FUND MANAGER SELECTION PROCESS BY A PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE – COMPETITIVE NEGOTIATION

FOR IMPLEMENTING THE FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT FOR BUSINESS ACCELERATION FINANCED BY THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME WEST 2021-2027

Policy Objective 1: A more competitive and smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity

Priority 1: A competitive region through innovation, digitalization and dynamic businesses

Specific objective: RSO1.3 Enhancing sustainable growth and increasing SME competitiveness and job creation in SMEs, including through productive investments

Regional Intervention 1.3.E: Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration

FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT FOR BUSINESS ACCELERATION

Total value	**EUR 14.000.000**
Beneficiary	The Fund Manager selected following a public procurement procedure – competitive negotiation, according to Law No 98/2016
RP West contribution to the created Venture Capital Investment Fund	EUR 11.200.000
Minimum amount of additional private investments attracted by the Fund Manager	EUR 1.250.000
Maximum management fee granted for the implementation of the Financial Instrument	EUR 2.800.000
Stages of the Financial Instrument implementation	**PRE-ACCELERATION** stage **ACCELERATION** stage **SEED FUNDING** stage
Objectives	Stimulate innovative entrepreneurship. Create a financial culture in Romania's West Region. Support and finance innovative SMEs that use new digital technologies, active in Romania's West Region's smart specialization domains.
Minimum number of business ideas developed up to MVP, in the PRE-ACCELERATION stage	100
Minimum number of SMEs financed in the ACCELERATION stage	40
Minimum number of SMEs financed in the SEED stage	10
Minimum number of jobs created in the financed SMEs	50

1. CONTEXT

The **West Region Regional Development Agency, as Managing Authority for the Regional Programme West 2021-2027 (RP West)** – MA RP West, launched a public procurement procedure – competitive negotiation, for the **selection of a Fund Manager,** in order to implement the **Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration,** either individually or in association with other economic operators.

The object of the public procurement procedure is the acquisition **of administration and management services – *CPV 66140000-3 Portfolio Management Services***, for a **Venture Capital Investment Fund** to be established by the selected Fund Manager and financed by the Regional Programme West 2021-2027.

The documents of the public procurement procedure can be found at https://ted.europa.eu/ro/notice/-/detail/651580-2024 – TED (JOUE) or https://e-licitatie.ro:8881/ca/procedure/view/100281997/

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT

By implementing the Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration, MA RP West aims to:

- Stimulate innovative entrepreneurship, by creating a financial culture in Romania's West Region and supporting business ideas, and by creating a portfolio of SMEs that can subsequently access equity financing.
- Supporting and financing innovative SMEs in the areas of smart specialization identified in the West Regional Smart Specialization Strategy 2021-2027 (RIS 3), which develop innovative products and services and use new technologies, with potential for growth and for international exposure, requiring capital infusions for development and diversification.
- Development and sustainability of the entrepreneurship environment in the West Region.

3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION

The total amount allocated from the RP West 2021-2027 to the Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration is **EUR 14.000.000**, of which:

- **EUR 11.200.000** represents **the estimated contribution of PR Vest** to the Venture Capital Investment Fund which will be set up;
- **EUR 2.800.000** represents the maximum amount **of management fee** granted to the Fund Manager, that are subject to the public procurement contract.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT

The Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration shall be implemented through **three stages:**

A. **Pre-Acceleration stage** - supported by a dedicated management fee of **EUR 800.000.** The activity in this stage will consist of supporting private individuals to develop new business ideas up to the level of the MVP (Minimum Viable Product), by providing training, mentoring and other necessary tools for the development of MVPs. The expected result of the activity will be the development of **at least 100 MVPs**, of which **at least 5%** must be developed in each of the **6 smart specialization areas** identified in the RIS 3 Regional Smart Specialization Strategy:
   - Agriculture and food industry
   - Energy efficiency and sustainable construction/buildings
   - Manufacturing industry
   - Cultural and creative industries
   - ICT and Automotive
   - Tourism, Health and Quality of Life.

B. **Acceleration stage -** provides eligible SMEs with a combined support that includes financing (equity/quasi-equity investment in exchange for an equity stake), as well as guidance, training, mentoring, and counseling, in order to increase their potential profitability. The allocation for this stage must be a minimum of **40%** of the PR West allocation for the investments.

C. **Seed Funding stage** - provides funding to eligible SMEs that have already obtained a first funding in the Acceleration stage, or to other eligible SMEs with market growth potential.

5. EXPECTED RESULTS

The implementation of the Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration will contribute to achieving at least the following **minimum results**:

1. Number of MVPs (Minimum Viable Products) developed in the Pre-Acceleration Stage: **100**
2. Number of SMEs financed in the Acceleration Stage: **40**
3. Number of SMEs financed in the Seed Stage: **10**
4. Number of jobs created in the supported SMEs: **50**
5. Number of SMEs introducing product/service/process innovation: **50**
6. Number of people trained across the 3 stages: **200**
7. Number of supported SMEs with international exposure - partnerships, collaborations: **15**
8. MOIC – Multiple of Invested Capital at Fund level: **1.5x**
9. Promote the image of West RDA, in any event in which the Fund Manager participates, as a promoter of innovative entrepreneurship and financial literacy.

6. THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE

The applicable public procurement procedure for selecting the Fund Manager for the implementation of the Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration is the **competitive negotiation procedure**, in accordance with Paragraph 4, Articles 80-85 of Law No 98/2016.

The procedure may be attended, as Bidders:

- ❒ an economic operator in its capacity of **Administrator of Alternative Investment Fund** – closed-end AIFM, according to Directive 2011/61/EU;
- ❒ **an association of economic operators**, in accordance with the provisions of art. 53 of Law no. 98/2016, of which at least one is an Administrator of Alternative Investment Funds - closed AFIAs, according to Directive 2011/61/EU, who will be the leader of the association.

The economic operator/Leader of the association must have the capacity of:

- Administrator of Alternative Investment Funds (AFIA), established in a member state, registered or authorized in accordance with Directive 2011/61/EU (DAFI) and national legislation.

OR

- Administrator of Alternative Investment Funds (AFIA), established in a third country, authorized in accordance with Directive 2011/61/EU (DAFI) or which has obtained prior authorization in accordance with the provisions of art. 37 of Directive 2011/61/EU (DAFI) in the reference state

The estimated value of the public procurement is **EUR 2.800.000,** representing the maximum total amount of the management fee.

The management fee cannot exceed EUR 2.800.000 and will be composed of:

- ➢ **EUR 800.000** for the management, administration, and implementation of the Pre-Acceleration Stage. Remuneration will be made on a performance-based basis, for each MVP developed;
- ➢ **a maximum of EUR 2.000.000 fee for the management** of the established Venture Capital Fund, and the completion of the Acceleration and Seed Funding stages. The final amount will be established in the procurement procedure.

The public procurement procedure requires the **submission of a participation guarantee**, in accordance with the provisions of Article 154 of Law 98/2016.

The procedure is carried out in **two phases**:

PHASE I – submission of applications for participation and selection of candidates, by applying the qualification and selection criteria.

The candidate must meet the following **minimum qualification and selection criteria**:

a. have **an average annual turnover over** the last 3 years - 2021-2023, **of at least EUR 200.000;**

b. have **relevant experience in managing Venture Capital Funds (mezzanine,** accelerators, etc.), demonstrated by making, **in the last 5 years, investments in SMEs, through equity / quasi-equity, of at least EUR 600.000;**

The qualification and selection criteria will be scored as follows:

1. Average annual turnover of the candidate for the last 3 years: 2021-2023	**Maximum score 40 pts.**
- **The maximum number of points (40 points)** will be awarded to the candidate with ***the highest average annual turnover.*** - **The other candidates** will be scored according to the following formula: $$\textbf{Score} = \frac{(Applicant's\ average\ annual\ turnover\ in\ EUR - 200.000\ EUR)}{(Highest\ average\ annual\ turnover\ in\ EUR\ - 200.000\ EUR)} X\ 40$$	
2. Experience in undertaking venture capital investments in the last 5 years	**Maximum score 60 pts.**
- **The maximum number of points (60 pt.)** will be awarded to the candidate ***with the highest value of investments in enterprises, through equity / quasi-equity.*** - **The other candidates** will be scored according to the following formula: $$\textbf{Score} = \frac{(Applicant's\ value\ of\ investments\ in\ enterprises, in\ EUR - 600.000\ EUR)}{(Highest\ value\ of\ investments\ in\ enterprises, in\ EUR\ - 600.000\ EUR)} X\ 60$$	

Candidates will be ranked based on their total score, from highest to lowest score. The first three candidates will be invited to participate in the second phase of the procedure. If two or more candidates have the same score, at the 3rd place level, all candidates who have the same score will be qualified.

PHASE II, consisting of:

- the submission of initial offer by the candidates selected in the first phase,
- the assessment of their compliance with the minimum requirements established by the contracting authority and of negotiations in order to improve the initial offers,
- the submission of final offers and their evaluation, by applying the award criteria and the evaluation factors.

The negotiation phase is carried out through meetings with each individual Bidder, respecting the principle of equal treatment and non-discrimination, **in order to improve the initial offer**, namely the technical and financial offer.

The following are not subject to negotiation: the minimum mandatory requirements laid down in the Tender Specifications, the award criteria, and the assessment factors.

Upon completion of the negotiations, the Bidders **will submit their final offers** within 30 working days.

Through the technical offer, the Bidder will propose an **operational team** that must meet the following **minimum mandatory criteria:**

i. **minimum 2 key experts**, English/Romanian speakers, **with experience in investing** in SMEs through venture capital - equity/quasi-equity.

   Mandatory minimum requirements are:

   - **Key investment expert No 1,** with experience in the specific field of venture capital investments, **participated**, as a private investor, business angel or as a member of a management team, member of the investment/advisory committee or employee, with tasks specific to the investment activity, of a legal entity whose object of activity is to make venture capital investments in enterprises, **in making investments worth more than EUR 300.000 cumulatively** (in any country/region).
   - **Key investment expert No 2,** with experience in the specific field of venture capital investments, **participated**, as a private investor, business angel or as a member of a management team, member of the investment committee or advisory or employee, with tasks specific to the investment activity, of a legal entity that has as its object of activity the making of venture capital investments in enterprises, **in the realization of at least two investments amounting to at least EUR 100.000 per financed enterprise** (in any country/region).

ii. **minimum 2 key experts,** English/Romanian speakers**, with experience in developing/implementing acceleration/pre-acceleration** programmes for companies.

   Mandatory minimum requirements are:

   - **Key Acceleration Expert No. 1** participated, as an expert/specialist/other position with similar responsibilities to those to be fulfilled in the present procedure, in the support of **at least 2 distinct sessions/cohorts** within enterprise acceleration/pre-acceleration programmes.
   - **Key Acceleration Expert No 2** participated, as an expert/specialist/other position with similar responsibilities to those to be fulfilled in the present procedure, in various acceleration programmes, in the acceleration of **at least 4 enterprises** that received funding of **at least EUR 10.000 each.**

Team leader - the head of the operational team, English/Romanian speaking, who can be one of the members of the proposed operational team or another expert, with management **experience** in a similar position in terms of responsibilities, for **at least two years** in at least one Investment Fund / Investment Committee of a legal entity.

According to the Tender Specifications, the Bidders must meet the following mandatory minimum **requirements:**

a. In order to carry out risk capital investments in SMEs, **the selected Fund Manager shall establish and authorize/register an Alternative Investment Fund - AIF,** closed-end fund, set up in accordance with Directive 2011/61/EU in a Member State of the European Union, in accordance with the legislation applicable in that State, or propose the use of

an already established Alternative Investment Fund through Venture Capital (AIF) under its management.

The Venture Capital Fund created will be financed from:

- **RP West funds:** EUR 14.000.000 minus the management fee established following the public procurement procedure;
- **Private contribution of the Fund Manager**: at least 2% of the total size of the Fund;
- **Private contribution from Independent private investors**: at least 8% of the total size of the Fund.

The indicative duration of the Fund will be **8 years,** with the possibility of extension of maximum 2 years, in rounds of 1 year each.

The investment period from the funding provided by RP West is from the moment of the establishment of the Fund until **31.12.2029 at the latest.**

b. To propose an **investment strategy aligned with the objectives of** RP West funded financial instrument, that identifies in which market it will operate, its size and potential for development, regional challenges and how to address them, investment opportunities and SMEs most likely to be successful, methods to attract independent private investors, arrangements to wind up the financial instrument, including the return of resources to the MA RP West.

c. To implement a **consistent investment policy appropriate** to the financial interests of the Managing Authority, ensuring portfolio diversification (sectoral, final recipients, geographical, etc.), applying sound portfolio management and risk diversification, while respecting the standards applicable to the venture capital investment field.

d. To present a **marketing strategy** for each of the 3 stages of the implementation of the Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration.

e. To present **cooperation agreements/letters** from potential partners in each county in the West Region, e.g. universities, scientific centers, business incubators, entrepreneurial initiatives – *at least one agreement/letter from each county;*

f. To have an adequate **organizational and governance structure,** correlated with the typology of the specific activities carried out;

g. To establish a regional organizational structure – regional office, located in the West Region, in the location provided by the West RDA, consisting of **at least 2 of the experts nominated in the** tender: 1 nominated expert with experience in investment activity and 1 nominated expert with experience in acceleration activity. They will ensure a constant support to SMEs and individuals with business ideas, providing information about the services and financing provided by the Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration, ways of applying for financing, implementing the marketing and communication strategy and organizing events for the development of the community of entrepreneurs at regional level. At the level of this structure, communication in Romanian will be mandatory.

h. To provide the necessary publicity, information and communication regarding the activity of the Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration

Awarding criteria

The award criterion is *"best quality for money"* and will be applied in relation to the financial offer and qualitative components of the technical offer submitted by the Bidders in the public procurement procedure.

The tender evaluation grid is:

	Assessment factors	Maximum score
A.	FINANCIAL OFFER	10 points
B.	TECHNICAL OFFER	90 points
	TOTAL A+B	100 points

CALCULATION METHOD FOR SCORING THE OFFERS:

A. The score for the assessment factor **„FINANCIAL OFFER"** shall be awarded as follows:

i. for the lowest total price tendered: the maximum score allocated to the evaluation criterion, namely 10 points;

ii. for a higher price than that referred to in point (a), the score shall be awarded as follows:

Financial Score of the Current Offer = Minimum price/current offer price x 10

The prices to be compared for scoring are the total prices offered exclusive of VAT.

B. Score for the assessment factor **„TECHNICAL OFFER"** shall be awarded as follows:

1. Proposed investment strategy	**Maximum score criterion 1: 58 points.**	
Sub-criterion 1.1: Market identification for the Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration in correlation with the eligible final recipients and sectors targeted for investment.	**Maximum score for sub-criterion 1.1: 15 points**	
1.1.a. The market identified by the Bidder and the marketing strategy for the Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration	**Maximum score: 10 points.**	
	Grading	**Points**
- The market identified by the Bidder for the Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration is correlated with the eligible recipients proposed in the investment strategy and the sectors targeted for investment. - The marketing strategy of the Instrument identifies the main actions that are regionally feasible and have specific actions at	Very good	10 points

each stage of implementation (Pre-Acceleration, Acceleration and Seed Finance).		
- The market identified by the Bidder for the Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration is partly correlated with the eligible recipients proposed in the investment strategy and the sectors targeted for investment. - The marketing strategy of the Instrument identifies the main actions that are feasible at the regional level and have specific actions at each stage of implementation (Pre-acceleration, Acceleration and Seed Financing). Or - The market identified by the Bidder for the Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration is correlated with the eligible recipients proposed in the investment strategy and the sectors targeted for investment. - The marketing strategy of the Instrument partially identifies the main actions that are feasible at the regional level, and which have specific actions at each stage of implementation (Pre-acceleration, Acceleration and Seed Financing)	Good	6 points
- The market identified by the Bidder for the Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration is partially correlated with the eligible recipients proposed in the investment strategy and the sectors targeted for investment. - The marketing strategy of the Instrument partially identifies the main actions that are feasible at the regional level, and which have specific actions at each stage of implementation (pre-acceleration, acceleration and seed funding).	Acceptable	2 points
1.1.b. Agreements/letters/other cooperation documents from potential partners from each county in West Region (e.g., universities, scientific centers, R&D organizations, clusters, business incubators, entrepreneurial initiatives, etc.) expressing the intention to support the implementation process of the Financial Instrument for Business Accelerator (identification of potential final recipients, measures to popularize equity investments, etc.). These agreements/letters/other cooperation documents contain identification data, contact person, address, e-mail, telephone.	**Maximum score: 5 points.**	

The points are awarded as follows:

- **The maximum number of points (5 points)** will be awarded to the Bidder *with the highest number of agreements/letters.*
- **The other Bidders** will be scored according to the following formula:

$$\textbf{Score} = \frac{(number\ of\ agreements\ or\ letters\ from\ the\ Bidder - 4)\ \times 5}{(highest\ number\ of\ agreements\ or\ letters - 4)}$$

Sub-criterion 1.2: Private contribution proposed in the Offer by Independent Private Investors as a percentage of the Total Fund Size.	**Maximum score for sub-criterion 1.2: 8 points**

The points are awarded as follows:

- **The maximum number of points (8 points)** will be awarded to the Bidder *with the highest private co-financing proposed.*
- **The other Bidders** will be scored according to the following formula**:**

$$\text{Score} = \frac{(\text{private cofinancing proposed by the Bidder\%} - 8\%) \times 8}{(\text{largest proposed private cofinancing \%} - 8\%)}$$

Sub-criterion 1.3: Profit distribution	**Maximum score for sub-criterion 1.3: 14 points**	
1.3.a. The proposed minimum rate of return (hurdle rate) to ensure a profitable rate of return for the Managing Authority and the other private investors contributing to the Fund.	**Maximum score: 7 points.**	
	Grading	**Points**
Minimum rate of return above 6%	Very good	7 points
Minimum rate of return greater than 5% and less than or equal to 6%.	Good	5 points
Minimum rate of return greater than 4% and less than or equal to 5%	Acceptable	2 points
1.3.b. Percentage proposed by the Bidder for participation in the additional profit (carried interest)	**Maximum score: 7 points.**	

The points are awarded as follows:

- **The maximum number of points (7 points)** will be awarded to the Bidder who proposes *the lowest participation in the additional profit for investors***.**
- **The other Bidders** will be scored according to the following formula:

$$\text{Score} = \frac{(23\% - \text{additional profit share proposed by the Bidder\%}) \times 7}{(23\% - \text{lowest aditional profit sharing})}$$

Sub-criterion 1.4: The Fund Manager's own contribution (skin in the game), as a percentage of the Total Fund Size	**Maximum score for sub-criterion 1.4: 6 points**

The points are awarded as follows:

- **The maximum number of points (6 points)** will be awarded to the Bidder who proposes *the highest own contribution of the Fund Manager;*
- **The other Bidders** will be scored according to the following formula:

$$\text{Score} = \frac{(\text{Own contribution proposed by the Bidder} - 2\%) \times 6}{(\text{Highest proposed own contribution} - 2\%)}$$

Sub-criterion 1.5: Expected results at each stage	**Maximum score for sub-criterion 1.5: 12 points**
1.5.a. The number of business ideas developed to Minimum Viable Product (MVP) in the Pre-acceleration Stage	**Maximum score: 4 points.**

The points are awarded as follows:

- **The maximum number of points (4 points)** will be awarded to the Bidder who proposes *the highest number of MVPs developed in the Pre-Acceleration Stage.*
- **The other Bidders** will be scored according to the following formula:

$$\text{Score} = \frac{(\text{number of MVPs proposed by the Bidder} - 100) \times 4}{(\text{the highest number of MVPs proposed} - 100)}$$

1.5.b. Number of SMEs financed in the Acceleration Stage	**Maximum score: 4 points.**
The points are awarded as follows: - **The maximum number of points (4 points)** will be awarded to the Bidder proposing *the highest number of SMEs financed in the Acceleration Stage* - **The other Bidders** will be scored according to the following formula: $$\textbf{Score} = \frac{(no.\,of\ SMEs\ financed\ in\ Accelerator\ proposed\ by\ the\ Bidder - 40)\ \times 4}{(the\ highest\ number\ of\ SMEs\ financed\ in\ Accelerator - 40)}$$	
1.5.c. Number of SMEs financed in Seed Financing stage	**Maximum score: 4 points.**
The points are awarded as follows: - **The maximum number of points (4 points)** will be awarded to the Bidder who proposes *the highest number of SMEs financed in the Seed Financing Stage***.** - **The other Bidders** will be scored according to the following formula: $$\textbf{Score} = \frac{(no.\,of\ SMEs\ to\ get\ seed\ investments, proposed\ by\ the\ Bidder - 10)\ \times 4}{(the\ highest\ number\ proposed\ of\ SMEs\ to\ get\ seed\ investments - 10)}$$	
Sub-criterion 1.6: Methodology for stimulating entrepreneurship in the region and supporting the capital ecosystem The number of reasonable and implementable methods and activities, other than those carried out for the implementation of the Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration, that will be used by the Bidder to develop the portfolio of investable SMEs, to stimulate the establishment of new SMEs, to foster the emergence of new products and services in the region and to use equity/ quasi-equity instruments as a method of financing SMEs. The proposed methods and activities should be based on the Bidder own experience or international experience and be implementable. These actions should be highlighted in the Work Plan for the implementation of the Instrument.	**Maximum score for sub-criterion 1.6: 3 points**
The points are awarded as follows: - **The maximum number of points (3 points**) will be awarded to the Bidder who proposes *the largest number of implementable methods and activities to stimulate entrepreneurship* - **The other Bidders** will be scored according to the following formula: $$\textbf{Score} = \frac{(number\ of\ methods\ or\ activities\ proposed\ by\ the\ Bidder - 2)\ \times 3}{(the\ largest\ number\ of\ methods\ or\ activities\ offered - 2)}$$	
2. Professional capacity of the operational team proposed by the Bidder	**Maximum score criterion 2: 32 points.**
Sub-criterion 2.1: Key investment expert No 1 participated, as a private investor, business angel or as a member of a management team, member of the investment/advisory committee or employee, with experience in the specific field of venture capital investment financial instruments, of a legal entity whose object of activity is to make equity investments in enterprises, **in making investments**	**Maximum score for sub-criterion 2.1: 8 points**

worth more than EUR 300.000 cumulatively (in any country/region).	
The points are awarded as follows: - **The maximum number of points (8 points)** will be awarded to the Bidder who has the expert *with the highest cumulative value of the investments made;* - For a cumulative value greater than or equal to EUR 5.600.000, **the maximum score of 8 points** will be awarded; - **for the other Bidders,** if the expert has made investments with a cumulative value of between EUR 300.001 and less than EUR 5.600.000, the score will be calculated on the basis of the following formula: $\textbf{Score} = \frac{(\textit{the cumulative value of investments made by the expert} - \textit{EUR } 300.000) \times 8}{(\textit{the highest cumulative value of investments made by an expert} * - \textit{EUR } 300.000)}$ Note: * if the highest cumulated value of the investments made by an expert is higher than 5.600.000 EUR, the value of 5.600.000 EUR will be used in the calculation of the score	
Sub-criterion 2.2: Key investment expert No 2 participated, as a private investor, business angel or as a member of a management team, member of the investment committee or advisory or employee, with experience in the specific field of venture capital investment financial instruments, of a legal entity whose object of activity is the making of equity investments in enterprises, in **the making of at least two investments amounting to at least EUR 100.000 per financed enterprise (**in any country/region).	**Maximum score for sub-criterion 2.2: 8 points**
The points are awarded as follows: - **The maximum number of points (8 points)** will be awarded to the Bidder who has the expert *with the highest number of investments equal to or greater than EUR 100.000 made* - For a number of investments greater than or equal to 20, the **maximum score of 8 points** will be awarded. - **for other Bidders** where the expert has made between 3 and 19 investments, the score will be calculated on the basis of the following formula: $\textbf{Score} = \frac{(\textit{number of investments} \geq \textit{EUR } 100.000 \textit{ realized by expert} - 2) \times 8}{(\textit{highest number of investments} \geq \textit{EUR } 100.000 \textit{ made by one expert} * -2)}$ Note: * if the highest number of investments is greater than 20 , the value of 20 will be used in the score calculation.	
Sub-criterion 2.3: *Key Acceleration* Expert No 1 participated, as an expert/specialist/other position with similar responsibilities to those to be fulfilled under the contract subject to the present procedure**, in the support of at least 2 distinct sessions/cohorts within business acceleration/pre-acceleration programmes.**	**Maximum score for sub-criterion 2.3: 8 points**
The points are awarded as follows: - **The maximum number of points (8 points)** will be awarded to the Bidder who has the expert *with the highest number of sessions/cohorts within organized/running acceleration/pre-acceleration programs;* - For a number of sessions/cohorts within organized/pre-acceleration programmes greater than or equal to 15, the **maximum score of 8 points** will be awarded.	

- **for other Bidders** where the expert has completed a number of sessions/cohorts between 3 and 14, the score will be calculated on the basis of the following formula

$$\textbf{Score} = \frac{(number\ of\ sessions/cohorts\ realized\ by\ expert - 2)\ \times 8}{(the\ highest\ number\ of\ sessions/cohorts\ realized\ by\ one\ expert * -2)}$$

Note: * if the highest number of sessions/cohorts organized/run is greater than 15, the value of 15 will be used in the calculation of the score.

Sub-criterion 2.4: *Key Acceleration* Expert No 2 participated, as an expert/specialist/other position with similar responsibilities to those to be fulfilled under the contract subject to this procedure, in various acceleration programmes, in **the acceleration of at least 4 enterprises that received funding of at least EUR 10.000 each.**	**Maximum score for sub-criterion 2.4: 8 points**

The points are awarded as follows:

- **The maximum number of points (8 points)** will be awarded to the Bidder *with the highest number of enterprises in which investments of at least EUR 10.000 have been made,* in *acceleration programmes attended by the nominated expert;*
- For a number of accelerated enterprises greater than or equal to 20, the **maximum score of 8 points** will be awarded.
- **for the other Bidders,** if the expert participated in the acceleration of a number of undertakings between 5 and 19, the score will be calculated on the basis of the following formula:

$$\textbf{Score} = \frac{(number\ of\ enterprises\ invested\ in - 4)\ \times 8}{(the\ highest\ number\ of\ enterprises\ in\ which\ investments\ have\ been\ made * -4)}$$

Note: * if the highest number of accelerated enterprises is higher than 20, the value of 20 will be used in the score calculation.

7. ELIGIBLE INVESTMENTS

The Fund Manager shall make **equity/quasi-equity investments** in selected SMEs.

Investments in the form of risk capital can be made only **in SMEs, defined according to Law 346/2004,** which at the time of the initial investment are not traded on a stock exchange, are not in difficulty and have their registered office or secondary offices and the economic activity for which the investment will be made located in the West Region. SMEs shall comply with the eligibility conditions referred to in Article 21(5) of Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 as well as those of the de minimis Regulation 2831/2024.

The investments financed must fall within the areas of smart specialization specified in the Regional Strategy for Smart Specialization of the West Region RIS3 2021-2027 and comply with the rules of de minimis aid in the Acceleration Stage and the rules of state aid risk financing - Article 21 of Regulation 651/2014, in the Seed Financing Stage**.**

The indicative value of the investments is:

- **for Acceleration Stage:** The value of an investment will be a minimum of EUR 10.000 and a maximum of EUR 200.000;
- **for Seed Financing Stage**: The value of an investment will be over EUR 200.000, up

to a maximum of EUR 1.000.000.

The potential for investment in SMEs will be identified, verified, and evaluated by the Fund Manager. The latter will undertake a *due diligence* process, for each funding opportunity, on key elements such as a detailed business plan containing details of products, sales and profitability, development, assessment of the viability of the investment and a clear exit strategy, etc.

The investments will be granted following an analysis of the SME's application for equity investment support, based on transparent, objective, and mandatory criteria applicable to all SMEs, established by the Fund Manager and approved by the Investors' Assembly, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

a. The contribution to the objectives of the RP West and the capacity to contribute to the expected output and results indicators;
b. compliance with the RIS 3 smart specialization domains;
c. compliance with the Fund's investment strategy;
d. capacity to enter new markets (internationalization);
e. competitive advantages over other competitors;
f. potential customers;
g. capacity for growth, sales and profitability;
h. ability, coherence and determination of the management team;
i. compliance with State aid requirements;
j. viability of the investment and the potential return;
k. potential exit strategy.

8. OTHER TOPICS

After the signing of the public procurement contract, the selected Fund Manager will apply for funding, in the MySMIS2021/SMIS2021+ information system, within the call for projects to be launched by the Managing Authority for the *Regional Intervention IR 1.3. E Financial Instruments,* under the conditions for accessing the funds set out in the Funding Applicant's Guide for the Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration. After this, a **Financing Agreement** will be signed between the Fund Manager and West RDA as Managing Authority RP West, which will define the rights and obligations of the parties.

After signing the Financing Agreement, AM PR Vest can pay, at the request of the Fund Administrator, **an advance of up to 30% of the value of the Financial Instrument for Business Acceleration**. For the advance requested, the Fund Manager will submit a **guarantee instrument,** which can be a bank guarantee letter issued by a credit institution/banking company in the European Union or an insurance policy issued by an insurance company in the European Union. The conditions for the payment of this advance will be laid down in the Financing Agreement.