



## Gi<sup>3</sup> alert

### Proposals invited for VLAIO subsidy for bio-based pilot projects

VLAIO (Flemish Agency for Innovation and Entrepreneurship) is calling for proposals from Belgian **small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) active in the bioeconomy to benefit from financial support to partially fund some of their bio-based pilot projects**. The aim of the call is to lower the threshold and raise awareness for smaller companies and smaller projects that need pilot infrastructure tests for applications in the bioeconomy. The project call opened in **September 2021** and proposals may continue to be submitted until the available funds are exhausted.

#### Qualifying projects

SMEs active in the bio-economy (from industry, primary agriculture, and aquaculture) may apply for support with a pilot project on bio-based applications to cooperate with a pilot infrastructure provider (as a subcontractor) and engage in a project that supports them in testing the feasibility of scaling up a bio-based application with technology readiness level (TRL) 4 through TRL 7. As a quality assurance measure and to guarantee investment in the Flemish ecosystem, only pilot infrastructure providers registered for the SME portfolio pillar “consultancy” are accepted.

The focus of the projects is on scale-up/demonstration activities. This means that there is sufficient maturity at the start of the project (proof of concept on an experimental scale) but no commercial rollout is yet possible. Pure registration or certification costs of an already developed product are not eligible. Projects that are already too far advanced in the industrialisation and/or commercialisation phase also will not be considered.

#### Budget

The grant amounts to a **minimum of EUR 20,000** and a **maximum of EUR 100,000**. The grant is calculated as a percentage of the accepted project budget. This budget includes the costs for the use of pilot infrastructure at an external

service provider where these costs comprise at least 60% of the total project budget. The **grant rate is 45% for small** enterprises and **35% for medium-sized** enterprises.

### Eligibility criteria

Eligibility for the project will be determined according to the following criteria:

- The applicant is an SME with operational activities in the Flemish region;
- The applicant is not an undertaking in difficulty (*onderneming in moeilijkheden*);
- A calculation of the net working capital is provided to ensure the applicant has the co-financing capacity to bear its share of the project costs at its own expense;
- A **cooperation** (subcontracting) arrangement is in place **with a pilot infrastructure** registered as a service provider for the SME portfolio (advisory pillar), a copy of the agreement is attached, and the amount is at least 60% of the total project budget;
- The DNSH (Do No Significant Harm) analysis substantiates for each of the six environmental objectives the answer “No” to the question of whether the project will seriously affect these environmental objectives;
- The duration of the project is a maximum of one year (potentially extended to maximum of two years in certain circumstances); and
- The TRL of the project must be **between 4 and 7**.

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### Contacts

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