

Loan for organisers of events & congresses

08/09/2020

Covid-19 creates a lot of uncertainty for the Meetings & Events industry!

The Flemish Government has therefore decided to offer the possibility of a **reimbursable loan** for organisers of events, congresses, meetings, etc. to create working capital for new events in the fall of 2020 and in 2021.

The **obligation to refund** the loan **lapses if the event is cancelled due to government measures related to COVID-19**. The business risk is not covered: even if the event was loss-making, the support must be repaid.

Applications are handled by **Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship**, the Flemish government agency for entrepreneurs, supporting innovation and entrepreneurship to contribute to a favourable business climate.

Conditions for the applicant

- The applicant is an organisation with one of the following legal forms:
 - a natural person who exercises professional activities in a self-employed capacity
 - a company with legal personality under private law
 - a non-for-profit association
 - a foreign organisation with a status that is equivalent to the legal forms above
- The organisation needs to have an operating entity:
 - **in Belgium** if the event takes place in the Flemish Region
 - **in the Flemish Region** if the event takes place in the Brussels Region.
- An important condition is that the **organisation was not in difficulty** on December 31, 2019. The EU Commission recently relaxed this condition for small companies. They can receive aid even if they were already in difficulty on 31 December 2019, provided that they are not subject to collective insolvency proceedings under national law and that they have not received any rescue aid or restructuring aid. In concrete terms, this means that the “mathematical approach” that normally counts (50% equity ratio) should not be applied.
- The organisation should **not** have sought **protection from creditors**.
- A Belgian **administrative authority** or a foreign comparable administrative authority **may not have a dominant influence on the applicant’s policy**. There is a presumption of dominant influence if the applicant for support is directly or indirectly owned for 50% or more of the capital or the voting rights by the administrative authority. The presumption can be rebutted if the applicant can demonstrate that the administrative authority does not actually exercise a dominant influence on the policy of the aid applicant.
Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship will decide on this.

Which events are eligible?

An event is a gathering of people, of a temporary nature, for entertainment, experience or professional purposes, that takes place at a specific place within the Flemish Region and at a predetermined time.

The event has its own management and an economic, reputational or societal value.

An event or a related series of events is eligible if:

- **it takes place** in the **Flemish Region** or in the **Brussels Region**
- **it contributes to the restart of the Flemish event sector** through the active creation of turnover, added value and direct and indirect employment with the applicant himself, and with subcontractors who contribute to the event
- the organiser can present a **profitable business plan**, taking into account
 - any project subsidies for the realization of the event
 - the guidelines of the national security council, the Flemish, provincial or local government for the organisation of events, known at the time of the application
- it has **sufficient funding** to be organised, including the requested support
- the organiser is able to **comply with the guidelines of the national security council, the Flemish, provincial and/or local government**. The applicant for support adds to his application the green score of the [CERM scan](#) and, depending on the number of people expected, a [CIRM \(Covid Infrastructure Risk Model\) scan](#) of the venue, where the event will take place.

The date(s) of the event, or the first day of a coherent series of events, falls after the date of submission of the aid application.

Event assessment criteria

The eligible applications will be assessed by a jury and **ranked according to the assessment criteria** below:

1. **The economic, reputational and societal added value of the event for Flanders:**
 - a) the contribution to the **international reputation** of Flanders and the restart of (business) tourism in Flanders;
 - b) the extent to which the event ties in with, or contributes to the **policy objectives of the Flemish Government**, in particular sports, culture, tourism, youth, economy and innovation;
 - events from the **sports sector** with a Flemish or international reach;
 - the extent to which the event is in line with the priorities of the **Flemish top events policy**.
 - events from the **youth sector** or **socio-cultural adult work** with a Flemish or international reach;

- events within the **cultural and creative sectors** of fashion, music, design, architecture, communication, PR & advertising, print media, literature, visual arts, gaming, new media, performing arts, cultural heritage & heritage and the audio-visual sector with a Flemish or international reach;
 - **conferences & fairs** that focus on the **economic growth sectors** of Flanders: life sciences, innovative & creative industry, traditional sectors such as port and chemistry or tourism themes;
 - **international association conferences** within the domains of circular economy, energy, industry 4.0, lifelong learning, caring & living together, mobility & logistics, smart living, or within the tourist themes Flanders natural, culinary heritage, heritage experience, cycling;
- c) the extent to which the event can be regarded as **unique and distinctive within its domain**.
- the extent to which the event stimulates and applies innovative developments in the sector;
 - the extent to which organiser pays attention to the sustainable and socially responsible organisation of the event.
2. **The actors involved in the organisation of the event:**
- a) the **professionalism and reliability** of the applicant, based on references from the past;
 - b) the professionalism and reliability of the applicant's subcontractors, based on references from the past;
3. **The efficiency and output:**
- a) The **direct and indirect employment** associated with the event, with the organiser and with the subcontractors who work at the event;
 - b) The degree to which resources are used efficiently; a **sound financial management** and approach as per the event's business plan;
 - c) The **quality of the business model** for the event to generate maximum private income, even after the event has taken place;
 - d) The chances of financial return and the **repayment capacity**;
4. **Effectiveness and outcome:**
- The extent to which a commercial leverage is created to get the entire event sector back on track.

The jury consists of representatives of Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship, Visit Flanders, Event Flanders, Sport Flanders and the Department of Culture, Youth and Media.

The jury can adjust the grant application and impose additional conditions in view of optimal use of public funds and the best possible support of the event sector.

Facts & Figures

→ Amount

- The reimbursable loan amounts to a **minimum of € 25,000** and a **maximum of € 800,000**, per event
- The loan may not exceed **60% of the total cost** of the event.
- It is limited to **non-recoverable costs** and **unavoidable invoices**.
e.g. invoices already paid for the marketing and communications campaign, advance payments for venues, subcontractors, speakers, artists ...
Personnel costs for the organiser's staff are also eligible as non-recoverable costs.
Food and drinks are not acceptable.
- The support is paid in **one instalment**.

→ Compensation

As compensation for the support, the organiser will have to **pay a fee of 2%**, in analogy with the guarantee premium. VLAIO does not pay 2% of the allocated support. This withheld amount must be paid back by the applicant to the Agency for Innovation & Entrepreneurship if the event takes place.

→ Payback

The loan must be paid back **within three months after the event**.

For an event series, in which e.g. some events took place and others could not take place, a proportional distribution is made of the amount to be paid back.

Example: for a series of 10 concerts, of which 6 took place and 4 did not, 6/10 of the advance will have to be paid back.

→ Warranty

The loan **must not be paid back if the event is cancelled due to government measures** regarding COVID-19. The business risk is not covered: if the event was loss-making, the aid must be repaid.

Procedure

→ Requests will be handled in 2 calls:

- **Call 1** for events starting in **2020**
Submission is possible as of Monday 7 September. The deadline for submission is Friday 2 October 2020, 12:00 noon.
- **Call 2** for events taking place **between 1 January and 1 October 2021**
Submission is possible as of Monday 5 October 2020. The deadline for submission is Monday 9 November 2020, 12:00 noon.
- The main organiser submits the request and will receive the advance.
- Applications can only be made online via the pink button 'application', on the website of VLAIO:
<https://www.vlaio.be/nl/subsidies-financiering/voorschot-voor-organisatoren-van-evenementen>

→ How to prepare the application?

A valid file contains the following documents:

- the **project description** of the event, taking into account the assessment criteria;
template: <https://www.vlaio.be/nl/media/1450>
- the **project budget** (business plan), with an overview of the non-recoverable costs and unavoidable invoices;
template: <https://www.vlaio.be/nl/media/1449>
- the **result of CERM-assessment** (Covid Event Risk Model). Even if you are organising an event for which you are not required to fill out the CERM, we expect you to add the result of the checklist as an attachment. You can fill in the checklist on www.covideventriskmodel.be

Bear in mind that:

- these templates are available to you for informational purposes only; changes may be made;
- All data when applying for the advance in the online tool must be entered via the pink button “application”.

→ The decision

The admissible applications for funding are **assessed by a jury and ranked** based on the assessment criteria.

Flanders’ agency Innovation & Entrepreneurship, Tourism Flanders and Event Flanders, the Department of Culture, Youth and Media and Sport Flanders are part of the jury.

The jury can adjust the grant application and impose additional conditions with a view to optimal use of public funds and the optimal stimulation of the event sector.

Do you have further questions?

Website (Dutch only):

<https://www.vlaio.be/nl/subsidies-financiering/voorschot-voor-organisatoren-van-evenementen>

Check out the Frequently Asked Questions (Dutch only):

[VLAIO FAQ](#)

Contact:

Visit Flanders Convention Bureau
Flanders’ agency Innovation & Entrepreneurship

mailbox@meetinlanders.com
info@vlaio.be