

## ***Innovate Moldova Programme***

### **Request for Applications (RFA) No. 2025-002**

Dear Applicant:

The **Innovate Moldova Programme**, funded by **Sweden** and the **United Kingdom** and implemented by the **Foundation for Advancement of Moldova (FAM)**, is seeking grant applications from companies operating in innovative industries such as Apparel, Automotive, Engineering, Creative Industries & Digital Media Production, Prototyping & R&D for Product Innovation, Green Manufacturing & Circular Economy Solutions, Electronics and Printed Circuit Board (PCB) Prototyping & Assembly, Unmanned Vehicles (UV) and Robotics Systems, Smart Electronics & LED Technologies, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Solutions for Business Innovation.

The purpose of the anticipated grants is to equip eligible companies with machinery, equipment, software, and technologies that support the automation and digitalization of the companies, thereby enhancing competitiveness, productivity, market penetration, and the export of products and services.

All grants will be awarded and implemented in accordance with the Innovate Moldova Programme and FAM's internal grant management policies.

FAM employees may not ask for, and applicants are prohibited from offering, any money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, thing of value, or compensation to obtain or reward improper favorable treatment regarding this solicitation. Any improper request from Programme employee should be reported to the FAM's Executive Director or directly here: <https://proeducatie.md/contacte/>

Annexes included with this Request for Applications:

- **Annex A** - Grant Application Form *(to be completed by applicants)*
- **Annex B** – Grant Application Budget Form *(to be completed by applicants)*
- **Annex C** – Applicant Self-Assessment Form *(to be completed by applicants)*

## SECTION I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### IA. OBJECTIVE

**Innovate Moldova Programme** intends to award grants to companies operating in innovative industries such as Apparel, Automotive, Engineering, Creative Industries & Digital Media Production, Prototyping & R&D for Product Innovation, Green Manufacturing & Circular Economy Solutions, Electronics and Printed Circuit Board (PCB) Prototyping & Assembly, Unmanned Vehicles (UV) and Robotics Systems, Smart Electronics & LED Technologies, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Solutions for Business Innovation. The purpose of the anticipated grants is to provide eligible companies with machinery, equipment, software, and technologies that facilitate their automation and digitalization, thereby strengthening competitiveness, increasing productivity, expanding market penetration, and boosting exports of products and services.

### IB. BACKGROUND

The **Innovate Moldova Programme**, funded by **Sweden** and the **United Kingdom** and implemented by the **Foundation for Advancement of Moldova (FAM)**, aims to enhance the competitiveness of Moldova's transformative sectors—including apparel, ICT, engineering, creative industries, and digital media production—and to strengthen the country's integration into Western markets. The Programme seeks to achieve this by facilitating sustainable partnerships between Moldovan business associations, centers of excellence and innovation, and their regional and international counterparts, including anchor firms, business associations, and investors. It further aims to improve the productivity and export sophistication of local companies; promote the adoption of green technologies and sustainable practices; expand access to affordable finance; and develop a workforce better aligned with private-sector needs, with particular focus on youth, women, and vulnerable populations.

The **Innovate Moldova Programme** aims to embed innovation within traditional manufacturing and creative sectors by enabling access to technologies that drive digitalization, automation, and sustainability. Achieving this vision requires a critical mass of companies in these sectors to adopt international technologies and align with global technology standards.

The purpose of this RFA is to support manufacturing and creative companies in accessing modern technologies that will enable them to automate and digitalize their production processes and value-chain verticals. Through this support, companies will enhance the value of their products and services, increase competitiveness, expand export potential, and improve productivity and operational efficiency.

### IC. DETAILED PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

**Innovate Moldova Programme** plans to support companies operating in innovative industries such as Apparel, Automotive, Engineering, Creative Industries & Digital Media Production, Prototyping & R&D for Product Innovation, Green Manufacturing & Circular Economy Solutions, Electronics and Printed Circuit Board (PCB) Prototyping & Assembly, Unmanned Vehicles (UV) and Robotics Systems, Smart Electronics & LED Technologies, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Solutions for Business Innovation to access technologies and equipment which will increase their competitiveness by allowing for increased digitalization and automation of their processes. This support serves a twofold objective: 1) increasing businesses' competitiveness; and 2) accelerating the export of local products and production services.

The below table includes verticals and the eligibility criteria for applicants in each respective category. The table also includes illustrative equipment that might be donated under a resulting grant award. This list is not exhaustive, and applicants may propose other equipment that fulfills the purpose of this RFA.

Applicants are encouraged to contribute their own resources for the proposed grant activity budget. Applicant contribution can be either cash co-financing or in-kind contribution.

Vertical	Illustrative Equipment Technologies	Applicant Eligibility	Recommended Applicant Contribution
<p>Design and Pre-production</p> <p><i>Includes samples development and approvals, sourcing and testing raw materials, garment costing, pattern making, and process planning and pre-production quality check</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2D&amp;3D modelling softwares</li> <li>• Textile scanners</li> <li>• 3D Scanners</li> <li>• Design workstations</li> <li>• 2D and 3D CAD/CAM software (ex. Autocad, GEMINI, Catia, Solidworks, Lectra, etc)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 3 years active on the market</li> <li>• 100% local capital</li> <li>• Minimum 1 designer or engineer employed and/or existence of outsourced design office</li> <li>• The company must operate within one of the industries supported by the Innovate Moldova Programme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 25% (cash co-financing) + 10% (in-kind contribution) = <b>35% total</b></li> </ul>
<p>Textile, Apparel, Footwear and Accessories Manufacturing</p> <p><i>Refers to cutting, sewing and finishing processes.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company management Software (ex. SAP)</li> <li>• Quality management software</li> <li>• Digital Labeling equipment</li> <li>• Digital Sewing machines</li> <li>• Advanced liniar performant sewing equipment</li> <li>• Sewing machines for buttons. buttonholes</li> <li>• Digital Embroidery machines</li> <li>• Digital Knitting machines</li> <li>• Digital Jacquard equipment</li> <li>• Digital printing machines</li> <li>• Digital cutting equipment</li> <li>• Any equipment for process automation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 3 years active on the market</li> <li>• 100% local capital</li> <li>• Minimum of 5 employees</li> <li>• Demonstrated export strategy</li> <li>• Applicant must include clear actions or plan related to sustainable manufacturing, waste reduction, or recycling to qualify for the grant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 25% (cash co-financing) + 10% (in-kind contribution) = <b>35% total</b></li> </ul>
<p>CNC – Metal Processing</p> <p><i>Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machines are automated machines, which are operated by computers</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company management Software (i.e. SAP)</li> <li>• Process and operations management software</li> <li>• Quality management software</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 3 years active on the market</li> <li>• 100% local capital</li> <li>• Minimum of 3 employees</li> <li>• Demonstrated export potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 25% (cash co-financing) + 10% (in-kind contribution) = <b>35% total</b></li> </ul>

<p><i>executing pre-programmed sequences of controlled commands.</i></p> <p><i>CNC machining is the manufacturing process using computer numerical control (CNC) machines such as grinders, lathes, and turning mills, all of which are used to cut, shape, and create different parts and prototypes.</i></p> <p><i>CNC Metal Processing is the process of CNC machining of metal materials such as Aluminum; Steel; Stainless Steel; Copper; Brass; titanium alloy; Kovar alloy; Invar alloy; Zinc alloy</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matrix design and production</li> <li>• CNC Metal Processing equipment</li> <li>• Precision measurement equipment</li> <li>• Sensors, actuators</li> <li>• Energy monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant must include clear actions or plan related to sustainable manufacturing, waste reduction, or recycling to qualify for the grant.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>CNC – Plastic Processing</b></p> <p><i>Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machines are automated machines, which are operated by computers executing pre-programmed sequences of controlled commands.</i></p> <p><i>CNC machining is the manufacturing process using computer numerical control (CNC) machines such as grinders, lathes, and turning mills, all of which are used to cut, shape, and create different parts and prototypes.</i></p> <p><i>CNC Plastic Processing is the process of CNC machining of plastic</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company management Software (SAP)</li> <li>• Process and operations management software</li> <li>• Quality management software</li> <li>• 3D Printers</li> <li>• CNC plastic processing equipment</li> <li>• Plastic injection moulding</li> <li>• Sensors, actuators</li> <li>• Energy monitoring</li> <li>• Robotic handling arms for post-processing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 3 years active on the market</li> <li>• 100% local capital</li> <li>• Minimum of 3 employees</li> <li>• Demonstrated export potential</li> <li>• Applicant must include clear actions or plan related to sustainable manufacturing, waste reduction, or recycling to qualify for the grant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 25% (cash co-financing) + 10% (in-kind contribution) = <b>35% total</b></li> </ul>

<p>materials such as PEEK; POM; PP; ABS; PC; PMMA; PTFE; Nylon.</p>			
<p>E-commerce/Logistics</p> <p><i>Refers to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multimodal &amp; sustainable transport solutions</li> <li>• Logistics platforms (consolidation, deconsolidation solutions, products reception, preparation of orders, inventory management)</li> <li>• Distribution (delivery, unloading and shelving)</li> <li>• Reverse logistics</li> <li>• Quality control</li> <li>• Labelling, fitting of anti-theft devices</li> <li>• Assembly, individual packaging</li> <li>• Cleaning and ironing</li> <li>• Solutions for Hanging Garment</li> <li>• Dynamic transport and logistics traceability</li> <li>• Performance monitoring</li> </ul>	<p>Logistics software          Robotic arms          Automated Storage &amp; Retrieval System (AS/RS) technologies and equipment          QR code marking          RFID identification          Logistics management solutions          Data exchange and interoperability solutions with suppliers, logistic services providers and clients</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 3 years active on the market</li> <li>• Company with mixed or local capital</li> <li>• Minimum of 3 employees</li> <li>• Applicant must include clear actions or plan related to sustainable manufacturing, waste reduction, or recycling to qualify for the grant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 25% (cash co-financing) + 10% (in-kind contribution) = <b>35% total</b></li> </ul>
<p>Creative Industries &amp; Digital Media Production.</p> <p><i>Refers to: audio-visual content creation, digital storytelling, animation and game development, AR/VR experiences, virtual production, sound design, and post-production workflows for commercial, educational, and creative projects</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional cameras and peripherals</li> <li>• Studio lighting kits</li> <li>• Sound recording equipment</li> <li>• VR/AR headsets and motion-capture sensors</li> <li>• Editing, compositing and color-grading hardware and software</li> <li>• Rendering workstations or GPU servers</li> <li>• Rigs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 3 years active on the market</li> <li>• 100% local capital</li> <li>• Minimum of 3 employees</li> <li>• Applicants shall demonstrate strong business cases/demand for solicited equipment and technologies</li> <li>• Proven track record of at least 3 completed projects or contracts in creative production within the last 24 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 25% (cash co-financing) + 10% (in-kind contribution) = <b>35% total</b></li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant must include clear actions or plan related to sustainable manufacturing, waste reduction, or recycling to qualify for the grant</li> </ul>	
<p>Prototyping &amp; R&amp;D for Product Innovation</p> <p><i>Refers to: the development of prototypes, testing of new product concepts, reverse engineering, digital modeling, and applied research activities that support early-stage product innovation and engineering feasibility.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desktop and industrial-grade 3D printers (FDM, SLA, SLS) for rapid prototyping</li> <li>• CNC routers, mini CNC mills, and laser-cutting machines suitable for small-batch component fabrication</li> <li>• 3D scanners (structured light or laser) for reverse engineering and digital modeling</li> <li>• CAD/CAE/CAM software licenses (SolidWorks, Autodesk Fusion, CATIA, Rhino, Siemens NX)</li> <li>• Prototyping toolkits (soldering stations, precision tools, small electronics kits for testing)</li> <li>• Testing &amp; measurement equipment — digital calipers, inspection microscopes, multimeters, oscilloscopes</li> <li>• Workstations with high processing/GPU power for simulation, modeling, and rendering</li> <li>• Environmental testing mini-chambers (for temperature/humidity testing of prototypes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 3 years active on the market</li> <li>• 100% local capital</li> <li>• Minimum of 3 employees</li> <li>• Applicants shall demonstrate strong business cases/demand for solicited equipment and technologies</li> <li>• Applicant must include clear actions or plan related to sustainable manufacturing, waste reduction, or recycling to qualify for the grant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 25% (cash co-financing) + 10% (in-kind contribution) = <b>35% total</b></li> </ul>
<p>Green Manufacturing &amp; Circular Economy Solutions</p> <p><i>Refers to: introducing resource-efficient production processes, waste-reduction systems, recycling and upcycling technologies, eco-design tools, and environmental monitoring solutions</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy-efficient machinery upgrades (servo motors, efficient compressors, smart power controllers)</li> <li>• Material-sorting and recycling equipment (plastic shredders, textile shredders, balers, compactors)</li> <li>• Waste-to-resource machines for textile,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 3 years active on the market</li> <li>• 100% local capital</li> <li>• Minimum of 3 employees</li> <li>• Applicants shall demonstrate strong business cases/demand for solicited equipment and technologies</li> <li>• Applicants must demonstrate a specific environmental or</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 25% (cash co-financing) + 10% (in-kind contribution) = <b>35% total</b></li> </ul>

<p><i>that support the transition to low-carbon and circular manufacturing models.</i></p>	<p>plastic, leather, or industrial by-products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eco-design and sustainability software (Life Cycle Assessment tools, CO<sub>2</sub> footprint calculators, resource-efficiency modeling software)</li> <li>• Energy monitoring systems, IoT sensors for consumption tracking, and smart meters</li> <li>• Water-saving devices for industrial processes (filtration, recirculation, micro-purification units)</li> <li>• Quality control &amp; environmental test equipment (particle counters, thermal cameras, spectrometers for materials testing)</li> <li>• Green packaging technologies (biodegradable packaging machines, labeling equipment)</li> </ul>	<p>resource-efficiency challenge the equipment will address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants must commit to track and report a measurable environmental improvement (e.g., reduced waste, energy savings, material recovery rates)</li> <li>• Operational capacity to install and maintain equipment safely</li> <li>• Must not be subject to ongoing environmental penalties or compliance violations</li> <li>• Applicant must include clear actions or plan related to sustainable manufacturing, waste reduction, or recycling to qualify for the grant</li> </ul>	
<p>Electronics and Printed Circuit Board (PCB) Prototyping &amp; Assembly</p> <p><i>Refers to: electronic circuit design, small-batch PCB fabrication, assembly of surface-mount and through-hole components, testing and debugging of electronic modules, and development of embedded systems for industrial, consumer, or automation applications</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desktop PCB milling machines for rapid prototyping</li> <li>• Pick-and-place machines for SMD component assembly (entry-level or semi-automatic)</li> <li>• Reflow ovens (lead-free capable) and solder-paste stencil printers</li> <li>• Hot-air rework stations, soldering/desoldering stations with temperature control</li> <li>• Inspection microscopes, digital magnifiers, PCB inspection cameras</li> <li>• Oscilloscopes, logic analyzers, multimeters, electronic load testers</li> <li>• PCB design and simulation software (Altium, Eagle, KiCad, Proteus, OrCAD)</li> <li>• Function generators, power supplies, and calibration tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 3 years active on the market</li> <li>• 100% local capital</li> <li>• Minimum of 3 employees</li> <li>• Applicants shall demonstrate strong business cases/demand for solicited equipment and technologies</li> <li>• Proven technical experience demonstrated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ at least 2 completed prototypes/products developed in company lifetime OR</li> <li>✓ contracts/services delivered in embedded systems or electronics assembly</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Availability of appropriate technical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 25% (cash co-financing) + 10% (in-kind contribution) = <b>35% total</b></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESD-safe workstations and anti-static equipment for electronics assembly</li> </ul>	<p>workspace (ESD-safe or adaptable environment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant must designate at least one trained electronics engineer or technician responsible for operating purchased equipment</li> <li>• Clear justification showing how purchased equipment supports commercial scaling, export-readiness, or integration into supply chains</li> <li>• Applicant must include clear actions or plan related to sustainable manufacturing, waste reduction, or recycling to qualify for the grant</li> </ul>	
<p>Unmanned Vehicles (UV) and Robotics Systems</p> <p><i>Refers to: design, prototyping, assembly, calibration, and testing of unmanned vehicles, drone components, robotic systems, and autonomous platforms for industrial, agricultural, environmental, security, or research applications.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CNC routers, 3D printers (FDM/SLA), and laser cutters for UV/robotic chassis and component prototyping</li> <li>• Flight-control boards, GPS modules, IMUs, telemetry modules, ESCs, BLDC motors</li> <li>• Sensor suites for UV/robotics (LIDAR, ultrasonic sensors, optical flow sensors, barometers, thermal cameras)</li> <li>• Robotics kits (multi-axis robotic arms, mobile platforms, actuator sets)</li> <li>• Testing and calibration equipment (propeller balancers, thrust stands, vibration testers, battery diagnostics)</li> <li>• Simulation and control software (PX4, Ardupilot, MATLAB/Simulink, ROS, Gazebo)</li> <li>• Safety enclosures, test cages, and protective rigs for flight testing</li> <li>• High-performance computers for simulation,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 3 years active on the market</li> <li>• 100% local capital</li> <li>• Minimum of 3 employees</li> <li>• Applicants shall demonstrate strong business cases/demand for solicited equipment and technologies</li> <li>• Demonstrated prior involvement in robotics/UV development via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ at least 1 prototype built, OR</li> <li>✓ a contract or R&amp;D partnership, OR</li> <li>✓ participation in a robotics/UV technical challenge</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Clear operational workspace suitable for assembly and testing (indoor technical lab or workshop)</li> <li>• Applicant must have at least one qualified engineer (automation, electronics, robotics, or</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 25% (cash co-financing) + 10% (in-kind contribution) = <b>35% total</b></li> </ul>

	path-planning, and AI-assisted control algorithms	<p>similar) responsible for operating the equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant must commit to comply with national UV safety and regulatory frameworks</li> <li>• Applicant must include clear actions or plan related to sustainable manufacturing, waste reduction, or recycling to qualify for the grant.</li> </ul>	
<p>Smart Electronics &amp; LED Technologies</p> <p><i>Refers to: design and manufacturing of energy-efficient lighting systems, LED modules, IoT-enabled devices, smart-home and industrial automation components, including testing and quality control of illumination, drivers, sensors, and electronic subsystems.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LED SMD assembly tools (semi-automatic pick-and-place, stencil printers, reflow ovens)</li> <li>• LED module testing equipment (luminous flux meters, spectrometers, CRI/temperature testers)</li> <li>• Optical and thermal analysis tools (integrating spheres, thermal imaging cameras, lux meters)</li> <li>• Prototyping equipment for smart electronics (microcontroller kits, IoT dev kits, sensors, RF modules)</li> <li>• Software for circuit and lighting design (Dialux, Relux, Altium, KiCad, Proteus)</li> <li>• Environmental simulation tools (mini-chambers for temperature/humidity cycling)</li> <li>• Power-supply testing systems, oscilloscopes, multimeters, load testers</li> <li>• Enclosure and small mechanical fabrication tools (3D printer, laser cutter) for LED luminaire prototyping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 3 years active on the market</li> <li>• 100% local capital</li> <li>• Minimum of 3 employees</li> <li>• Applicants shall demonstrate strong business cases/demand for solicited equipment and technologies</li> <li>• Demonstrated technical capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ at least 1 completed prototype/product, OR</li> <li>○ at least 1 B2B contract in electronics, lighting, or automation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Must demonstrate access to or ownership of appropriate workspace for assembly/testing (ESD-compliant or adaptable)</li> <li>• Must employ or subcontract at least one electronics or electrotechnical engineer with relevant experience</li> <li>• Must outline a measurable benefit (energy efficiency gains, export potential, new product lines)</li> <li>• Applicant must include clear actions or plan related to sustainable manufacturing, waste reduction, or recycling to qualify for the grant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 25% (cash co-financing) + 10% (in-kind contribution) = <b>35% total</b></li> </ul>

<p>Artificial Intelligence (AI) Solutions for Business Innovation</p> <p><i>Refers to: the integration of AI algorithms, machine-learning models, computer vision, predictive analytics, and automation tools into production, logistics, design, customer engagement, or management processes to enhance productivity, forecasting, and decision-making across any industry.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AI-ready workstations (GPU-powered computers suitable for model training and inference)</li> <li>• Edge-AI devices (NVIDIA Jetson modules, industrial AI controllers, embedded AI boards)</li> <li>• Computer vision kits (cameras, lenses, lighting, industrial vision sensors) for defect detection, counting, sorting, and quality control</li> <li>• AI-assisted software for automation, forecasting, or optimization (ERP/CRM with AI modules, predictive maintenance tools, AI scheduling/route optimization systems)</li> <li>• Data analytics and BI platforms with ML extensions</li> <li>• AI modeling and automation tools</li> <li>• Voice-to-text, NLP, and generative AI tools for customer support, documentation, or digital marketing</li> <li>• IoT sensors &amp; gateways feeding real-time data to AI pipelines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 3 years active on the market</li> <li>• 100% local capital</li> <li>• Minimum of 3 employees</li> <li>• Applicants shall demonstrate strong business cases/demand for solicited equipment and technologies</li> <li>• Must demonstrate a specific operational use case (e.g., defect detection, forecasting, automation, quality control, logistics optimization)</li> <li>• Must ensure basic digital maturity: stable IT infrastructure, dedicated person responsible for implementation, and secure data practices</li> <li>• If purchasing high-end hardware, the applicant must demonstrate capacity to operate and maintain the equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 25% (cash co-financing) + 10% (in-kind contribution) = <b>35% total</b></li> </ul>
<p>Other Innovations in Industries Not Listed Above</p> <p><i>Refers to: novel technologies, automation tools, specialized equipment, software, or process enhancements that demonstrably improve competitiveness, productivity, innovation capacity, sustainability, or export readiness in sectors not explicitly covered under this RFA</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automation and process-optimization tools (small-scale industrial robots, pneumatic systems, automated sorting or packaging equipment)</li> <li>• Specialized manufacturing machinery for niche sectors (wood processing, metal finishing, furniture, printing, agri-processing, etc.)</li> <li>• Sector-specific digitalization tools (ERP/CRM modules adapted to industry needs, digital workstations, inventory &amp; stock control systems)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 3 years active on the market</li> <li>• 100% local capital</li> <li>• Minimum of 3 employees</li> <li>• Applicants shall demonstrate strong business cases/demand for solicited equipment and technologies</li> <li>• Must demonstrate a clear and specific innovation need supported by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ a documented operational challenge, OR</li> <li>✓ an upgrade required to access new</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 25% (cash co-financing) + 10% (in-kind contribution) = <b>35% total</b></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing, calibration, and quality-control equipment relevant to the applicant’s vertical</li> <li>• Advanced measurement tools (laser distance, 3D measurement arms, precision inspection cameras)</li> <li>• Environmental and safety equipment improving compliance with EU standards (air filtration, noise reduction systems, fume extraction units)</li> <li>• Specialized software (CAD/CAM systems, simulation tools, industrial design platforms)</li> <li>• Prototyping and small-batch production tools suitable for artisanal, craft, or niche industries</li> </ul>	<p>markets/export opportunities, OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ an innovation that improves productivity or quality</li> <li>• Equipment requested must be directly linked to a measurable business outcome (efficiency, export readiness, quality, green transformation)</li> <li>• Company must have sufficient technical capacity and staff to operate and maintain equipment</li> <li>• Companies requesting niche or highly specialized equipment may be asked to provide proof of existing production volumes to justify the investment</li> <li>• Applicant must include clear actions or plan related to sustainable manufacturing, waste reduction, or recycling to qualify for the grant.</li> </ul>	
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**Applicants should demonstrate how they will use the equipment donated under the grant to further their business competitiveness.** Depending on the industry and vertical, this could include: obtaining quality management systems certifications (ex. ISO 9001, 14000, 45000) and/or social audit compliance certifications (SMETA, BSCI, SEDEX, etc.); hiring or training dedicated personnel on computer-aided machine software; participating in certified trainings on digitalization; updating warehouse stocks or product databases; implementing product traceability; and other improvements as applicable.

## SECTION II. AWARD INFORMATION

Innovate Moldova programme anticipates awarding several grants as per description in Section I.C., with anticipated award sizes of up to **€10,000** (to be denominated and disbursed in the equivalent amount of Moldovan Lei). The final grant award amount will be dependent upon grant activities and final negotiation and may be lower or higher than that range. The duration of any grant award under this solicitation will depend on the received applications and final negotiations with Innovate Moldova Programme. The estimated start date of grants awarded under this solicitation is **December 2025**, with an expected end date of **March 2026**. The Project works with zero% VAT; therefore budgets required from the Programme shall be presented without VAT.

The type of grant awarded will be determined during the course of negotiation and following a determination of risk.

### **SECTION III. ELIGIBILITY**

#### **IIIA. ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS**

- Applicants must be a registered Moldovan legal entity formally constituted, recognized by and in good standing with appropriate Moldovan authorities, and compliant with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations.
- Applicants should review the eligibility criteria for each vertical within a eligible sector, as defined in the table in **Section I.C.**
- Applicants may only submit one application under this RFA.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate successful past performance in their respective vertical within the eligible sector.
- Applicants must demonstrate sound management capacity, including robust financial, administrative, and technical policies and procedures, as well as internal controls that safeguard assets, prevent fraud, waste, and abuse, and ensure effective achievement of program goals and objectives. The Innovate Moldova Programme will assess these capabilities prior to awarding any grant.

### **SECTION IV – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

#### **IVA. INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS**

Applicants must propose strategies for the implementation of the program description described above, introducing innovations that are appropriate to their organizational strengths.

##### **IVA1. PRE-AWARD RISK ASSESSMENT**

All organizations selected for award are subject to a pre-award risk assessment conducted by Innovate Moldova Programme, to ascertain whether the organization has the minimum management capabilities required to handle the grant. The applicant self-assessment is the first step in the pre-award risk assessment process. The Applicant Self-Assessment Form is contained in Annex C.

##### **IVA2. GRANT APPLICATION**

Templates to be utilized when developing the application are provided in Annex A-B. Applicants shall present their technical application and budget in the formats provided and shall follow the instructions and guidelines listed in these annexes.

The application must be signed by an authorized agent of the Applicant.

##### **IVA3. INELIGIBLE EXPENSES**

Innovate Moldova Programme grant funds may not be utilized for the following:

- Private ceremonies or representation expenses
- Procurement of restricted or prohibited items (e.g., military equipment, commodities and services for support of police or other law enforcement activities, abortion equipment and

services, luxury goods and gambling equipment, or weather modification equipment, agricultural commodities, motor vehicles including motorcycles, pharmaceuticals, certain medical equipment, pesticides, or fertilizer)

- Costs already covered by other sources
- Fines, penalties, or bad debts
- Construction (unless specifically authorized under certain conditions)
- Alcoholic beverages
- Other costs deemed unallowable by donor rules or general cost principles

#### **IVB. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

Applications shall be submitted in English.

Application (including the budget and supporting documentation) should be submitted in electronic copy to the Innovate Moldova Programme e-mail address [grants@innovate.md](mailto:grants@innovate.md) and should reference **RFA No. 2025-002** no later than **17:00 local time, on December 18, 2025**. Late or unresponsive applications will only be considered at the discretion of Innovate Moldova Programme.

In addition to the application forms and budget, applicants should submit the following to

- Applicant Self-Assessment form
- A copy of the Applicant’s valid legal registration (Extras, Registration Certificate)
- A copy of their latest financial statements for 2023 and 2024
- Export Strategy (1 page, including target markets, existing contracts/international partners, any other evidences), if applicable.

Please submit all questions concerning this solicitation via email to [grants@innovate.md](mailto:grants@innovate.md). Innovate Moldova Programme will assist applicants in understanding the application process, and can provide coaching in application development at the request of applicants.

#### **SECTION V. APPLICATION MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA**

Full applications will be evaluated against the merit review criteria in the table below.

<b>Merit Review Category</b>	<b>Rating (Points)</b>
Innovation, feasibility & technical approach	30
Sustainability and financial self-reliance	30
Management & programmatic capacity, including past performance and personnel	25
Cost effectiveness	15
<b>Overall Rating (out of 100 points)</b>	<b>100</b>

These merit review criteria elements are described more fully below.

*A. Innovation, feasibility & technical approach.* The quality and feasibility of the application in terms of the viability of the proposed technical approach, (i.e., the proposed technical approach can reasonably be expected to produce the intended outcomes), and the appropriateness of the proposed equipment and technologies. The extent to which the proposed equipment will increase automation and digitalization of processes and competitiveness of the company overall is clearly articulated. Applicant presents a clear approach for a complementary competitiveness activity (such as certification, training dedicated staff on new software, updating product traceability, etc) that will increase the effectiveness of equipment donated under the grant. **30 points**

B. *Sustainability and financial self-reliance.* The extent to which the funded activity will result in building and strengthening the capacity of the applicant, and whether the activity itself is sustainable or will promote sustainability of the organization. Applicants must demonstrate that the company will ensure a return on investment from the donated equipment. **30 points**

C. *Management and programmatic capacity, including past performance and personnel.* Evidence of the applicant's capability to undertake and accomplish the proposed activities and utilized the donated equipment to the envisioned full potential. The application should demonstrate the organization's effectiveness in terms of internal structure, technical capacity, and key personnel to meet business competitiveness goals. In addition, the organization must demonstrate adequate financial management capability. The evaluation will be based principally on the background, qualifications, reputation, appropriateness and skills of its key personnel based on a review of submitted CVs and certifications; and the "track record," reputation (confirmed through reference checks), and achievements (including development of self-sufficient, sustainable activities) of the organization. **25 points**

E. *Cost effectiveness.* The degree to which budgeting is clear and reasonable and reflects best use of organizational and grant resources. The extent to which applicant and third-party contribution meets the illustrative amounts outlined in Section I.C. **15 points**

## **SECTION VI. AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

All grants will be negotiated, denominated, and funded in Moldovan Lei. All costs funded by the grant must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable.

The issuance of this RFA and any assistance provided with application development do not constitute an award or commitment on the part of the Innovate Moldova Programme, nor do they obligate the Programme to reimburse any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Innovate Moldova Programme reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received and may request additional clarifications from applicants. Applicants will be notified in writing of the decision regarding their application.