

Grants & Incentives**SCHEME FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) INFRASTRUCTURES AND METHODS (Managed by the Human Resources Development Authority – HRDA)****Aim**

The main aim of the “Scheme for the Enhancement of HR Infrastructures and Methods” is to cover the gaps observed due to the lack of suitable quality advanced and innovative infrastructures and human resource development systems.

Scope of activities

- Creation of infrastructures and methods for the dissemination and application of:
 - New technologies in training and personnel development.
 - New methodologies in training and personnel development.
 - New sectors, professions and skills in training and personnel development.
 - New approaches, structures and mechanisms for more efficient satisfaction of training needs and personnel development and promotion of lifelong learning.
- Creation of infrastructures and methods for the provision of services to very small, small and medium enterprises for training and personnel development.
- Creation of customer service centres of businesses on a sectoral, cross-sectoral, regional or local basis or for specific professional categories, for the provision of services on training issues and human resource development.
- Creation of infrastructures and systems for the promotion of professional qualifications certification.
- Creation of modern infrastructures and systems for meeting the specialized needs of the economy on training issues and human resource development.
 - Creation of infrastructures and systems which will directly correspond to the training needs of unemployed people will be flexible and will aim at meeting the needs of the labour market both generally and locally.

Funding Conditions & Obligations

Interested businesses will have to follow the following procedure for the submission of applications, implementation of the project and release of funding:

- Stage 1: Application submission
- Stage 2: Evaluation, selection and approval of proposals
- Stage 3: Contract signing
- Stage 4: Implementation of the proposed Project in two Phases (1 and 2)
- Stage 5: Evaluation and approval of deliverables
- Stage 6: Payment of subsidy

Stage 1 – Application Submission

The HRDA accepts applications by interested parties twice a year, on the 15th of May and 15th of November. Applicants submit all the necessary documentation duly completed and signed.

Stage 2 – Evaluation, selection and approval of proposals

The applications are evaluated by an internal Evaluation Committee on the basis of pre-defined criteria. A successful proposal needs to receive an overall mark of 60%, and 40% for each criterion as a minimum to be considered for funding. The evaluation procedure takes six months.

Stage 3 – Contract signing

Upon approval of the proposal, a Contract is signed between the Applicant and the HRDA, which defines the commitments and the obligations assumed by each party.

Stage 4 – Execution of the proposed Project

The project is executed in **two Phases** described in detail below.

- (i) Phase 1 must be completed within six months and may include the following activities:
- Feasibility Study including research (if necessary), for establishing the necessity and feasibility of the proposed infrastructure and/ or personnel development system.
 - Design of the proposed infrastructure and/ or personnel development system, on the basis of the results of the study.

Upon completion of this Phase, the Applicant prepares and submits all the outputs of the above activities in the form of deliverables to the HRDA, along with progress reports, budget for Phase 2 and timeframe for the implementation of the project in Phase 2.

- (ii) Phase 2 must be completed within thirty months and may include the following:
- Execution of work for the creation of the approved infrastructure and/ or the personnel development system, on the basis of the approved design, the action plan, the budget and the timeframe.
 - Pilot operation of the specific infrastructure and/ or the personnel development system for at least twelve (out of the thirty) months and the submission of an activity report for the twelve-month period, according to the approved action plan.

Prior to the pilot operation, a report and action plan for the utilization of the specific infrastructure and/ or the personnel development system for at least twelve months is submitted to the HRDA for approval.

Stage 5 – Evaluation and approval of deliverables

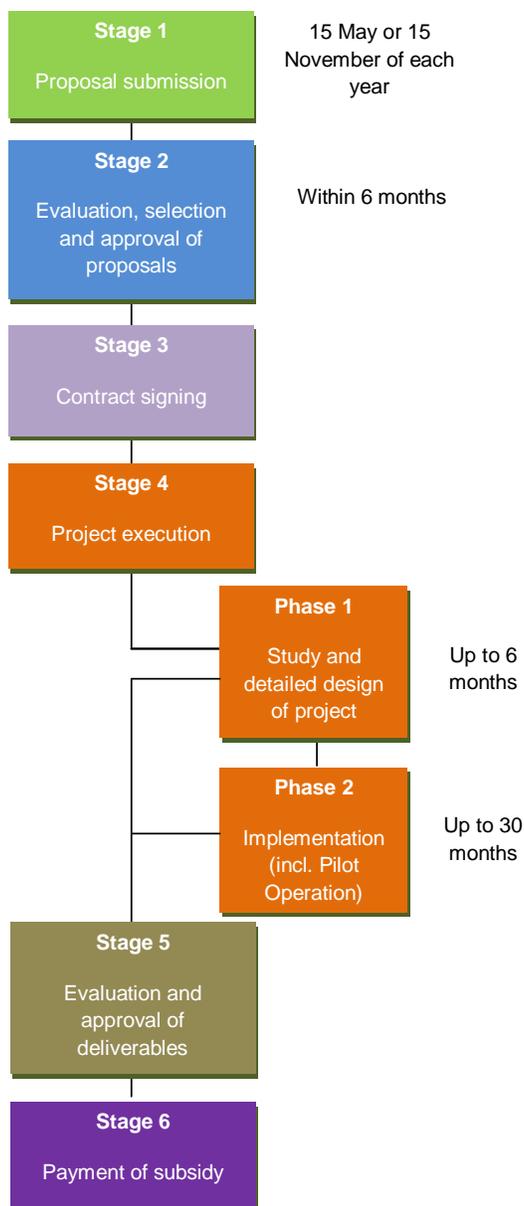
Deliverables are evaluated and approved separately for each Phase described in Stage 4 above.

This gives the flexibility to the HRDA to stop a project after Phase 1, i.e. not approve its continuation to Phase 2. It is therefore possible for an application for a project to be accepted in Stage 2, but not receive funding for both Phases in Stage 4.

The approval decision is being taken on the basis of the Scheme's requirements.

Stage 6 – Payment of subsidy

The payment of the subsidy takes place upon completing each Phase of Stage 4, provided that all requirements are being met.



Eligible Costs

The eligible costs relate to the implementation of the project (i.e. Stage 4) and are as follows:

For Phase 1:

- Consultants'/ Associates' Fees and/ or staff cost for the preparation of the feasibility study and research to establish the needs for personnel development which the proposed infrastructure and/ or personnel development system will target. This also covers the design of the proposed

infrastructure and/ or personnel development system and the preparation of a complete action plan for the implementation of the proposal.

- Expenses for travelling abroad (including accommodation) if necessary which may cover the expenses of the staff, consultants or other co-operators for the purpose of studying and designing the Project.

For Phase 2:

- Consultants'/ Associates' Fees and/ or staff cost for conducting necessary work to implement the approved infrastructure and/ or personnel development system, on the basis of the approved timeframe and for preparing the utilization plan for at least twelve month, from the date of completing the infrastructure/ system for its implementation/ operation.
- Management Expenses for the implementation of the approved infrastructure and/ or personnel development system (if up to 15% of the total eligible cost for implementing the infrastructure/ system). This includes management and secretarial support as well as supervision.
- Purchase and installation of the proposed equipment such as machinery, tools, audiovisual systems, furniture and parts, air-conditioning systems, translation booths etc.
- Purchase of training aids such as software and/ or licenses for software to be used during the operation of the approved infrastructure and/ or personnel development system.
- Expenses for travelling abroad (including accommodation) if necessary which may cover the expenses of the staff, consultants or other co-operators for implementing the Project.

Funding Quota

The maximum level of funding for this Scheme is **75% of the total amount of eligible costs** with the following ceilings:

- For Phase 1: €25.000
- For Phase 2: €175.000

It should be noted that this Scheme falls under the **de minimis** regime, indicating a cap of **€200.000** for a period of three (3) financial years.

The level of subsidy paid to the Applicant is calculated on the basis of actual expenses and the financial evidence submitted with the subsidy application. The final subsidy cannot exceed the amount which has already been approved and notified to the Applicant with the initial letter of approval.

Scheme Duration

This scheme has been active since 1 January 2011. The deadlines for submitting application for this Scheme are twice a year as follows:

- First Quarter: 15 May
- Second Quarter: 15 November, until the 31st December 2014.