



REGIONAL INCUBATOR FOR
SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

RISE Journey: Call for Applications

*Supporting social entrepreneurship ideas
and development of young people from
Western Balkans*



This project is co-funded by the French Development Agency (AFD) and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)

Hello there! Are you ready to embark on a Journey? This is not just any journey; this is your chance to change the World! Ok, maybe first your community, then the World. Everyone can RISE as a hero of their own microworld, all you need is motivation, an idea, a bit of courage and possibly some sort of support. This is where we come. And who are we, you wonder?

Who Are We ?

We are a group of 11 partners from the Western Balkans, Germany and France¹, looking for young change-makers from the region, like yourself, to help us develop social businesses for better societies.

We strongly believe that social entrepreneurship can be a great bridge between young people, but also societies, and that it can bring amazing opportunities for growth and development.

This is why we have formed a network of 6 local incubators which will be a valuable support to all of the great ideas emerging in the Western Balkans.

We have dedicated the next two years to the development of social enterprises, a regional community of change-makers, raising awareness of this important topic and fortifying already existing initiatives. Why? For a great reason, to bring the young people of the region closer together in building a prosperous and stable region, because we know that you can do it.

WHAT IS A SOCIAL BUSINESS?

A social enterprise is an operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders.

It operates by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative fashion and uses its profits primarily to achieve social objectives.

It is managed in an open and responsible manner and, in particular, involves employees, consumers and stakeholders affected by its commercial activities.

Basically, it's business for social good!

What Is RISE ?

RISE - Regional Incubator for Social Entrepreneurs is a project for the motivated, committed youth, willing to learn and change things for the betterment of the Western Balkans. We aim to support your social business ideas that will make the region a better place.

RISE Journey is a specially tailored programme that is free-of-charge to participate in and it will help you learn, grow, and make a change in your surroundings. We focus on cooperation, ideas exchange, and peer learning to get better results.

Do you have an idea or innovative solution for a new and better way to approach education, women empowerment, culture, rural development, health or employment in your community? Social

¹ The Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO), GROUPE SOS Pulse, the South East European Youth Network (SEEN), the Franco-German Youth Office, Institut Français, ARNO, Balkan Green Foundation, Nesto Vise, Smart Kolektiv, IEC Tehnopolis and Yunus Social Business.

entrepreneurship skills, knowledge and experience will help you solve social and/or environmental issues that you are passionate about and help you make profit while doing it!

RISE Journey also provides you with the chance to participate in special mobility and business development grants in the second phase of the Journey. These grants will help you to explore the regional social business practices and give you a financial kick-off.

RISE supports young change-makers in making their ideas a reality. Let's work together and make better societies grow!

What Do We Offer ?

We will support a new generation of regional changemakers to RISE up and help solve problems in their local communities. This is why we developed our supporting programme, the **RISE Journey**, which consists of two phases: Ideation and Incubation Chapter.

For the first phase, **Ideation Chapter**, 36 RISE Ventures from the region are going to be selected for a 4-month-long ideation process (6 from each - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo², Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia). The **Ideation Chapter** will help you build your ideas from scratch to a solid project, while being supported by experts and mentors, covering all of the important subjects in social entrepreneurship.

In parallel, **design thinking workshops** will take place to enhance problem-solving skills for the participants.

After building up your idea, you will have an opportunity to pitch your idea on the **Demo day**, and get a chance to be financially and practically supported to implement your ideas towards positive impact on the community. In total, 12 teams will be selected, two per Local Incubator.

The selected Ventures will continue the RISE Journey with the **Incubation Chapter**. This phase is dedicated to:

1. Testing and validating your social business model through a tailor-made support program and a business development grant.
2. Regional mobility opportunities, such as **RISE Bootcamp** and **RISE Expeditions** to visit your peers, role-model businesses and trainers/mentors/experts across the Western Balkans region and get more inspiration, knowledge, know-how and connections.

The Journey comes to an end with a Final RISE regional event, attended by all of the stakeholders of the project to recognise and celebrate our achievements!

To summarize, RISE Journey consists of:

- 1) The Ideation Chapter - lasting for 4 months
 - Tailor-made programme to help you develop your idea
 - Design thinking workshops

² This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

- Demo day – pitch presentation in front of a Jury
- 2) The Incubation Chapter - lasting for 6 months
- Testing and validating your idea supported with business development grant
 - Regional mobility opportunities
 - Final event

As program organisers we will adapt the program timeline and modules of implementation in accordance with COVID-19 situation development.

Who Can Apply ?

- Young people from 18 to 35 years old from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia speaking English well enough to actively participate in an international program, in a group of a minimum of 2 persons that have:
- Availability to participate in a program with 4 hours of active participation per week and meetups during 4 months ideation phase, whether these are in online or offline format
- High motivation to learn about social entrepreneurship and to be involved in a regional intercultural program
- The ambition to develop a concrete idea with social impact
- The willingness to learn from other actors in the region
- At least, have identified a social/environmental issue they want to tackle
- At most, worked on their idea on a small scale / at a personal level, without having engaged in a real business activity yet.
- The idea impact is regional or local

Who Cannot Apply ?

- Incorporated / registered entities
- Political parties, government and state agencies
- Scholarships ideas
- Capital funding ideas
- Research ideas
- Projects already selling their products or services
- Projects that have already been supported/funded by another existing support program delivering similar training and knowledge to entrepreneurs
- Ideas with discriminatory practices, at risk of creating or reinforcing divisions
- Ideas where the main impact is outside the region

What are our criteria for selection ?

Key criteria

The key criteria that applicants will need to demonstrate are:

- Strong motivation to participate in the program, the mindset of a true change-maker and commitment to fully participate in 4 months of ideation program
- How the idea tackles a critical social/environmental issue
- The potential for the idea to become a sustainable business

- At least half of team members speak English
- Not having previously been a participant in an ideation/incubation/acceleration program with the same idea

Advantageous criteria

Additional points are going to be awarded if the idea:

- The innovation is implemented in a local context
- Has the potential to scale or replicate in the region.
- Has the potential to create additional jobs.
- Respects gender-equality principles