

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME "COMPETITIVENESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP"

INTRODUCTION

The Operational Programme (OP) "Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship" details the strategy for the reinforcement of competitiveness and outward oriented entrepreneurship of the Greek economy in the framework of the overall National Development Strategy for the new period 2007-2013.

The OP provides funding to the 8 "Convergence" Objective regions, with the contribution of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The Total EU Co-financed Budget amounts to EUR 1,519,000,000, of which Community Contribution amounts to EUR 1,291,000,000 and National Contribution amounts to EUR 228,000,000. In addition to this amount, it is estimated that National Resources amounting to EUR 202,000,000 will be earmarked to cover the cost of projects that are not co-financed by the E.U., such as expropriations (exceeding the project cost ceiling), anticipated income, etc. Private Funding amounting to EUR 1,410,565,249 is also anticipated for the realisation of these projects. The total sum of the above amounts is estimated to reach EUR 3,131,565,249.

The OP interventions support the following sectors:

- research, technology and innovation,
- processing – services – trade, mainly in the form of State aid,
- consumer protection,
- energy and promotion of renewable forms of energy
- tourism, culture and the health sector.

GOAL AND STRATEGY

The **core development goal of the Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship OP** for the period 2007-2013 is *"the improvement of the competitiveness and outward orientation of the country's enterprises and production system, with special emphasis on the dimension of innovativeness."*

This core development goal consists of **3 strategic objectives**:

- Acceleration of the transition to the knowledge economy.
- Development of healthy, sustainable and outward-oriented entrepreneurship and securing the natural, institutional and organisational conditions that will allow it to flourish.
- Reinforcement of the appeal of Greece as a hub of business growth, with respect towards the environment and sustainability.

The rationale that governs the strategy emphasises the shift of public support towards increased added value interventions and sectors, towards actions fostering the ability to incorporate new technologies into the Greek production system and the adaptation of generated innovations, as well as the improvement of the country's outward orientation through its interconnection with global integrated product and service production systems, the reinforcement of international collaborations between bodies and enterprises, the growth of the exports of goods and services, etc.

PRIORITY AXES – MAIN CATEGORIES OF ACTIONS

The **General OP Goals** operationally correspond to the **Priority Axes** of the OP. In particular:

- **Priority Axis 1** "*Creation and utilisation of Innovation supported by Research and Technological Development*" aims at the acceleration of the transition to a knowledge economy, the incorporation of research, technology and innovation into the country's productive fabric, as its principal motor for development and competitiveness, as well as the broad dissemination of the results of research and innovation in the Greek economy and society.
- **Priority Axis 2** "*Reinforcement of entrepreneurship and extroversion*" seeks to foster outward-oriented entrepreneurship as the only available means for the productive upgrade of the country towards high value added goods and services, characterised by high quality, environmental awareness, incorporation of knowledge and innovation.
- **Priority Axis 3** "*Improvement of entrepreneurial environment*" aims at the improvement of the entrepreneurial environment, including, among others, actions for consumer protection and the development – improvement of supportive structures and mechanisms geared towards enterprises.
- **Priority Axis 4** "*Completion of the country's energy system and reinforcing sustainability*" aims at ensuring the country's energy supply and its accession to international energy transport networks, the rational management of natural resources and the promotion of renewable sources of energy.

The OP's **main action categories** are:

- **In the framework of promoting Research, Development and Innovation (RDI)**, two intervention categories were designed based on the "Strategic plan for RDI 2007-2013" of the General Secretariat for Research & Technology. The first, which is entitled "Knowledge-Excellence", aims at the promotion of activities for the generation of research results (national sectoral RTD poles, collaborations between productive and Research & Technology bodies, international Research & Technology collaborations, expanding research and technological infrastructure, etc). The second intervention category, which is entitled "Value", concerns the translation of the research results into a product, with the concomitant reinforcement of supply and demand for RDI services, mediation, patents, etc. In this manner, substantial effort is underway in order to ensure that the Research, Development and Innovation actions of programming period 2007-2013 constitute an integrated framework.
- **In the framework of reinforcing entrepreneurship – extroversion** (Priority Axis 2), actions are foreseen in support of the modernisation of enterprises, the promotion of business collaboration and networking, reinforcement of special forms of tourism, promotion of private initiatives in the culture sector, business excellence, support towards specific population groups for their entrepreneurial development, etc.
- Priority Axis 3 concerns **the improvement of structures, infrastructure and supportive mechanisms for developing and supporting entrepreneurship**. In particular, there are provisions for the reinforcement of business parks, business incubators, the development of a uniform network of structures supporting business activity, actions promoting tourism, projects for developing marine tourism and fostering investments in the culture sector, with an emphasis on the protection of antiquities and cultural heritage, etc. At the same time, the Priority Axis intervenes in the sector of consumer protection and market supervision, as well as in matters concerning the upgrading of the institutional framework in sectors such as the development of corporate responsibility systems, arbitration between businesses, growth of e-services in the public sector, etc.

- Priority Axis 4 concerns the **securing of the country's energy supply**. This framework provides for actions such as promoting the use of natural gas, integrating – modernizing the country's power grid, the penetration of Renewable Energy Sources, rational management of natural resources, etc.