



**European Committee
of the Regions**



European Entrepreneurial Region Award 2027

Local drivers of growth for EU competitiveness

How to apply?

What is the EER?

The European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) Award is an initiative of the Committee of the Regions identifying and rewarding EU regions and cities with outstanding, **future-oriented entrepreneurial strategies**, regardless of their size, wealth or specific competences. The territories with the most credible, visible, forward-looking and promising political strategy are granted the label “European Entrepreneurial Region” (EER) for a specific year. The EER calls for application take place every two years.

The aim of this initiative is twofold:

- to promote **smart growth of SMEs at local and regional level** and contribute to the implementation of EU-level policies.
- to demonstrate **optimal use of EU and other public funds** oriented towards the development of policies and programmes supporting entrepreneurs and SMEs within the region.

Through the EER initiative, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) contributes to the implementation of the key priorities of the EU Competitiveness Compass, supports the growth and scaling-up of SMEs in the Single Market, promotes place-based innovation and the development of robust entrepreneurial ecosystems. The EER label is an opportunity for local and regional actors to demonstrate the crucial role SMEs and entrepreneurs play in steering the EU economy towards a green and digital transition and strengthening the resilience of the economy in a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape. By harnessing their potential to innovate and collaborate, the EER label enables EU regions to move further along the path of resilient, sustainable and digital growth.

The EER scheme follows a **multi-level governance and multi-stakeholder** approach by promoting regional EER ecosystems and communities, in which both regional and local actors are represented. The EER label gives policy makers and stakeholders a strong impetus to jointly develop strategies for accelerating the economic recovery.

Fourty five European territories have been awarded the EER label so far:

- **2011:** Brandenburg (Germany), County Kerry (Ireland) and Murcia Region (Spain);
- **2012:** Catalonia (Spain), Helsinki-Uusimaa (Finland) and Trnava (Slovak Republic);
- **2013:** Nord-Pas de Calais (France), Southern Denmark and Styria (Austria);
- **2014:** Flanders (Belgium), Marche (Italy) and North Brabant (Netherlands);
- **2015:** Lisbon (Portugal), Northern Ireland (United Kingdom) and the Valencian Region (Spain);
- **2016:** Glasgow (United Kingdom), Lombardia (Italy) and Małopolska (Poland);
- **2017:** Extremadura (Spain), Lower Austria (Austria), Western Greece (Greece);
- **2018:** Central Macedonia (Greece), Ile-de-France (France) and Northern and Western Region (Ireland).
- **2019:** Asturias (Spain), Gelderland (Netherlands), Thessaly (Greece)
- **2020:** Gdansk and Pomorskie (Poland), Gothenburg (Sweden), Navarra (Spain)
- **2021/2022:** Castelo Branco (Portugal), Gabrovo (Bulgaria), Helsinki-Uusimaa (Finland), Madrid Region (Spain), Region Sud (France), Silesia (Poland)
- **2023:** Barcelona (Spain), Penela (Portugal), Western Pomerania (Poland)
- **2024:** Famalicao (Portugal), Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italy), South Moravia & Brno (Czech Republic)
- **2025:** Galicia (Spain), Krapina Zagorje (Croatia), Mazovia (Poland)

The EER label has been set up by the **European Committee of the Regions** in partnership with the **European Commission** and is supported by the **European Parliament**, the **European Economic and Social Committee** and EU-level stakeholders such as **SME United**, **Eurochambres** and **Social Economy Europe**.

How to apply for the EER label for the year 2027?

The **EER 2027** call for applications has been launched on 11 November 2025 at the European Commission's SME Assembly in Copenhagen (Spain).

The theme of the EER 2027 campaign is *Boosting local drivers of growth for EU competitiveness*, highlighting how local authorities can support SMEs through smart rules, strong ecosystems, and tailored support.

Based on this, the EER jury may award up to three EER labels.

Applications for shall be submitted until **19 March 2026** and shall consist of the following items:

- an **application form**, including a fact sheet on the applicant territory, an outline of its political vision, a description of foreseen governance mechanism to ensure efficient implementation of the EER actions, as well as an action plan and a communication plan;

- a **declaration of political commitment** demonstrating that the territory's EER strategy is endorsed by its political leadership (e.g. the regional assembly, the regional government or other authorised political bodies).

The application form can be downloaded from the EER web page:

<https://cor.europa.eu/en/plenaries-events/awards/european-entrepreneurial-region-eer>

Assessment criteria

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria.

1) Political vision and commitment

- The application demonstrates a future-oriented political vision for implementing the key priorities of the EU Competitiveness Compass, including specific action strands supporting the growth and scaling-up of SMEs in the Single Market, promoting place-based innovation and the development of robust entrepreneurial ecosystems.
- The application demonstrates the commitment of the territory to implement its political vision taking account of the rapidly changing economic landscape and key megatrends, e.g. global competition for skills and resources, AI development and digitalisation, regulatory simplification the changing nature of work, demographic changes and the transition to a circular and low carbon economy.
- The application is based on a realistic assessment of the territory's strengths and weaknesses (SWOT analysis). The context and unique starting point of each applicant are taken into account by the members of the jury.
- The political vision demonstrates a clear added value of the EER award for the territory, including for its own policy-making.
- The territorial EER objectives are embedded in a regional development and/or smart specialisation strategy and are guided by the overarching framework of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- The competent political authorities demonstrate a strong and credible commitment to implementing the EER strategy in the territory.

2) Multilevel governance, partnership and cooperation

- The EER strategy is prepared and implemented following a multilevel governance approach involving both the lower levels (municipalities etc.) and, where possible, the national level.
- A broad range of relevant actors is involved in the design and implementation of the EER strategy, including economic and social partners, learning and research institutions, and civil society.
- There is a demonstrated capacity and will to exchange good practices with other regions and to develop specific cooperation initiatives with other EER regions.

3) Delivery

- The strategy includes concrete actions that contribute to the implementation of entrepreneurship policies that fall within the territory's competences through the EER scheme and does not merely synthesise existing policies.

- The implementation of EER actions follows the principles of good governance and includes effective mechanisms for monitoring and follow-up.
- The use of relevant indicators, which will follow the progress of the implementation.
- The application includes measures to ensure optimal use of European Structural and Investment Funds and other public funding.
- The application demonstrates how the EER actions will be sustainable beyond the EER year.
- The projected actions take the social, environmental, innovative and durable growth

4) Communication

- The application includes an ambitious and convincing communication plan with specific actions at the highest level that are directed at all key target groups (including SMEs and other relevant actors).
- The EER label will be used to publicise the territory's policy both within the territory and at EU level.
- The planned communication actions will enhance the visibility of the CoR and of the EU.

Eligibility

The EER label is open to all EU territories below the level of the Member State that are endowed with competences at a political level and able to implement an overall entrepreneurial vision, regardless of their size, wealth or specific competences. It does not matter whether a territory has legislative competences or not. Each applicant's budget, specific structural or territorial challenges and economic starting point are taken into account by the EER jury. The label remains open both to territories that are already successful and to those that, while currently lagging behind, are committed to implementing the changes necessary to develop their entrepreneurial potential.

Regions are defined in the broadest sense, including communities, autonomous communities, departments, Länder, provinces, counties, metropolitan areas, cities, as well as cross-border territories with legal personality such as EGTCs and Euroregions. In order to be eligible, the applicant must have the necessary political competence to implement a comprehensive policy strategy aimed at SMEs, startups and industry.

Schedule

- 11 November 2025: Launch of the EER 2027 call for applications.
- 19 March 2026: Deadline for submission of applications.
- July 2026 EER 2027 award ceremony.

Please submit your application for the EER 2027 label, together with a written declaration of political commitment, by email to: eer-cdr@cor.europa.eu
Deadline for applications: Wednesday, 19 March 2026 at midnight

More information: <https://cor.europa.eu/en/plenaries-events/awards/european-entrepreneurial-region-eer>
eer-cdr@cor.europa.eu