

## APPLICATIONS CLOSE FOR HELLENIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARD 2017

- 1250 participants in this year's award
- The judging process begins

**ATHENS, 23 February 2017** – The fifth cycle of the Hellenic Entrepreneurship Award (HEA) has closed for entries with a record number of entrepreneurs applying – almost 15% more than in 2016. This year more than 1250 budding and experienced entrepreneurs are competing for a share of the €1,250,000 in prize funding as well as mentorship and a wide range of business support services offered by the HEA and its network of supporters. Created in 2012 by the Libra Group on behalf of The Hellenic Initiative, the award programme has so far declared 14 winners and created many hundreds of jobs across Greece.

Among HEA 2017 entrants, digital, creative and information services have the strongest representation (22% of applicants), with tourism coming second (14%). There are several business sectors that gathered an unexpected number of submissions this year, such as agriculture, pharmaceuticals and special needs education. Also noteworthy for HEA 2017 is a broader regional participation with almost 35% of entries coming from Western Greece, Central Macedonia and Crete.

Commenting on this year's entries, Alexandros Nousias, Director of the Hellenic Entrepreneurship Award, stated: *"The fifth cycle of entries for the award has just closed and we look forward to in-depth analysis of these entrepreneurs and their business plans. While Greece faces economic and social challenges, there are still people who dare to chase their dreams and make a difference and we would like to thank each and every one of them. Now it is time for the panel of judges to undertake the difficult task of deciding which business plans stand the best chance of succeeding and making a contribution to the Greek economy."*

This year's competition was enhanced with an intensive educational programme by the HEA that included start-up training events throughout Greece and an interactive tutorial webinar. The aim of the programme was to encourage greater participation in the award and to support contestants during the application process. "We wanted everyone, irrespective of their business experience, to be in with a chance of winning an award and realizing their dreams," added Nousias.

Finalists of HEA 2017 will be announced in May and winners will be announced in early June 2017, during the award ceremony.

- Ends -

### **About The Hellenic Entrepreneurship Award:**

The Hellenic Entrepreneurship Award was founded in 2012 by the Libra Group on behalf of the Hellenic Initiative, to support established and budding entrepreneurs by providing funding, support services and mentorship for start-up businesses. The Libra Group has committed €10 million to the programme which will help entrepreneurs in Greece to generate economic growth in their homeland. The award partners are Piraeus Bank Group which has contributed to the training and education of participants since 2014 through its subsidiary, Excelixi Center of Sustainable Entrepreneurship and the Australian based property investment and development company, Jalouse Pty Ltd.

Amongst the winners' supporters are Antidote, Atradius, Intracom Telecom, Ioannis Vassardanis & Partners Law Firm, Lykourezos Law Offices, Microsoft, People for Business, Reed Smith, SAP Hellas, SATO, Onassis Cultural Centre, V+O and White Room.

[www.hellenicaward.com](http://www.hellenicaward.com)

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## Past HEA Winners

### 2016 Winners:

1. **Blueground** ([www.theblueground.com](http://www.theblueground.com)) – A technology-enabled chain of serviced apartments, houses and villas created by transforming existing residential properties.
2. **Bubblz** ([www.bubblz.com](http://www.bubblz.com)) – A mobile application that rewards users' social media posts and, via a web marketing platform, enables brands and vendors to promote products and services through user-generated content.
3. **Raymetrics** ([www.raymetrics.com](http://www.raymetrics.com)) – A company that aims to create a new, advanced and powerful 3D ceilometer for the aviation industry, aimed at providing additional data, essential for airports and meteorological agencies.

### 2015 Winners:

4. **Yoleni's** ([www.yolenis.com](http://www.yolenis.com)) – An online delicatessen that enables European and American customers to purchase authentic products from every corner of Greece. Soon to begin a chain of Greek gastronomy around the world.
5. **Smart Guide** – A wearable electronic mobility guide that senses nearby obstacles and obstructions for the blind and visually impaired. This innovative product will be produced in the facilities of "Lighthouse for the Blind of Greece" by employees who themselves have impaired vision.
6. **Heliix** ([www.heliixinc.com](http://www.heliixinc.com)) – A ground-breaking technology which converts thermal energy into electricity. The company's first implementation of the technology, Phaethon™, is a device that can reduce a household's annual electricity costs by up to 30%.

### 2014 Winners:

7. **Anassa Organics** ([www.anassaorganics.com](http://www.anassaorganics.com)) – A company that produces and markets premium herbal teas and infusions, addressing Greek and global markets.
8. **e-satisfaction** ([www.e-satisfaction.gr](http://www.e-satisfaction.gr)) – An independent platform that records e-shoppers' entire online shopping experience from browsing through ordering to delivery – set to become a comprehensive e-commerce rating tool.
9. **Open Circle** ([www.opencircleproject.com](http://www.opencircleproject.com)) – A web-based community/ platform, where visionary entrepreneurs present their business concepts in order to promote collaborations with prospective investors through equity crowdfunding.
10. **RTsafe** ([www.rt-safe.com](http://www.rt-safe.com)) – A medical technology company presenting a revolutionary approach to optimising the effectiveness of radiotherapy for cancer patients while minimizing the likelihood of harmful side effects.

### 2013 Winners:

11. **Stella Mare** ([www.stellamare.gr](http://www.stellamare.gr)) – A seafood processing and marketing business which is targeted at both domestic and global markets.
12. **Casa Parlante** ([www.casaparlante.gr](http://www.casaparlante.gr)) – A "Living Museum", depicting the everyday life of a noble family in a historic 19th century mansion in Corfu.

13. **Different & Different** ([www.differentanddifferent.gr](http://www.differentanddifferent.gr)) – A innovative catering company and culinary academy.
  14. **Rabt** ([www.rabt.co](http://www.rabt.co)) –A technology start-up that helps media companies to increase audience retention by automatically analysing preferences and recommending video and other content most likely to engage individual users.
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**About The Libra Group:**

The Libra Group is a privately-owned international business group that controls 30 subsidiaries active in 35 countries across six continents. It is focused on six core sectors: aviation, energy, finance and diversified, hospitality, real estate, and shipping. The group is wholly-owned by the Logothetis family.

For more information, visit the website: [www.libra.com](http://www.libra.com)

**About The Hellenic Initiative:**

Our Mission: Investing in the future of Greece through direct philanthropy and economic revitalization. We empower people to provide crisis relief, encourage entrepreneurs, and create jobs.

We are The Hellenic Initiative (THI) - a global movement of the Greek Diaspora.

Visit our website: <http://www.TheHellenicInitiative.org/>

<http://onegreece.org>

Like us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/thehellenicinitiative>

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