



Invitalia's Entrepreneurship Support for the Unemployed, Italy

What?

INVITALIA's Entrepreneurship Support for the Unemployed seeks to ensure that all unemployed people have an opportunity to enter entrepreneurship. Its objectives include (i) supporting the unemployed to enter the labour market; (ii) fostering entrepreneurship development at the local level; (iii) spreading and promoting a business culture; (iv) enhancing beneficiaries' skills to improve their employability; and (v) promoting the development of an entrepreneurial infrastructure. The integrated scheme includes financial support via "free" micro loans, training, advice and information and one-to-one mentoring support. The programme also seeks to build an entrepreneurship culture and strengthen the business start-up support infrastructure.

Why?

There is an ongoing need in Italy to create jobs and to help unemployed people back into work. The Italian economy has seen increasingly high rates of unemployment since the recent economic crisis, especially in the regions of Sicily, Sardinia and Campania. Offering entrepreneurship support to the unemployed creates another route back into work.

Key activities

The Entrepreneurship Programme supports venture creation through three routes (i) self-employment; (ii) starting a micro-business; and (iii) franchising; with a specific focus on manufacturing, services and trade. An integrated suite of measures is offered for each route, including financial support, training, advice, information provision and one-to-one mentoring. Financial incentives include grants of up to EUR 25 823 for expenditure on investment, and up to EUR 5 165 for working capital. Since 2000, all unemployed people are eligible and the measure also extends to all regions of Italy. The focus is on providing an intensive level of support in the initial year of start-up when the risk of failure is greatest.

To be eligible, applicants must be unemployed for at least six months. Priority access is given to unemployed youth (18-35 years old) and the unemployed living in Italy's southern regions. These participants are also eligible to receive additional support and incentives.

INVITALIA is the national agency that is responsible for business development and attracting investment,

including all national measures that support business creation and innovative start-ups.

Impact

Between 1996 to 2013, more than 300 000 applications were received. The programme supported the creation of more than 100 000 new enterprises, creating nearly 200 000 new jobs. Over EUR 4 million has been given in grants and loans.

This case study was adapted from material published in: OECD/EU (2016), Inclusive Business Creation: Good Practice Compendium, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264251496-en> [1]

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Links

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