



INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROJECT
CALL FOR DELIVERY

DELIVERY OF PILOT BUSINESS START SUPPORT
2019-2021



This project is funded by the
European Union





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1 Introduction

The European Commission considers small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurship as the key to ensuring economic growth, innovation, job creation and social integration. Young businesses and entrepreneurs willing to innovate have a high potential to grow and to create additional employment. The Turkish Cypriot economy is dominated by SMEs, most of them micro-enterprises, which are concentrated in low-tech/low innovation and low added value sectors such as trade and services. The industrial sector is made up of small, low-tech and relatively old firms. Compared to the European average the ICT sector plays only a negligible role. Public and private funding of Research and Development activities is low, and cooperation between business and the research sector is limited, contributing to few innovations being commercialized.

Economic development interventions have a critical role to play in developing communities. This role is not just in the context of contributing to the overall economy but also by promoting equal access to economic opportunity and stimulating employment and income opportunities. According to the 2016-2017 Competitiveness Report on the Turkish Cypriot economy, the Turkish Cypriot community (TCc) ranks 102 out of 139 economies on innovation and 63 out of 139 on technological readiness. Being an entrepreneur and starting a business is often not seen as a desirable career opportunity. Therefore, one of five strategic goals of the draft SME strategy 2016-2020, which the Turkish Cypriots produced with EU assistance, is to improve the conditions for entrepreneurship.

With funding from The European Union's Aid Programme to the Turkish Cypriot community NI-CO is implementing this project to contribute to a strengthened innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem providing demand-oriented services to support potential entrepreneurs. NI-CO will deliver both directly and through various stakeholders and delivery partners a range of programmes and actions including: The development of an

Innovation Hub at the former wholesale area of the Bandabuliya in Nicosia; developing an enterprise culture through working with schools, specific target groups such as women and young people, promoting successful role models of entrepreneurs; working with existing businesses to help them become more competitive through innovation; encouraging bi-communal business activities; and focusing on specific business sectors to support them become more innovative and entrepreneurial.

An important element of the overall programme will be to design and deliver support programmes for entrepreneurs according to their specific needs and demands in partnership with local actors. So as to contribute to the improvement of the enterprise culture and enterprise eco-system overall, it is planned that any person wanting to start a business should receive basic information and training on how to start a business. Hence a standard Business Start Up service will be put in place on a pilot basis initially. It is envisaged that the service will attract a full range of business start up types. For those businesses with significant growth opportunities more specialist additional services will be provided outside this programme.

Whilst this call is specifically in relation to the delivery of a Business Start Up support service, NI-CO envisage working with other delivery partners going forward on other areas under Entrepreneurship and Innovation. If an organisation wishes to express an interest in partnering with NI-CO or potentially delivering specific actions within their scope of expertise they are encouraged to do so by submitting a short resume of their organisation and proposed actions, as a separate submission, to melike@entrepreneurship4u.eu. Should NI-CO feel that such proposed actions fit in with the overall Innovative Entrepreneurship project a separate discussion will be held with the interested parties.

2 Delivery of Business Start Up Support for the Turkish Cypriot Community

NI-CO plans to provide, through a number of delivery partners, standardised Business Start Up support for new entrepreneurs throughout the TCC for the period of November 2019 through to December 2021. NI-CO will work with delivery partners to develop their capacity to deliver this type of general start up service and also work with them to secure the longer term sustainability of the service post 2021.

The support will be available free of charge to participants. NI-CO, along with its delivery partners and other stakeholders will promote the support offering through a planned communications strategy so as to encourage participation. Participants will be referred to one of the local delivery partners where they will receive:

1. Initial advisory meeting with business advisor.
2. Opportunity to participate in Ideation/Initial Market Research workshop.
3. Participation in four enterprise workshops – Self Assessment, Market Research/Marketing, Business finance and Innovation.
4. Support in the development of their business plan – up to two additional one hour one-one meetings.
5. Sign posting to other sources of support.

As this is a completely new initiative it is difficult to gauge uptake at this stage. However NI-CO would target as a minimum the following levels of uptake for each of the support elements once the services are fully operational.

	Participant Numbers
Initial Advisory meetings	400
Ideation Workshops (average attendance 10 participants)	320
Enterprise Workshops	250
Business Plan development/next steps advisory meetings	125

NI-CO are seeking to appoint a number of delivery partners that will be in a position to deliver the support services on a geographical basis and within their team resources.

Delivery agents will be able to impact on the participation levels locally through their own marketing and networking strategies.

3 Business Start Up Support Services

There is a clear case for a start-up support service within the TCc. Research undertaken indicates:

- A high degree of consistency with the aims of economic development;
- Compelling evidence of market failure currently affecting enterprise development within the TCc;
- Support for a universal volume start-up support programme amongst relevant stakeholders;
- A clear need to stimulate private sector growth and employment creation within the TCc;
- A need to address persistent under performance in business creation and entrepreneurship within the TCc and
- A gap in the landscape of available start-up support.

4 NI-CO Capacity Building

NI-CO recognises the need to develop the capacity of delivery partners to enable them deliver the programme. NI-CO will provide the following support to delivery partners to ensure the sustainable delivery of the programme:

- A three-day capacity building workshop to be held in late September for all business advisors/trainers on the programme. This will be delivered by experienced trainers from Northern Ireland. The outcome of these workshops will be that each member of the delivery team will be capable of both mentoring new business starts and delivering the series of 4 enterprise workshops.
- Each member of the delivery team will be provided with an experienced business advisor/trainer (a NI based Short Term Expert (STE)) who will provide mentoring support for up to six months so as to ensure that the delivery team member can develop to their full potential. This will include the STE meeting with the delivery team member monthly, reviewing their progress, sitting in on live mentoring and training sessions being provided by the team member, and providing feedback and guidance. The STE will also be available on an ongoing basis to provide support through Skype, e-mail and telephone.
- NI-CO will develop a package of support materials for delivery team members to use. This will include: Business Advisory meeting structure Pro-forma: Training materials for Ideation/Market Research workshop: Training materials for four enterprise workshops and work-books, Business Plan template: and online support materials on IE website.
- NI-CO will facilitate a study visit to Ireland in October for each member of the Delivery Team. This five day visit will look at “next steps” – essentially looking at what other programmes/projects that are operating in Ireland that could be replicated

within TCc. The visits will include: Accelerator project, Innovation Hub, Social Enterprise initiative, sector specific initiatives such as Agri-food, Farm Diversification etc.

5 Statement of Requirements

The Business Start Support programme will deliver services to anyone seeking to establish a new business within the TCc. The 'customer journey' will contain 5 elements:

1. Initial assessment
2. Ideation/initial market research workshop
3. Enterprise workshop
4. One-to-one support and
5. A final meeting

All of these interactions will be recorded on a Management Information System (MIS) that will be supplied by NI-CO. NI-CO will have responsibility for managing performance of delivery partners and ensuring quality standards are delivered to.

The participant journey can be summarized as follows:

- 1.0 An initial assessment (face to face meeting) with a Business Advisor to ensure the participant's eligibility and to gather information about the proposed business idea – c1 hour.
- 2.0 Each participant will be offered the opportunity to attend a Ideation/Initial Market research workshop (3 hours)

3.0 Participants will be offered the opportunity to attend four business-planning workshops to help shape and develop their business plan. Workshops will focus on Self Assessment, Market Research/Marketing, Finance and Innovation. Workshops will be 3 hours duration.

4.0 Participants will receive one-to-one support on financial and business planning to help compile and produce their business plan, including developing cash-flow and financial forecasts.

5.0 A business plan review and sign-off face to face meeting will be held to review the full final business plan, identify areas critical from an implementation perspective, signpost to other supports and address any start up queries.

6 Proposal Requirements

Potential Delivery Partners are requested to submit a proposal of not more than 10 A4 pages outlining by the deadline of **27 August 2019, 15:00** (Cyprus time).

1. Organisational details to include but not limited to;
 - Type of organisation eg: private business, NGO
 - Date established
 - Experience/role in the business start up/enterprise sector
 - Current income/funding model
 - Key personnel
 - Premises available for business mentoring and training delivery
 - Geographical area organisation can provide service in

2. Proposed methodology;

- How the organization will ensure the successful delivery of the programme to include networking, partnerships in place, marketing and quality management.

3. Delivery Team members

For each proposed team member an up to date CV should be attached with a specific paragraph on experience dealing with new business starts, advising/mentoring business start ups or existing businesses. For each team member detail should be provided on their availability in terms of flexibility to meet clients at short notice and to deliver enterprise workshops in the evenings outside normal working hours.

4. Selected partners will be paid on Innovative Entrepreneurship (IE) standardized rates which will be agreed prior to the commencement of the programme.

Potential delivery partners are requested to provide detail on the charges they will make to NI-CO for:

- 1.0 Initial Business Advisory Sessions (per hour)
- 2.0 Delivery of three hour Ideation/Market Research workshops
- 3.0 Delivery of four three hour Enterprise Workshops
- 4.0 Follow up Business Advisory support (per hour)
- 5.0 Management of delivery

5. Potential delivery partners are asked to confirm their commitment to have the delivery personnel attend the three-day capacity building workshop provisionally scheduled for 20, 21 and 22 September 2019.

6. Potential delivery partners should present their proposals on how they see the service becoming sustainable post December 2021. They should also comment on how the capacity building provided by NI-CO will contribute to the overall sustainability of their organisation going forward.

7. Any other relevant information to support the proposal.