

**Project assignment (TOR)**  
**for**  
**the Investment Committee members for the Smart Start Program**

## **1. Introduction**

The Innovation Fund of the Republic of Serbia (IF) was established by the Law on Innovation Activity to provide funding for innovation in enterprises and supporting the implementation of innovation policy.

From its foundation in 2011 until today, the IF, as a key state actor in the development of the innovation system of Serbia, supports the development of innovations through the implementation of various programs using appropriate instruments of financial, technical and advisory support, with the aim of empowering innovative companies and strengthening the link between research and development from one and the private business sector on the other hand, respecting the highest ethical, financial and business standards and practices.

The success of IF's programs is reflected in the number of high value-added products, services and technologies developed by IF's grant beneficiaries, as well as in employment, revenue, export and IP-protection growth in these supported SMEs. As in other IF's financing programs (Mini Grants program, Matching Grants Program, Collaborative Grant Scheme Program, Katapult), so within the Smart Start Program, the cornerstone is the independent application evaluation process conducted by the Investment Committee.

The Investment Committee is an independent body within the IF's application evaluation process, which is responsible for making the final decision on which projects the IF will support (with the approval of the IF's Board of Directors). Accordingly, the IF has published the third public call for the Smart Start program based on the identified needs and gaps in Serbia's innovation infrastructure in order to support the earliest initial stages of future innovative companies. In order to achieve this, the Investment Committee will be required to evaluate the most promising projects for this program in the spring of 2024.

## **2. Objective of the assignment**

This project assignment is prepared for the needs of hiring highly qualified experts who will serve as members of the independent Investment Committee, whose role is to evaluate and select the best projects for the **Smart Start Program**.

### **Smart Start Program**

This program serves to support teams comprised of 2 to 5 members, looking to incorporate themselves as enterprises in order to pursue development and commercialization of new products, services, technologies and technological processes with high added value. Smart Start provides grant financing of up to EUR 45,000 per project, for projects lasting 6 to 9 months. The goal of the program is to create successful cohorts of early-stage startups with clearly mapped development goals (and a minimum viable product at the end of the grant), a robust business plan and market analysis and a functioning team to lead this endeavor into further growth stages.

The composition of the Investment Committee needs to include **3 members** (of which one member is the Chairperson) for the Smart Start Program.

The Investment Committee members need to have proven expertise in any of the following areas:

- Private Industry
- International Entrepreneurship
- International Finance and Venture Capital / Private Equity
- Business Development

### 3. Scope of work

The tasks and responsibilities of the members of the Investment Committee are as follows:

- Receive access to the applications for review through the IF Portal;
- The Investment Committee members will discuss each application's merits during the preselection meetings, taking into account comments and scores of each member of the Investment Committee and assign numerical scores in the scoring table and make the Preselection decision;
- At the conclusion of the preselection phase, the Investment Committee will prepare a written evaluation (using the online Investment Committee Preselection Form on the IF Portal) for each application assigned;
- Participate at the pitch event and assign numerical scores in the scoring table, and make the final decision for every preselected application;
- Prepare a final written evaluation (using the online Investment Committee Financing Decision Form on the IF Portal) for each application presented at the pitch event;
- Conduct the work in the English language, due to the international evaluation process and the contents of the application documents.

### 4. Qualifications, work experience and evaluation criteria

#### a. Minimum required qualifications of the Investment Committee member:

- Education: University degree – Bachelor's;
- English language knowledge: Upper intermediate level - B2 (fluent speaking, reading, writing, understanding of professional terms in the field of work, understanding the essence of complex texts and the ability to have an uninterrupted and fluent conversation);
- Computer literacy: Using computers and the Internet, and having basic computer skills (Microsoft office).

Any candidate who does not meet the specified minimum qualifications and minimum criteria related to general and specific work experience will be excluded from the further evaluation process.

#### b. Work experience and evaluation criteria:

GENERAL WORK EXPERIENCE	Maximum 30 points
SPECIFIC WORK EXPERIENCE	Maximum 70 points

TOTAL	Maximum 100 points
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Based on the acceptability of applications and their compliance with the specified administrative requirements from this TOR, qualifications and evaluation criteria, with a maximum possible score of 100 points, contracts will be offered to the top three (3) candidates on the ranking list (with the highest number of points). In case the contract is not concluded with the selected candidate, the IF reserves the right to award the contract to the next candidate from the ranking list.

- General work experience:

The candidate must meet both of the criteria defined as General work experience, which are listed in the table below:

GENERAL WORK EXPERIENCE (maximum 30 points)			
Description of criteria		Maximum points	Points distribution
1	At least 5 years of relevant work experience in entrepreneurship / financing / business development	15	< 5 years = disqualified From 5 to ≤ 6 years = 8 points > 6 and ≤ 8 years = 10 points > 8 and ≤ 10 years = 12 points >10 years = 15 points
<b>AND</b>			
2	At least 3 years of work in the startup ecosystem as a co-founder / investor / advisor or ecosystem facilitator	15	< 3 years = disqualified From 3 to ≤ 4 years = 8 points > 4 and ≤ 7 years = 10 points > 7 and ≤ 10 years = 13 points > 10 years = 15 points

- Specific work experience:

The candidate must meet criterion outlined in the row 1 of the table below, as well as one or more than one criterion specified in rows 2, 3 and 4. These criteria, categorized as Specific work experience, are detailed in the table below:

SPECIFIC WORK EXPERIENCE (maximum 70 points)			
Row no.	Description of criteria	Maximum points	Points distribution
1	At least 3 years in providing assistance and/or mentoring to startups (individually or as a part of the program/organizational activities)	20	< 3 years = disqualified From 3 to ≤ 4 years = 10 points > 4 and ≤ 7 years = 12 points > 7 and ≤ 10 years = 15 points > 10 years = 20 points
<b>AND</b>			

2	Proven track record of at least 2 years of evaluating and investing in startups (VC/angel investing)	15	From 0 to < 2 years = 0 points ≤ 2 to ≤ 3 years = 5 points > 3 and ≤ 5 years = 10 points > 5 years = 15 points
<b>AND/OR</b>			
3	Experience as a startup co-founder/C-level manager, with at least 1 exit or proven results in sales (at least EUR 1M in one of the last 3 years of being engaged)	10	YES – 10 points NO – 0 points
<b>AND/OR</b>			
4	Experience in providing business advisory (business development, growth strategy, sales, fundraising) to at least 10 startups and innovative SMEs (individually / running support programs) in previous 3 years	25	From 0 to ≤ 9 startups = 0 points 10 startups = 10 points > 10 and ≤ 15 startups = 15 points > 15 and ≤ 20 startups = 20 points >20 startups = 25 points

## 5. Timing and duration

The Investment Committee work will be carried out in the following manner:

- Remotely via the IF's portal, with an initial meeting and preselection meetings via a video conference platform (e.g. *Zoom*).
- The presentation of preselected/shortlisted applications (pitch) will be held live in Belgrade (depending on the need and justification at that moment, there is a possibility that this phase can be held remotely via a video conference platform).

It is expected that the engagement of the members of the Investment Committee will begin in February 2024 and last up to 5 months. The total estimated time of engagement is up to 20 working days (1 working day means 8 working hours). The following distribution is planned:

- For the preselection phase – up to 10 working days (done remotely);
- For the Final Decision on financing phase, including the final pitch event - up to 10 working days (it is done at the Fund's premises or remotely, depending on the need and justification at that moment).

The expected time effort per each Investment Committee member per day is 8 projects (i.e., 8 projects reviewed within one working day).

## 6. Reporting obligations

The Investment Committee members shall submit reports on their activities to the persons engaged in the IF for the Smart Start program. The reporting obligations are divided into 2 phases: the preselection phase and the final decision phase.

Preselection phase:

- Preselection Committee review: a written evaluation includes a detailed summary per

evaluation criteria for each project, to be submitted to the IF online Portal;

- Preselection Decision for the Smart Start Program (done in cooperation with IF);
- Response to objection(s) to the outcome of the preselection phase if required.

Final decision phase:

- Approval Decisions: a written evaluation includes a detailed summary per evaluation criteria for each project in this phase, to be submitted to the IF online Portal;
- Final Decision for the Smart Start Program (done in cooperation with IF);
- Response to objection(s) to the outcome of the final decision phase if required.

In accordance with the IF internal procedure, the Preselection Decision and the Final Decision is signed by the Chairperson of the Investment Committee.

In addition, the Investment Committee members should prepare activity reports (timesheets) in which they will summarize key issues and tasks undertaken, as well as working hours spent on all issues and tasks.

## **7. Inputs by the Innovation Fund**

The IF will provide necessary documentation and templates, as well as access to the applications to be reviewed. The IF will also provide full technical support regarding the IF's online Portal to the Investment Committee members in order to facilitate efficient and satisfactory conditions for accessing the review materials and producing quality reviews.

## **8. Terms of payment**

The payments for services will be made based on the time sheets and deliverables stipulated in the section 6 of this project assignment.

Each Investment Committee member needs to provide invoices for services conducted. The IF will provide the invoice template to the Investment Committee members.

## **9. Confidentiality and Conflict of interest**

The Investment Committee members undertake to comply with the IF Confidentiality Policy and Prevention of Conflict-of-Interest Policy and to maintain confidentiality on all information that is not in the public domain and shall not be involved in another assignment that represents a conflict of interest to this assignment.

## **10. Contract value**

The maximum budget for this procedure is EUR 30.000,00 NET amount (EUR 10.000,00 NET per Investment Committee member contract).

Contracted ceiling has been established based on the understanding that it includes all of the Investment Committee member's costs and profits as well as any tax obligation that may be imposed on the Investment Committee member in his/her country of residence.

The Investment Committee member is solely responsible for all taxes due in the country of residence of the Investment Committee member.

The IF shall pay on behalf of the Investment Committee member taxes and contributions levied, as required by the Republic of Serbia's laws and regulations, in respect of carrying out of the Services, except the Annual Income tax which is to be paid by the Investment Committee member.