GPEK
Greening Private Enterprises in Kosovo

Greening Private Enterprises
in Kosovo (GPEK)

CHALLENGE FUND

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

Sweden
Sverige

HELVETAS
KOSOVO

Greening Private Enterprises in Kosovo (GPEK) is a project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), co-funded by Sweden and implemented by Helvetas.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

GPEK Challenge Fund – Call for Proposals

1. What is the GPEK Challenge Fund?

The GPEK Challenge Fund is a co-investment grant facility established under the **Greening Private Enterprises in Kosovo (GPEK)** project. It supports SMEs to implement innovative green investments that improve environmental performance, strengthen business competitiveness, and contribute to broader market transformation.

2. Who is eligible to apply?

The Call is open to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that:

- are legally registered and operating in Kosovo;
- have been in operation for at least two years;
- have the technical and organizational capacity to implement the proposed project; and
- are able to provide the required cash co-financing contribution.

3. Does the total project budget (EUR 100,000) include the 30% co-financing, or is the grant EUR 100,000 with an additional 30% co-financing required on top of that?

The grant amount to be covered by GPEK can be up to EUR 100,000, with the applicant's cost-share (co-financing) of at least 30% required on top of that amount.

4. What is the available grant amount?

The GPEK Challenge Fund provides grants ranging from **EUR 50,000 to EUR 100,000**.

In exceptional and well-justified cases, applications requesting a grant amount below EUR 50,000 may also be considered.

5. What percentage of project costs will GPEK finance?

The Challenge Fund will finance up to **70% of eligible project costs**.

Applicants are required to contribute at least **30% of the total eligible project costs in cash**.

6. Can the applicant's contribution be provided in-kind?

No.

The mandatory minimum 30% co-financing contribution must be provided in cash.

Applicants may provide additional in-kind contributions; however, these will not be considered as part of the required co-financing contribution.

7. What types of projects are eligible?

Projects should introduce green innovations that contribute to one or more of the following areas:

- resource efficiency;
- circular economy solutions;
- renewable energy;
- energy efficiency;
- sustainable production processes;
- green certifications and environmental standards;
- environmental compliance improvements;
- low-carbon technologies; and
- innovative green products, services, or business models.

8. What is meant by "systemic impact"?

The Challenge Fund aims to support investments that generate benefits beyond the individual applicant.

Applicants should demonstrate how their proposed project can:

- influence other businesses or market actors;
- introduce new green products, services, or solutions;
- encourage wider adoption of sustainable practices;
- address market barriers; or

- contribute to longer-term sector transformation.

Projects focused solely on improving the competitiveness of one company, without wider market relevance or demonstration potential, are unlikely to be prioritized.

9. Can a company apply for funding to purchase machinery or equipment?

Yes, provided that the machinery or equipment forms part of a broader innovative intervention that demonstrates green transformation and wider market impact.

Applications focused only on increasing production capacity of a single company, without additional environmental or systemic benefits, will generally not be considered eligible.

10. What costs are eligible?

Eligible costs may include, among others:

- equipment and technology;
- consultancy and technical assistance;
- training and capacity building;
- travel related to project implementation;
- communication and visibility activities;
- certification and compliance-related costs; and
- other activities directly supporting green innovation and business transformation.

Applicants should refer to the Call for Proposals for detailed eligibility rules.

11. Which costs are not eligible?

Examples of non-eligible costs include:

- salaries and regular personnel costs;
- repayment of loans, interest, or debt obligations;
- fines and penalties;
- entertainment expenses;
- fundraising activities;
- political or religious activities;

- weapons;
- gambling-related activities;
- tobacco-related activities; and
- prohibited or hazardous products.

The complete list of non-eligible costs is provided in the Call for Proposals.

12. What is the maximum project duration?

Projects may be implemented for a maximum period of **two years**.

13. What is the application process?

The application process consists of two stages:

Stage 1: Expression of Interest (EOI)
Applicants submit a brief Expression of Interest outlining their proposed intervention.

Stage 2: Full Grant Application
Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a detailed Full Grant Application.

Shortlisted applicants will also undergo a due diligence process before final approval.

14. What is the application deadline?

Expressions of Interest must be submitted by:

31 January 2027 at 16:00 CET

Applicants are encouraged to submit their applications well before the deadline.

15. How should applications be submitted?

Applications should be submitted electronically by email to:

gpekgrants@helvetas.org

The email subject line should be:

CfP#1 Application – Applicant's Name

16. **Will late applications be accepted?**

No.

Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

17. **Can organizations other than SMEs apply?**

No.

This Call is open exclusively to eligible SMEs registered in Kosovo.

18. **Can startup businesses other than SMEs apply?**

No.

This Call is open exclusively to eligible SMEs registered in Kosovo.

19. **Can SMEs apply in partnership with other organizations?**

Yes.

Partnerships are encouraged where they strengthen the proposed intervention and contribute to achieving the intended impact.

However, all partners must comply with the applicable eligibility requirements.

20. **Will shortlisted applicants receive support in preparing the full application?**

Yes.

Shortlisted applicants may receive targeted technical assistance to strengthen their Full Grant Application.

Receiving technical assistance does not guarantee approval or funding.

21. **How will applications be evaluated?**

Applications will be assessed against a set of criteria designed to determine the relevance, feasibility, and potential impact of the proposed investment.

The evaluation will consider, among others:

- alignment with GPEK objectives and the goals of the Challenge Fund;

- the strength of the proposed green innovation and its contribution to environmental sustainability;
- the business case, including financial viability and potential for long-term commercial sustainability;
- technical feasibility and the applicant's capacity to successfully implement the project;
- potential for scalability, replication, and wider market or sector impact;
- the extent to which the project addresses identified market barriers and encourages wider adoption of green solutions;
- the expected environmental and business performance improvements; and
- cost-effectiveness and value for money of the proposed investment.

22. What environmental impacts should projects demonstrate?

Applicants should demonstrate how their proposed investment will contribute to measurable environmental improvements compared to the current situation (baseline).

Depending on the nature of the project, expected impacts may include:

- reduced energy consumption and improved energy efficiency;
- increased use of renewable energy sources;
- reduced greenhouse gas emissions and contribution to low-carbon production;
- improved resource efficiency through reduced use of materials, water, or energy;
- reduced waste generation and increased reuse, recycling, or circular economy practices;
- improved environmental management and compliance with relevant standards;
- introduction of cleaner technologies, sustainable production methods, or greener products and services; and/or
- achievement of recognized environmental certifications or sustainability standards.

Applicants should clearly explain the expected environmental benefits, including relevant indicators and targets where possible.

23. Can previous Helvetas grantees apply?

Yes, provided that they meet all eligibility requirements and have complied with the conditions of any previous grants received.

24. Will information sessions be organized?

Yes.

Information sessions will be announced through Helvetas Kosovo’s official communication channels, including Facebook and LinkedIn.

25. Where can applicants submit questions?

Questions may be submitted to the GPEK Challenge Fund team via email:

gpekgrants@helvetas.org

Responses to questions of general relevance may be published to ensure equal access to information for all applicants.

26. Does an SME need to operate in the green sector to apply?

No.

SMEs from eligible sectors may apply, provided that their proposed project introduces a green innovation, technology, process, product, service, or business model that contributes to environmental sustainability and aligns with the objectives of the GPEK Challenge Fund.

The Challenge Fund is not limited to companies already operating in the environmental sector; it supports businesses seeking to transition toward greener and more sustainable operations.