

## PRESS RELEASE

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### UniCredit programme to distribute EUR 60,000 to social enterprises

- UniCredit Bank and UniCredit Foundation are organizing their social innovation programme for non-profit organizations for the third time
- This year's programme titled "Step With Us!" will distribute total funding of EUR 60,000 to social enterprises
- Under a new feature of the programme, the 10 best applicants will receive consultancy to fine-tune their business cases to successfully pitch it to a professional jury
- In addition to funding, the three winners will get professional mentoring for 12 months to reinforce their skills required for successful business
- Applications are to be submitted before 17 December 2017. For more details please visit [www.unicreditbank.hu/lepjvelunk](http://www.unicreditbank.hu/lepjvelunk)

This year's programme awaits applications from non-profit organizations wishing to reduce the economic vulnerability of disadvantaged groups through establishing and running a **social enterprise**. Social enterprises aim **to alleviate social problems reinvesting their profit** into their social purpose. The programme will reward innovative solutions helping disadvantaged communities improve their living conditions through their own efforts in a sustainable way.

The programme will have two categories enabling both **new and existing social enterprises** to participate.



The **10 best organizations will be offered a one-off consulting session to fine-tune their business case to successfully pitch it to a jury**. The professional jury will select three winners in March 2018.

Of the **EUR 60,000 funds available in total**, EUR 55,000 will be directly awarded to the best three applications while EUR 5,000 will be assigned to the project voted most successful by UniCredit Bank employees.



The winners will get complex support including cash and **customized mentoring for a period** increased to **12 months** from last year's 6 months. Mentoring enables social enterprises to **grow** efficiently leveraging their capabilities and potentials to ensure long-term social impact. Professional support will be provided by programme partner NESsT Hungary and the top managers of UniCredit Bank will also contribute to mentoring.

Maurizio Carrara, President of UniCredit Foundation, said that although critical problems can be alleviated by simple donations, disadvantaged groups also need support to get away from negative life situations. "With this programme, we want to find and reward the best solutions that not only provide financial support to disadvantaged communities but also motivate and ensure them a better future. Such sustainable business solutions are developed by social enterprises that need complex support in the early phase of their growth."

"Such enterprises combine the civil intention to help with a good business idea", said Marco Iannaccone, Deputy CEO of UniCredit Bank. "Besides providing funds, we can also help them improve their business ideas by assigning volunteer mentors to them and enabling our employees to share their business and professional skills with them."

Marianna Veres, representative of "Nem Adom Fel" (I Never Give Up) Social Cooperative, an award winner from last year, gave some specific examples of the support received by them in the mentoring process. "It was during the business training provided by NESsT that we developed our marketing strategy and the business

strategy of our hot meal kitchen. The bank's top managers also gave valuable support in finalizing our sales system and fine-tuning our management structure. Our overall approach has been much influenced by the fact that by the end of the process we as an NGO started to feel at home in the business community."

**More information:**

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**UniCredit Foundation**

UniCredit Foundation is a corporate foundation that was established in 2003 in order to contribute to the development of solidarity and philanthropy in the communities and territories, primarily where UniCredit is present (14 countries including Europe and Central Asia). Through the transfer of financial resources and the typical management skills of a company, UniCredit Foundation supports projects of significant social impact and innovation, implemented by local nonprofit organisations. [www.unicreditfoundation.org](http://www.unicreditfoundation.org)

**UniCredit Bank**

UniCredit Bank is part of UniCredit Group, a simple, successful pan-European commercial bank, with a fully plugged-in CIB, delivering a unique Western, Central and Eastern European network to its extensive client franchise of 25 million clients. UniCredit offers local expertise and international reach, supporting its clients globally and providing them with unparalleled access to leading banks in its 14 core markets as well as 18 other countries worldwide. UniCredit European banking network includes Italy, Germany, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey.

**NESsT**

NESsT addresses the critical problems of emerging market economies by supporting and developing sustainable social enterprises. Operating in Latin America and Central Europe, NESsT is the catalyst of social enterprises providing them with funding and professional advice. Since its establishment in 1997, NESsT has invested more than USD 8 million in social enterprises and developed and trained about 3,300 social enterprises in 40 countries worldwide. More information: [www.nesst.org](http://www.nesst.org)