие на МСП.
<b>Specific goals</b>	Увеличаване на дела на занаятчийството, предприемачеството в селските райони и творческите индустрии.

	Повишаване на нивото на предприемаческа активност на местно ниво.
<b>Expected results</b>	<p>Increasing entrepreneurial activity.</p> <p>Number of implemented initiatives and projects.</p> <p>Increasing the share of new technological enterprises.</p>

### Specific actions:

- 1) Conducting seminars, trainings and consultations for farmers and foresters in rural areas.
- 2) Grant funding and financial instruments to meet the various needs of entrepreneurs and start-ups in rural areas.
- 3) Projects and measures to promote crafts and entrepreneurs in the creative industries.

The other area of impact that is relevant to start-ups is 'Access to Finance'

A measure for Support for start-ups and growing enterprises for access to financing is foreseen in connection with an identified need, the need to provide specific financial instruments for start-ups and growing enterprises. A strategic objective "Bulgarian SMEs, start-ups and growing enterprises have access to various sources of financing in order to increase their competitiveness" and specific objectives: Implementation of measures to improve access to financing for start-up enterprises. The goals are related to improving access to equity financing for start-ups, access to mezzanine financing for growing businesses. an initiative to support start-ups and growing businesses. Expected results are acceleration of the process of growing and increasing the competitiveness of technology start-ups. Specific planned actions are:

- 1) Provision of pre-seed and seed funding for start-ups.
- 2) Provision of venture capital.
- 3) Provision of growth capital (mezzanine financing) for growth enterprises and fast-growing medium-sized enterprises.
- 4) Creation of a mechanism to promote investments from business angels.
- 5) Provision of specific capital financial instruments for financing technological and technology-related SMEs. Creation of specific venture capital funds and private equity funds providing financing for

enterprises in areas such as: artificial intelligence, data and metadata analytics, robotics, microelectronics, high-performance computing and cloud data infrastructure, blockchain technologies, quantum technologies, photonics , industrial biotechnology, biomedicine, nanotechnology, pharmaceuticals, advanced materials and technologies.

**The Human Resources Development Program 2021-2027** will provide support for inclusive entrepreneurship and to promote business start-up initiatives by people from disadvantaged groups to provide opportunities for job creation. Key target groups are youth, women, the elderly and people with disabilities, who continue to face challenges in the labor market. Actions to be taken under the PRDP include strengthening entrepreneurial culture among disadvantaged groups, creating entrepreneurial skills through training and mentoring, familiarization with successful start-ups and networking to increase resilience potential, facilitating access to financing, support in the initial stage of entrepreneurial activity with specialized services and consultations, etc. Opportunities will be sought by encouraging businesses to hire unemployed youth and by providing training to facilitate connecting unemployed and inactive youth with job vacancies. Support for self-employment, incl. in the field of social economy:

- a. measures to stimulate entrepreneurship of those wishing to start a business, development and evaluation of business ideas, training for entrepreneurial skills, support for registration of business activities; (For the period 2014-2020, opportunities were provided for training in entrepreneurship and supporting the final trainings and created a small business in the amount of BGN 5,000, as well as easier conditions for using financing)
- b. measures for the development of skills in the field of social entrepreneurship, including for the unemployed;
- c. measures to support and develop budding entrepreneurs;
- d. access to finance for start-up entrepreneurs;
- e. specific support for self-employment of youth and other disadvantaged groups on the labor market;

In addition to support for training, financing services for the development of the start-up enterprise, easier financial conditions for crediting, start-up entrepreneurs can also take advantage of the opportunities of subsidized employment for employed workers.

### **Program "Competitiveness and innovation in enterprises" 2021-2027 (PKIP)**

In Priority 1 Innovations and growth of PKIP, the following are foreseen:

- Support for production investments in enterprises according to the regional development potential: support for family enterprises, enterprises from the creative industries and crafts
- Support for innovation implementation

The possibilities of PKIP can be used by the enterprises falling in the thematic priority areas for smart specialization in the period 2021-2027

In the ISIS Smart Specialization Strategy 2021-2027 has been developed, the thematic priority areas for smart specialization are the following:

1. Informatics and ICT.
2. Mechatronics (independent field).
3. Healthy living and biotechnology industries.
4. New technologies in creative and recreational industries.
5. Clean technologies, circular and low-carbon economy.

Herbal production and eco-tourism are among the priority areas:

#### **HEALTHCARE AND BIO-TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY**

methods for clean production, storage, processing and reaching the end user of specific Bulgarian ingredients, means and products (including yogurt, honey and bee products, bread, wine, dairy and meat products, essential oils, beer, herbs and herbal products, cosmetics and products);

#### **NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN CREATIVE AND RECREATION INDUSTRIES**

cultural and creative industries (as defined by the EC: architecture, archival work and librarianship, artistic crafts, audio-visual forms (film, TV, video games and multimedia), cultural heritage, design, including fashion design, festivals, music, stage and visual arts, publishing, radio;

computer and mobile applications and games of an educational, marketing and/or entertainment nature;

alternative (rural, eco-, cultural and festival) and extreme tourism and sports (to stimulate non-seasonal, non-mass, but permanent niche tourism);

production of goods and equipment with direct application in these areas (e.g. national (regional) costumes, bicycles, climbing walls, etc. goods for alternative and extreme sports, costumes, sets, materials for historical reenactments, specialized equipment and equipment, printed editions).

### **Rural Development Program (DPSR 2021-2027)**

The projects envisaged in the Program for the Development of Rural Areas 2021-2027 are aimed at:

- biological production
- disadvantaged areas
- the start-up aid for young farmers
- supporting small farms, as well as investments in farms
- the processing of agricultural products and non-agricultural activities (eco and alternative tourism).

It is planned to support young and small farmers in the form of a grant in case their holding is up to 20,000 euros SPO. The grant will be in the amount of a 100% grant, which will be accessible to a larger number of farms and an easier and more accessible way of applying.

### **Law on Persons with Disabilities**

The law foresees the possibility of financing projects for the initiation and development of independent economic activity on the basis of Article 46 of the Soviet Union - up to BGN 20,000.

Every year, a session is announced for the selection of projects for starting an independent business activity by people with disabilities

### **Employment Promotion Act**

The following options are provided:

1. Encouraging entrepreneurship among unemployed persons to start an independent business activity as a micro-enterprise under the Small and Medium Enterprises Act (SME) (Article 49 of the Law on Small and Medium Enterprises. The target group is unemployed persons registered in the DBT with an approved business project for independent business activity as a micro-enterprise under ZMSP. A subsidy is granted for the expenses incurred for starting the independent economic activity, laid down in the business project, in the amount of up to BGN 4,000 (Article 49, Paragraph 1 of the



ZNZ), as well as additional monthly amounts for paid insurance contributions for the "Pensions" fund, the Social Insurance Institution and the National Health Insurance Fund, on the minimum amount of the monthly insurance income for self-insured persons, according to the Law on the Budget of Social Insurance Institutions and the National Health Insurance Fund for the relevant year (Art. 49, paragraph 4), training funds for the acquisition of a professional qualification in the subject of the independent economic activity and/or its management according to the approved business project, in the amount of up to BGN 300 (Article 49, Paragraph 3); the costs are reimbursed is for used external consulting services and/or accompanying services, within the framework of the contract, in the amount of up to BGN 500, according to the established nomenclature and limits of the Cooperation Council of the Directorate "Labor Office" (Art. 49b);

2. Encouraging the entrepreneurship of unemployed persons (Art. 47, Art. 48 and Art. 49b of the Labor Code). Main objective Encouraging the unemployed to start a business activity for the production of goods and/or services independently or together with other persons. According to Art. 47, Para. 1 - An unemployed person, registered in the "Labor Bureau" directorates with the right to unemployment compensation, with an approved business project for independent economic activity for the production of goods and/or services; According to Art. 47, Para. 4, Art. 48 and Art. 49b - A person who has entered into a contract under Art. 47, Para. 1 of the Labor Code with DBT to start an economic activity for the production of goods and/or services independently or with other persons; Subsidies for the unemployed person - a one-time sum of money, instead of cash compensation for unemployment, under the conditions and according to the procedure of CSR (Article 47, Paragraph 1); an additional amount in the amount of BGN 2,840, provided that he provides employment under the approved business project to another unemployed person without the right to unemployment compensation (Article 47, Paragraph 4); credit for qualification in the subject of business activity and/or its management according to the approved business project. The maximum amount of the loan is up to BGN 1,000 (Article 48); the costs for used external consulting services and/or accompanying services\*, within the scope of the contract, in the amount of up to BGN 500, are reimbursed, according to the established nomenclature and limits of the Cooperation Council of the "Labor Bureau" directorate

In implementation of the **community-led local development approach**, the approval of the strategies of the Local Initiative Groups is expected, through which also stratifying entrepreneurs will be supported. Two organizations have been established on the territory of Smolyan district

Local Initiative Group (LIG) Devin – Smolyan

MIRG "High Western Rhodopes-Batak-Devin-Dospat

### **FUND OF FUNDS Fund manager of financial instruments in Bulgaria**

**The possibility of a microcredit of up to BGN 50,000** is provided for each enterprise under the following parameters:

#### **1. Financial resource**

- BGN 23.9 million public resource;
- additional private co-financing from financial intermediaries.

#### **2. Objectives of the instrument**

- improving access to financing for the creation and development of start-up enterprises;
- support of social entrepreneurship;
- promotion of entrepreneurship among vulnerable groups.

#### **3. Final recipients**

- companies and self-employed persons registered no more than 5 years ago, including enterprises whose owners are representatives of vulnerable groups - unemployed for more than 6 months, young people up to the age of 29, people with disabilities;
- social enterprises.

#### **4. Type of financing**

- investment or working credit in the amount of up to BGN 48,895;
- possibility of a small loan of up to BGN 5,000;
- repayment term up to 10 years;
- possible grace period for principal and interest up to 3 years;\*
- for the acquisition of tangible and intangible assets for the development or expansion of the activity of the enterprise or self-employed person; for other expenses related to the main business activity.

## **5. Financial intermediaries**

"SIS Credit"

"Micro Fund"

First Investment Bank

## **Second option Microloan up to BGN 100,000**

### **1. Financial resource**

- BGN 5 million public resource;
- expected volume of credits for final recipients BGN 25 million.

### **2. Objectives of the instrument**

- improving access to financing for the creation and development of start-up and social enterprises with a high risk profile;
- support of social entrepreneurship;
- promotion of entrepreneurship among vulnerable groups.

### **3. Final recipients**

- Companies and self-employed persons registered no more than 5 years ago, including enterprises whose owners are representatives of vulnerable groups - unemployed for more than 6 months, young people up to the age of 29, people with disabilities; social enterprises.

### **4. Type of financing**

- investment or working credit in the amount of up to EUR 50,000 or BGN 97,791;
- eased credit conditions - lower interest rate, smaller collateral requirements, possibility of a grace period;
- repayment term up to 10 years;

- for the acquisition of tangible and intangible assets for the development or expansion of the activity of the enterprise or self-employed person; for other expenses related to the main business activity.
- guarantees from the Fund of Funds in the amount of 80% of each loan granted until reaching a loss ceiling of 25% on the guaranteed portfolio.

#### **5. Financial intermediary**

- Unicredit Bulbank
- Bulgarian Development Bank Microfinance

In conclusion, it can be concluded that there are many opportunities for start-up entrepreneurs in the Smolyan region, and with the presence of a support center created within the FLOREO project, they will have the opportunity to be directed to the appropriate measure depending on the specific needs.

## 3.2 Review and evaluation of existing entrepreneurship support policies Greece

The following documents were considered for the preparation of this report

1. National SME (Small Medium Enterprises) Observatory 2021
2. The National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP)
3. Special Program Management Service Eastern Macedonia, Thrace
4. Institute of Entrepreneurship Development Greece – Foundation Anna Lindh
5. SME Country Fact Sheet Background document 2021
6. Planet Consulting 2021
7. University Macedonia, Departments of Economics
8. Rural Development Programme of Greece 2014-2020
9. EPAnEK (Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship & Innovation) 2014 – 2020 Operational Programme
10. ALBA American University in Greece – Finance & Marketing
11. OAED Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies, Country Assessment Notes
12. National Observatory of disability issues

Greek Government acknowledged that entrepreneurship has become a top priority for the Greek Nation, and created the General Secretariat for Industry.

The General Secretariat for Industry falls under the Hellenic Ministry of Economy & Development.

The purpose of the General Secretariat for Industry is:

- a) To develop a National Strategy for the manufacturing sector, to plan and implement measures and actions for the development of competitiveness, entrepreneurship and productivity of SMEs and business in general.
- b) To contribute to the sustainable development, productive reconstruction, environmental protection and improvement of citizens' quality of life.

- c) To contribute to the establishment and implementation of measures relating to the production and placing on the market of specific categories of industrial products and/or services, the use of which may jeopardize the safety or health of citizens.
- d) The creation of an appropriate business environment / infrastructure for businesses
- e) The support of businesses for the production and marketing of products and services.
- f) To contribute to regional and balanced development.

The National Recovery and Resilience Plan, N.R.R.P. is structured on four pillars:

- (a) Green,
- (b) Digital,
- (c) Employment, skills, and social cohesion,
- (d) Private investment and transformation of the economy.

### **National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP)**

For its implementation, Greece asked for the maximum of funds available under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), i.e., EUR 17.8 billion in grants and EUR 12.7 billion in loans.

The Commission has adopted the first Partnership Agreement for the 2021-2027 programming period for Greece, the first EU country to submit its strategic reference document for deploying more than €21 billion of investments for its economic, social and territorial cohesion.

The Partnership Agreement lays out the strategy and investment priorities to be addressed via the Cohesion policy funds and the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF). These funds will support key EU Priorities such as the green and digital transition and will contribute to develop a competitive, innovative and export-oriented growth model for the country.

Support for the modernization - upgrading of existing businesses, with priority in areas of the Regional Smart Specialization Strategy

### **Rural Development Programme of Greece 2014-2020**

#### **THE FUTURE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020 is one of the most important growth promoting tools of the country. It is based on a vision for *integrated development and sustainable competitiveness of rural areas* and it aims to enhance the competitiveness of the agri-food sector, promote the multifunctional role of rural areas and protect the environment.

The strategy for the rural development during the programming period 2014-2020 ensures the continuity of operations implemented during the previous programming period and constitutes a starting point for new innovative operations in rural areas and the rural economy. It is structured around three interdependent and complementary key objectives:

- *Creating a strong, competitive and viable agri-food system*

- *Promoting sustainability of the agri-food system and rural areas*
- *Creating viable and multifunctional rural areas*

These objectives are mainly achieved by:

- **Strengthening** competitiveness and agri-food system productivity by enhancing the added value of agricultural products.
- **Developing** human resources and **strengthening** the entrepreneurial culture.
- **Protecting** and **managing** natural resources and biodiversity, as well as the mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
- **Providing** basic services and **improving** the quality of life in the countryside.
- **Fostering** social cohesion in rural areas and the rural diversification.

On the implementation side, some new elements are introduced such as the delegation of certain measures to the Regions and the territorial and/or sectorial specialization.

The contribution of the **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development** to the RDP 2014-2020 amounts to approximately €4,7 billion corresponding to around **€6 billion of public expenditure**.

The allocation of the EAFRD resources to the major strategic choices of the RDP 2014-2020 is shown in the diagram at :

<https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/2014-2020/OP-2014-2020-finances-planned-by-TO/dfgu-z6tv?referrer=embed>

### **EPAnEK New Programming Period 2021-2027**

The Managing Authority of EPAnEK publishes the "**Competitiveness**" Programme for the new programming period 2021-2027, as approved on 15/6/2022 by the European Commission.

The Programme is designed as a comprehensive intervention of the NSRF 2021 - 2027 that will support the productive, competitive and extroverted sectors of the economy in their transition to a development model, lead by the a knowledge based economy.

### **Forms of aid Tax Exemption foy NEW business 2015 - 2025**

The beneficiary is entitled to a tax exemption after an audit and approval of the implementation of 50% of the budget for the investment plan and the beneficiary has made its entire own capital contribution.

### ***Cash Grant***

A beneficiary will be entitled to a cash grant equal to 50% of the total approved grant following the audit and approval of implementation of 50% of the investment plan budget and if the beneficiary has made its full capital contribution. The remaining 50% will be provided when the investment plan is completed and productive operations commence.

### ***Leasing Subsidy***

The first payment of the leasing subsidy will be made after the state auditors certify that all of the leased equipment has been installed according to the lease agreement. The leasing subsidy will be paid every six months following the payment of the lease installments by the beneficiary. The subsidy may not exceed 60% of the approved amount before the completion of the investment plan and the commencement of productive operations.

### ***Wage Subsidy***

The payment of the subsidy will commence after the state auditors certify that the relevant new employment has been created. The subsidy will be paid every six months following the payment of the relevant salary costs by the beneficiary in accordance with approved state aid rates, and up to 60% of the approved amount before the completion of the investment plan and the commencement of productive operations.

## **COMPETITIVENESS, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION OP (Operational Program)**

### ***Main objectives:***

The OP should substantially contribute to the proposed shift in the growth model of the Greek economy from non-tradable into tradable sectors, and cluster development of innovative and out turned sectors with a sustainable competitive advantage. A crucial aspect of the OP is its articulation with the Regional OPs regarding the support of priorities identified through national/regional smart specialisation strategies (RIS3) at the appropriate level.

EU funding will also contribute in upgrading the country's infrastructures in the sectors enhancing the development of entrepreneurship, the innovation and the outturn of the enterprises (mainly research centres, broadband and NGA infrastructures and energy efficiency interventions).. The use of Financial Instruments is foreseen in most of the specific objectives (including those relating to energy efficiency), where appropriate and depending on the results of the ongoing ex-ante assessments. The OP contributes to achieving the Europe 2020 – 2017 targets for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.



## **Funding priorities**

The OP will contribute to promote the following key priorities:

- "Enhancing entrepreneurship with sectorial priorities" (ERDF –50,79% of EU allocation): increase research potential and private investments in research and development, promote innovation and outturn of SMEs, particularly in sectors with a competitive advantage (agri-food, energy,
- supply chain, cultural and creative industries, environment, tourism/culture, ICT, health, Material/Constructions).
- "Adaptability of employees, enterprises and entrepreneurial environment to the new development requirements" (ESF –18,18% of EU allocation): aiming at matching the employees and enterprises skills to the development needs. In parallel, the effort will focus on the capacity of the public administration to facilitate the improvement of the entrepreneurial environment.
- "Development of mechanisms to enhance entrepreneurship" (ERDF –29,19 % of EU allocation): invest in upgrading the country's infrastructures in the sectors enhancing the development of entrepreneurship, the innovation and the outturn of the enterprises (mainly research centres, broadband and NGA infrastructures and energy efficiency interventions).
- "Technical Assistance" (ERDF - 1.50% and ESF 0.34% of EU allocation respectively): provision of technical assistance.

## **Expected impacts**

- Contribute to increase the RDI expenditure, of the enterprises, in all Regions (from 0.34% to 0.51 % of the GDP);
- Contribute to double the number of Patents in transition and more developed Regions;
- Contribute to increase the use of ICT up to 20% of the SMEs, in transition and more developed Regions, from as low as 8% today;
- Contribute to increase, up to 2025, the broadband coverage to 100% and the NGA broadband connections of a 100 Mbps bandwidth to 50%;
- Assist at least 1.185 enterprises to create new products; assist at least 22.500 SMEs; create at least 8.430 new jobs in the assisted enterprises
- Contribute to increase the Gross Added Value of the 9 strategic sectors of the country by at least €11 billion
- Contribute to increase the Exports' Value in the 9 strategic sectors of the country by at least €1,1 billion

- Increase the penetration of Renewable Energy Sources to the energy balance of the country up to 20% by 2025;
- Double the investment of the enterprises to adopt more environmental friendly processes, in order to reduce their environmental footprint (from €38 to 76 million);
- Contribute to increase the amount of recycling of industrial waste from 765.000 to 970.000 tonnes /year
- Contribute to improve the Energy Efficiency of the country's building stock from 70 ktoe/ year to 900 ktoe/year;
- Contribute to increase the alternative use of natural gas from 4.225 to 6.600 million m<sup>3</sup>/year;
- Contribute to increase the % of final consumers using smart meters from 0 to 80% by 2025;
- Leverage an additional amount of private contribution of 3,5 billion € against the public investment of 4,5 billion € generated by the OP;

### **Transforming Tradition into Competitiveness and Innovation for Greek Companies**

**2021 SEV Center of Excellence in Creative Leadership's online conference had it all: amazing talks on the challenges and rewards of the digital age, the perils and joys of marrying innovation and tradition, and a new leader for the Center**

- Distinguished speakers from Greece's leading industries, stimulating panel discussions, and applied research findings were the elements of the SEV Center of Excellence in Creative Leadership's online conference, entitled "Tradition and Innovation in a Digital World." This event aimed to round up the 2020-2021 applied research of the Center on how Greek companies can utilize tradition as a source of competitiveness and innovation, as well as give us a sneak peek of the research topics for 2022.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=3&v=wZcx2\\_96kOQ&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=wZcx2_96kOQ&feature=emb_logo)

## **ESF+ project in Greece fosters future young entrepreneurs**

The “Know Thyself” center in Greece, co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF), aims to strengthen self-employment and improve the competitiveness of the local economy by training students in the skills they need to work in their chosen field, as well as on developing their entrepreneurial skills.

## **OAED, Organization for Unemployment Greece adapts OECD regulations**

Inclusive entrepreneurship policies seek to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to create a sustainable business for those with realistic potential, regardless of their background. Business creation by people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups (e.g. women, youth, seniors, immigrants, the unemployed, people who experience disability) helps generate jobs, thereby fighting social and financial exclusion while stimulating economic growth. These policies have become much more relevant with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to rapidly increasing unemployment and inactivity.

Addressing this jobs crisis is one of the top policy priorities in European Union and OECD countries and inclusive entrepreneurship schemes have strong potential for moving some unemployed people back into work. Moreover, these policies can be leveraged to help reboot economies as there is untapped growth potential among some of the target groups. This note is the fourth country assessment note prepared by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in collaboration with the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission on the state of inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programs in each EU Member State.

Each note provides an overview of the entrepreneurship activities by women, youth, seniors, immigrants and the unemployed. It also provides an assessment of policies and programs that support people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups in business creation and self-employment, and suggests policy actions to address gaps in the support system and to improve the quality of available support offers.

The notes cover national-level policies and programs and, where relevant, sub-national initiatives and actions by the non-governmental sector. The 2020 notes include a special section on entrepreneurship support for people who experience disability. This section provides an overview of the entrepreneurship activity levels, obstacles faced and policy responses. It also contains a new section on entrepreneurship framework conditions to provide additional context for interpreting the tailored policies and programs.

These country-specific notes are part of a wider programme of work by the OECD and the European Commission that includes “The Missing Entrepreneurs” publications, the Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool ([www.betterentrepreneurship.eu](http://www.betterentrepreneurship.eu)), a series of Policy Briefs on specific target groups, policies and issues, and national policy reviews of youth entrepreneurship and women entrepreneurship. This work stream examines how public policies and programs can support inclusive entrepreneurship.

This includes refining regulatory and welfare institutions, facilitating access to finance, building entrepreneurship skills through training, coaching and mentoring, strengthening entrepreneurial culture and networks for target groups, and putting strategies and actions together for inclusive entrepreneurship in a coordinated and targeted way.

Governments are increasingly recognizing the challenge of inclusive entrepreneurship, but there is still much to do to spread good practice. For more information please refer to: [www.oecd.org/employment/leed/inclusive-entrepreneurship.htm](http://www.oecd.org/employment/leed/inclusive-entrepreneurship.htm).

## **OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development**

Framework conditions for entrepreneurship are improving, notably due to many efforts to streamline regulations and boost the availability of finance for entrepreneurs and SMEs. However, domestic market conditions remain challenging. • The share of working people who are self-employed is very high in Greece.

In 2019, the self-employment rate was nearly double the European Union (EU) average (23.0% vs. 12.5%). Seniors and youth, the most affected by the persisting effects of the financial crisis, have the highest self-employment rates.

- Data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor suggest that there are about 430 000 early-stage entrepreneurs, i.e. those involved in creating a start-up or managing a new business that is less than 42 months old. Early-stage entrepreneurship rates were approximately equal to the EU average for the period 2015-19. The gender gap was slightly less pronounced than the EU average and seniors were notably more active than the EU average.
- Eliminating the differences in early-stage entrepreneurship activity rates across population groups (i.e. applying the early-stage entrepreneurship rate of men who are 30-49 years old to the whole population) would result in an additional 68 000 entrepreneurs. Most of these “missing” entrepreneurs are women and about half are over 50 years old.

- Inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes are long-standing. Many programmes are operated at the national level by the employment agency and the majority of these public actions have been realized with support from EU Structural Funds and international donors. Nongovernmental organisations have a strong role in supporting inclusive entrepreneurship, however most of these projects operate on a very small scale.
- Youth entrepreneurship is well established and the majority of initiatives appear to be of reasonable quality. While many of these actions are implemented through the Youth Employment Initiative, there are also many schemes that support innovative entrepreneurship in higher education.
- The most notable gaps in the inclusive entrepreneurship support system are for female entrepreneurs and immigrant entrepreneurs. Little support for women entrepreneurs is in place and support for immigrant entrepreneurs has not kept pace with the growth in immigration in recent years.
- The following measures are recommended to strengthen inclusive entrepreneurship in Greece:
  - o Provide tailored assistance to women in supporting them on the path to innovative entrepreneurship;
  - o Strengthen entrepreneurship support for migrants, especially to formalize informal businesses;
    - o Increase tailored entrepreneurship training and coaching for older people such as; and
    - o Further develop entrepreneurship education and training in secondary and tertiary level education curriculums, including in vocational education and training.

## **OAED - Hellenic Manpower Employment Organization**

### ***Latest funding for unemployment***

#### ***New Programs to be announced at HELEXPO September 2022***

New Youth Entrepreneurship Pilot Program for Unemployed Young People Aged 18 to 29, by the OAED, with an Emphasis on Women

OAED with the subsidy to the program of Youth Entrepreneurship of Unemployed Youth, emphasis is placed on Women's Entrepreneurship, in which women will fill 60% of the positions.

With the completion of Stage 6 (the program below), the second phase of the entrepreneurship program addressed to the unemployed was announced under the name "Program for Granting Business Initiatives to Employ Young Freelancers Aged 18 to 29 with an Emphasis on Women" in which they will have the possibility for all the unemployed to participate. You can find out about the program [here](#).

The OAED implemented the subsidized 'New Pilot Program of Youth Entrepreneurship for Unemployed Young People aged 18 to 29, with an Emphasis on Women' to which interested parties can submit an application from till end of 2021.

This program supports 18- to 29-year-olds who wish to develop entrepreneurial activity, in order to implement their business ideas into sustainable businesses. Those interested will submit an application for their participation in consulting and coaching actions, in order to strengthen their possibilities for access to the labor market, through the design and implementation of new businesses.

Unemployed people aged 18-29 can participate in the program who:

- They are registered in the Organization's registers
- They have a completed Individual Action Plan (IAP),
- The unemployed should remain outside the labor market, education, training and wish to develop business activity.

The program includes the following 6 (six) Stages:

- ✓ Publication of Invitation and Submission of Application by the unemployed
- ✓ The selection criteria of the 5,000 unemployed will be based on standard qualifications and the description of the business idea.
- ✓ Selection of up to 5,000 beneficiaries,
- ✓ Participation in a five-day Business Initiatives Advisory Program (S.A.E.P.) (up to 5,000 beneficiaries),
- ✓ Questionnaire Completion Procedure After completing the five-day SAEP counseling, the beneficiaries will describe their business ideas in detail within 2 weeks on the "Business Idea Maturity Assessment Questionnaire"
- ✓ Maturity assessment of business ideas up to 5,000 beneficiaries and selection of mature business ideas up to 3,000 beneficiaries.

## SEVEN STAGES

The Evaluation Criteria (K) and the weighting factors of the Business Idea Maturity Evaluation Questionnaires are the following:

- Knowledge & Experience (20%)
- Market Perception & Value Proposition (20%)
- Market Dynamics Analysis & Competitive Advantage (30%)
- Financial Planning Ability (15%)
- Entry Readiness (15%)

Provision of Coaching Services to up to 3,000 selected beneficiaries. This guidance will include six sessions (one session per week lasting 1.5-2 hours), of which the 1st session will be live (with the physical presence of a mentor and an unemployed person) and the other 5 remotely.

Follow-up of the progress of the beneficiaries six (6) months after the completion of the Action (i.e. after the submission of the business plans to the electronic platform).

After the completion of the Stage (Stage 6 of the present) of the provision of coaching services, an Entrepreneurship Program will be announced for 2,500 young unemployed people aged 18-29, in which all unemployed people will have the opportunity to participate, including those who will have complete the Business Plan Support Program of this Call.

Specifically, with a Public Call, the unemployed will be invited to submit an online application, accompanied by their business plan.

The Applications will be evaluated by Comparative Evaluation, based on specific scoring criteria and the most complete and viable proposals will be selected.

Emphasis will be placed on women who will fill at least 60% of the program's positions.

The amount of the aid and the duration of the program will be 10,000 euros and 12 months or 17,000 euros and 18 months.

The program has a total budget of €43,400,000.

### **B' PROGRAM**

After the record of 50,000 new jobs created during the pandemic, the OAED started 2022 just as strongly, with the implementation of a "new generation" of active employment policies with 86,000 subsidized new jobs in the private sector. These actions on the one hand help companies to increase their staff and on the other hand give the unemployed the opportunity to rejoin the labor market".

As he points out, these are **11 new programs** of the **National Recovery** and Resilience Plan "Greece 2.0" and the NSRF, which subsidize the hiring of the unemployed in 62,000 new full-time jobs, with a budget that will exceed **580 million euros, as well as eight open programs with 24,000 new jobs.**

In particular, on January 17, online applications for the first of the 11 new programs began, which concerns the grant of businesses for the employment of 4,000 unemployed people, aged 30, in the Regional Units of the Western Sector of Athens, Western Attica and Piraeus, as well as in the South Aegean Administrative Region, with an emphasis on women.

With a total budget of €26 million, the 12-month program subsidizes each hire with amounts ranging from €467 per month (€5,598 per year) for unemployed men aged 50 and over, to €700 per month (€8,397 per year) for unemployed women aged 30 and over above. Applications will be submitted until February 17.

On January 27, applications began for the 3rd round of subsidies for **7,000 new jobs for unemployed people aged 30 and over in the Regions. of Macedonia and Thrace**, Western Greece, Epirus, Thessaly and Central Macedonia, with an emphasis on the long-term unemployed and the unemployed aged 50 and over.

*The duration of the subsidy is 12 months and the subsidy amounts range from **473 euros per month (5,676 euros per year)** for the unemployed, aged up to 49, to 710 euros per month (8,520 euros per year) for the long-term unemployed aged 50 and over.*

In addition, until February 11, the applications for the employment program for 5,000 unemployed people aged 30 and over, with an emphasis on women, with a total budget of 32 million euros, in the Regions of Western Macedonia, Central Greece, the Ionian Islands, the Peloponnese, the North Aegean and of Crete, with amounts of wage subsidy and insurance contributions ranging from 467 euros per month (5,598 euros per year) for unemployed people, aged 30-49, to 700 euros per month (8,397 euros per year) for unemployed women aged 30 and over.

Businesses submit their application through the State Aid Information System of the Ministry of Development & Investments ([ependyseis.gr/mis](http://ependyseis.gr/mis)). Then, the OAED labor consultants will indicate to the company candidates, according to the category of unemployed, the specialty and the required qualifications, and the company will choose among the candidates for recruitment.

In the above actions, there is no commitment to employment, after the end of the program and simplified and faster integration and repayment procedures are foreseen, while the subsidy of salary and non-salary costs also includes the corresponding Christmas and Easter gifts and leave allowances.



## **National Observatory of disability issues**

Entrepreneurship and people with disabilities: advantages, barriers and challenges

There are several reasons that lead a person to the decision to create their own business. Some of these are: difficulty finding paid work, dissatisfaction with the conditions prevailing in the private sector labor market (e.g. wages, working hours, etc.), need for personal satisfaction and self-actualization, desire for independence and autonomy, achieving a better balance between professional and personal and/or family life, presenting an opportunity to be exploited for self-employment or business activity.

Turning to entrepreneurship is a career choice that involves several challenges, but also many advantages. Some of them are the following:

i) it is an alternative solution for people with limited employability opportunities, as well as for people with high-level knowledge, skills and ideas, ii) it is an essential outlet for those people for whom independence and creativity are important values, iii) it gives greater opportunities for initiative and flexibility, iv) successful entrepreneurship provides greater financial rewards than wage labor, v) young people can engage in products and services aimed at similar age groups, as well as take advantage of the advantages of modern technology that usually they know better.

In particular, with regard to people with disabilities and chronic diseases, there are also some additional reasons that strengthen a person's intention to engage in business activity, and they are as follows:

- the inability to find work due to disability or chronic illness,
- unequal treatment and discrimination in employment (e.g. behavior of employers and employees, level of remuneration, etc.),
- the mismatch between the abilities and expectations of people with disabilities and the jobs offered,
- the lack of accessibility in the work environment,
- employers' reluctance to make the necessary reasonable adjustments,
- the desire for flexible working conditions (hours, etc.).

At the same time, a number of factors discourage people with disabilities from undertaking a business plan. At a general level, the great shortcomings of society in the entire network of institutions and infrastructures concerning persons with disabilities create a restrictive framework that prevents their equal participation in the entire range of social activities, and consequently to the undertaking of business activity.

In addition, the entry of disabled people into the business world is hampered by additional inhibiting factors such as: the higher costs required due to the disability (equipment, ergonomic workplace arrangement), lower income and low borrowing capacity from the banking system, limited employment of people with disabilities as employees and the consequent lack of experience, but also staying out of the labor market due to disability (treatment, rehabilitation), the educational barriers that hinder access to appropriate education/training and, finally, the relatively more limited social relationships due to social exclusion (a person's wider range of social relationships/networks also increases their business prospects, e.g. potential to develop a clientele, etc.).

In addition, people with disabilities face, in most cases, the reduction of disability benefits in the event of employment and/or starting a business.

It is clear that these cuts are a serious deterrent. Especially in the case of business activity that also entails financial risk, the loss of benefits and pension acts as an even more deterrent.

It should, however, be pointed out the state's inadequacy in adopting "active" policies to support the employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship of people with disabilities, which in Greece is combined with a distorted, welfare character, perception of people with disabilities.

At the base of all these obstacles is the prevailing, even today, perception of the "incapacity" of people with disabilities, which is reflected both in the actions and in the "assumptions" of society regarding issues concerning people with disabilities. More specifically, the limited perception of the possibilities of participation and contribution of people with disabilities in the whole spectrum of social life (society, economy, culture, etc.) produces attitudes and institutions that exclude people with disabilities, while at the same time they feed into a distorted, providential understanding of disability.

Low expectations and providential perception feed off each other. The question of entrepreneurship is included in this context. Low expectations, the result of passive policies, in turn fuel and reproduce unilateral welfare treatment at the expense of active policies. It is obvious that in many cases, the

disabled people themselves, due to their experiences within a society that systematically excludes them, develop low expectations for themselves and accept their position on the margins of society.

However, the challenge of taking entrepreneurial action is really attractive, and today we find that more and more people with disabilities are taking up and implementing business ideas, while claiming an equal position and role in society.

Despite the obstacles and difficulties, **entrepreneurship can be an important way out and opportunity for people with disabilities and chronic diseases**, as:

- entrepreneurship facilitates integration into the labor market, where accessibility barriers, discrimination, prejudices and stereotypes make it difficult to find paid work,
- through business activity, people with disabilities have the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and strengthen their self-confidence,
- the possibility increases that they will deal with the subject that interests them and is closer to their qualifications, knowledge, skills, and interests,
- matching the object of the business with their desires, expectations, abilities and knowledge creates greater scope and new opportunities for professional advancement and success,
- there is a greater possibility of flexibility in terms of working conditions (work rate, working hours, place of work, etc.) and adapting these conditions to the needs arising from the disability or chronic illness of each person.

In addition, the entrepreneurship of people with disabilities and chronic diseases can contribute to:

- the creation of new jobs for people from the same population group,
- the creation of working environments adapted to the needs of people with disabilities and chronic diseases,
- designing goods and services aimed at people with disabilities or chronic conditions, facilitating their daily life and
- encouraging other people with disabilities and chronic conditions to engage in business activity.

