# Can a measure that helps someone to start up an SME be considered as supporting SME?

All common output indicators refer to the situation of participants or entities before the ESF support starts. If the SME has been legally founded before the start of the support and the support is used to somehow help the business through the start-up phase then it may be counted in the indicator on “number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises”. Individuals benefitting from business counselling, mentoring, training or similar support would also be counted as participants. However, if the SME is legally founded during the support period or afterwards as a result of the support provided then it should not be counted in the output indicator and only the individuals benefitting from support would be counted as participants.

In the case of programmes designed to support the creation of SMEs, programme-specific indicators might be established. Here, a result indicator that aims to count the number of SMEs created through ESF support must be linked to a relevant output indicator based on an equivalent observation unit, for example the number of business plans treated and not the number of persons supported.

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