



LEADERS 4FUTURE

"Create Your Own Business Plan" Contest
RULES AND REGULATIONS

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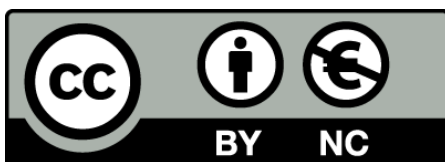
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Overview and Scope

These Rules and Regulations (“Rules”) govern participation in the “Create Your Own Business Plan” National and International Contest, organised under Work Package 5 of the LEADERS4FUTURE project and co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union (Project No. 101185858). The contest is open to young women aged 18–30 resident in one of the seven partner countries - Spain, Norway, Greece, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania - who submit a written business plan and a one-minute elevator-pitch video through the project’s OER platform. Seven national winners, one per country, are invited to the Final Conference in Reus, Spain, where an international jury awards two cash grants of €3,000 each, for the Most Innovative Idea and the Most Gender-Inclusive Start-up.

These Rules should be read together with the Public Contest Guidelines and the Digital Submission and GDPR Consent Agreement published on the OER platform, which describe the submission requirements, evaluation rubric and technical specifications in full. Where any inconsistency arises between these Rules and other promotional or informational material, these Rules prevail.

1. Originality and Intellectual Property

1.1 Declaration of original authorship.

Every entrant must submit, together with the written business plan and pitch video, a signed declaration confirming that the submitted materials are their own original work and do not infringe the intellectual property, patent or copyright of any third party.

1.2 Plagiarism and similarity threshold.

The local Support Point runs every written business plan through a recognised plagiarism-detection tool. A similarity index of 20% or higher (excluding standard headings and template text carried over from the mentoring worksheets) triggers a manual review. Where that review confirms unattributed copying of core business content, financial data or narrative text, the entry is disqualified immediately, and the candidate is notified in writing by their local Support Point coordinator, setting out the evidence found.

1.3 Ownership of the business idea.

Participation in the contest does not transfer ownership of the business concept, product design, service method or any related intellectual property to the LEADERS4FUTURE consortium, the European

Commission or any funding body. Entrants retain 100% ownership of their entrepreneurial and intellectual creations throughout and after the contest.

1.4 Creative Commons licensing of shared material.

Only the material an entrant chooses to make public on the OER platform - the project abstract, the elevator-pitch video and, where agreed, the business name - is released under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Licence (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0). Detailed financial data, cost calculations, supplier information, technical drawings and any other operationally sensitive content contained in the full written plan remain private, are used solely for evaluation and auditing purposes, and are not published or licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

2. Composition and Operation of the Selection Boards

2.1 National Selection Board.

At each of the seven Support Points, a Local Selection Board of three members evaluates the local entries: (a) the coordinator of the host partner organisation; (b) an external business mentor or entrepreneur; and (c) a representative of the local entrepreneurial ecosystem (a chamber of commerce, a municipal business hub or a regional development agency).

2.2 International Selection Board.

At the Final Conference in Reus, an International Jury Panel of thirteen members evaluates the seven national winners: seven international project managers (one per partner organisation), three investors or business angels, and three experts in economic development with a gender perspective.

2.3 Timing and venue.

National evaluation takes place at each Support Point after the close of the submission window and before 15 December; international evaluation takes place in Reus during the Final Conference on 13 January.

2.4 Independence and conflicts of interest.

No board member may evaluate an entrant with whom they have a direct personal or professional relationship. Any potential conflict of interest must be declared in advance, and the affected member must abstain from scoring that entrant.

2.5 Confidentiality.

Deliberations and individual scores are confidential. Only the aggregated results and final rankings are communicated to entrants and, where applicable, published.

3. Prize Investment Commitment

3.1 Signed commitment.

Before receiving the €3,000 grant, each international winner signs an Investment Commitment Agreement undertaking to use the funds exclusively for the development of the business presented in the contest.

3.2 Permitted and excluded uses.

Winners may allocate the grant to legal registration and incorporation costs, product prototyping and development, branding and digital marketing, and essential equipment and software licences. The grant may not be used for personal expenses, repayment of pre-existing personal debts, non-business travel, or any activity contrary to EU ethical and safety standards.

3.3 Justification deadline.

Within six months of receiving the funds, each winner must submit a Post-Grant Activity and Expense Report to the project coordinator, comprising an itemised expense ledger, supporting invoices, receipts or bank statements, and evidence of business progress (such as a registration certificate, an active website, social media presence, or photographs of prototypes).

3.4 Consequences of non-compliance.

If the report is not submitted, or if it demonstrates that the funds were used for an ineligible purpose, the project coordinator may require partial or total repayment of the grant.

3.5 Scope of consortium oversight.

After the funds are disbursed, the consortium's role is limited to the documentary control described above; it does not include an obligation to provide continuity mentoring. Winners remain free to seek informal advice from their Support Point on the same basis as any other project beneficiary, but the Investment Commitment Agreement should state clearly that no further structured mentoring is guaranteed as of right.

4. Disqualification and Grounds for Exclusion

The consortium reserves the right to exclude a participant or a submission from the contest, at any stage, on any of the following grounds:

- Failure to meet the eligibility criteria (age bracket, country of residence, or the plagiarism threshold set out in Clause 1.2).
- Content that is offensive, discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate.
- Manipulation of the public voting system, including through bots or duplicate accounts.
- Breach of the GDPR consent terms or failure to sign the required image-rights consent documents.
- False declarations made on the registration form.

5. Appeals Procedure

5.1 Filing an appeal.

An entrant who disputes a decision may file a written appeal, through their local Support Point, within 5 working days of the announcement of results, stating the procedural grounds, factual errors or evaluation discrepancies being disputed.

5.2 Local review.

The Local Selection Board reviews the case, re-verifies the scorecard calculations, and issues a written recommendation to the project coordinator within 5 working days of receiving the appeal.

5.3 Final decision.

The central Project Coordinator (Open Europe) issues a final decision within 10 working days of receiving the Local Selection Board's recommendation. This decision is final and binding on all parties.

6. Data Protection and Image Rights (GDPR)

6.1 Legal basis.

Personal data submitted for the contest is processed by the consortium partners, as data controllers, under Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). For the four partner countries outside the European Union/European Economic Area - Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania - the GDPR is not directly applicable national law; in those countries, the partner organisations undertake, under the terms of the grant agreement, to apply an equivalent standard of protection. Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 governs, separately, the European Commission's and EACEA's own processing of data transferred to them for audit purposes; it does not itself impose obligations on the consortium partners' day-to-day handling of contestants' data, and reference to it in earlier drafts of the contest documentation should be understood in that limited sense.

6.2 Consent to public dissemination.

Explicit, informed consent, captured through an unticked checkbox on the OER submission form, is required before an entrant's name, project abstract and elevator-pitch video are published on the public section of the OER platform.

6.3 Right to withdraw consent.

An entrant may withdraw consent and request deletion of their data and files at any time by writing to leadersforfuturebalkans@gmail.com. The technical partner (Open Europe) executes the deletion within 72 hours of receiving the request.

6.4 Transfer to EACEA.

Registration details, business plans and related data may be transferred to EACEA and the European Commission for audit and grant-verification purposes, as disclosed to entrants at the point of submission.

7. Governing Law, Jurisdiction and Other Legal Provisions

7.1 National phase.

Each national round is organised, and any related dispute is governed, under the law of the country in which the relevant Support Point operates, applying that country's own consumer-protection and competition rules where these exist.

7.2 International phase and prize.

The international phase and the award of the cash grants are governed by Spanish law, with the courts of Reus/Tarragona having jurisdiction over any dispute. For entrants who are consumers habitually resident in an EU/EEA country, this choice does not deprive them of the mandatory protections of the law of their own country of residence (Regulation (EC) No 593/2008, "Rome I", Article 6) nor, in principle, of their right to bring proceedings before the courts of that country (Regulation (EU) No 1215/2012, "Brussels I Recast", Articles 17–19; for Norway, the equivalent protection derives from the 2007 Lugano Convention rather than Brussels I Recast). Because Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania are outside the EU/EEA and these instruments do not apply there, the practical effect of this clause for entrants resident in those countries should be confirmed with local legal counsel before publication.

7.3 Taxation of the prize.

The tax treatment of the €3,000 grant, including any withholding or declaration obligation, depends on the winner's country of tax residence and may change over time. The consortium does not withhold tax on the winner's behalf and gives no assurance as to the applicable treatment in any of the seven partner countries. Each winner is responsible for her own tax position and is strongly encouraged to consult a local tax adviser before spending the grant.

7.4 Force majeure.

The consortium may postpone, modify or cancel any phase of the contest, without liability, where prevented from proceeding as planned by an event beyond its reasonable control, including natural disaster, act of a public authority, or a major technical failure of the OER platform, provided entrants are notified as soon as reasonably practicable.

7.5 Limitation of liability.

The consortium does not guarantee the commercial success of any business idea submitted or awarded, and accepts no liability for investment or business decisions taken by entrants, whether before, during or after the contest.

7.6 Tie-break criteria.

Where two or more entries receive an identical score, priority is given first to the entry with the higher score on Social and Gender Impact and, if the tie persists, to the entrant who has faced the greatest barriers under the “fewer opportunities” criteria.

7.7 Renunciation by a winner.

If a national or international winner is unable or unwilling to accept the prize, it passes to the next-ranked eligible entrant, who must confirm acceptance in writing within 10 working days of being notified.

7.8 Use of the project name and brand.

Winners and finalists may state that they were recognised by the LEADERS4FUTURE contest and may reference this fact in their own promotional material. They may not modify the project’s name or logo, use it in any way that suggests the consortium endorses their business beyond that fact, or continue using it after being asked in writing to stop.

7.9 Age of entrants.

Because eligibility is strictly limited to applicants aged between 18 and 30 on the date of submission, no entrant is a minor for the purposes of the contest, and these Rules make no separate provision for the participation of minors.

7.10 EU co-funding notice.

Every version of these Rules and all contest materials must display the notice reproduced on the cover page of this document.



why youth