**1. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

* 1. These rules regulate the procedure and conditions for organising and conducting the Business-Aru grant competition (hereinafter referred to as the Competition).
	2. The main purpose of this Competition is to stimulate and support women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan.
	3. The Competition is open to both existing and start-up entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan.
	4. The best projects, based on the results of the Competition, will be nominated for the award of the Grant.
	5. The organiser of the Competition is Bank CenterCredit JSC
	6. The partners of the Competition are Mastercard and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development represented by the project ‘Women in Business Kazakhstan’.
	7. The Competition is a public event, the procedure for conducting it is regulated by the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
	8. Existing and start-up women entrepreneurs and companies where the founder is a woman (or women) are invited to participate in the Competition.
	9. Participation to the Competition is free of charge.
	10. Objectives of the Competition:
* Popularisation of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan
* Motivating women to utilise their entrepreneurial potential
* Training in business skills
* Support for the best business projects
1. **DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPETITION**
	1. The Competition for the best business project "Business-Aru" is held in partnership with Mastercard and with the support of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development within the Women in Business programme.
	2. This competition is aimed at supporting women's businesses
	3. The competition is held as part of a social project to support women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan, the winners of which will receive grants on a non-repayable basis to start or develop a business.
	4. Competition participants will be given free access to an online mini training course in three modules: ‘Finance’, “Marketing” and “Sales” for all women entrepreneurs, experts, and women who have a desire to launch their own business.
	5. After completing all modules of the training course, all additional webinars and tests after each module, it will be possible to participate in a competition for a free grant of up to 10 million tenge. To do this, it is necessary to submit to the competition a detailed business plan-description for the creation or development of your business project in the approved form.
	6. As part of the competition (optional), participants will be able to:
* gain knowledge in key areas of business such as finance, marketing and sales;
* develop a business plan for developing an existing business or launching a new one;
* submit their business plans to the competition and participate in the competition for non-repayable cash grants for the realisation of the provided business model or non-financial support for business development from the EBRD.
1. **TERMS OF PARTICIPATION**
	1. Participants of the Competition may be:
* Women – individuals, including individual entrepreneurs, who have reached the age of 18 – citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as foreign citizens and persons without citizenship who have a residence permit in the Republic of Kazakhstan and permanently reside on the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
* Legal entities - small and medium-sized enterprises, in which, at the time of submission of the application for the Competition and receipt of the grant, 100% of the founders are women.
	1. The Competition participant cannot be a person who has employment relations with the Organiser and the Competition Partners, spouse of such a person, his/her close relatives, as well as persons who are in close kinship or any property relations with such a person.
	2. Participants of the Competition may not be persons and companies that fall under the List of Unacceptable Activities, Project Types and Business Practices according to Appendix 1 to the Responsible Finance Policy of Bank CenterCredit JSC.
	3. The participants of the Competition cannot be persons and enterprises that have outstanding court debts and are in the unified register of debtors of the Ministry of Justice.
	4. Registration as a Participant in the Competition is by completing the form from the date of publication of these rules on 6 March 2025 to 23 March 2025 via the link: https://www.bcc.kz/
	5. Applications received later than the dates specified by the Organiser will not be considered.
	6. The organiser guarantees the confidentiality of the information received and the security of personal data.
	7. The Organiser has the right to exclude from participation in the Competition and/or disqualify persons who failed to complete the registration procedure or who provided false information during registration.
	8. Having filled in the form for registration as a Participant in the Competition and participating in the Competition, the Participant unconditionally accepts the rules of the Competition, as well as all rights and obligations of the Participant of the Competition provided by these Rules.
	9. Participants in the Competition agree that any of their data, including names, surnames and video images, obtained by the Organiser in connection with their participation in the Competition may be used by the Organiser for promotional and other purposes without obtaining their prior consent and without monetary payment of any kind.
	10. The Competition Participants guarantee that they have all rights to the intellectual property objects used in the course of work on the projects and for other purposes related to participation in the Competition. The Competition Participants guarantee that third parties may not have any claims against the Organiser and/or persons supported by the Competition in connection with the use of any intellectual property objects by the Competition Participants in the process of participation in the Competition. In the case of such claims, the Competition Participants guarantee to indemnify the Organiser and/or the persons supported by the Competition for damages related to such claims.
	11. The task of each Contest Participant is to develop a business plan in accordance with the criteria of these Rules.
	12. The Competition Participant shall independently provide himself/herself with technical equipment (laptop, tablet, etc.) and Internet connection.
1. **STAGES AND TERMS OF THE COMPETITION**
	1. **The first stage –** Acceptance of applications – will take place from 6 to 23 March 2025 inclusive. Also, during this period, a promotional campaign about the Competition will be conducted. During this period, the participants will be informed and registered.
	2. If the Participant has filled in the fields of the electronic application form, agreed to the terms and conditions of the Rules and received a confirmation of registration to the e-mail address specified by him/her a Participant is considered to be registered.
	3. **The second stage –** the Competition Launch – will be held on 26 March 2025 in the format of an online webinar. The webinar will include an official announcement of the Competition launch, a presentation of the Competition objectives and terms and conditions, speeches by successful women entrepreneurs sharing their experience, and a Q&A session with the Competition organiser and partners**.**
	4. **The third stage –** the Training Course – will be held from 27 March to 8 May 2025 online on the Zoom platform.
	5. The training course covers three key areas - finance, marketing and sales - and will help Participants to structure and write their business plan. After each module of the course, Participants are required to take a test. Completion of the course is a prerequisite for participation in the grant competition. The detailed programme of the training course is attached in Annex 1.
	6. **The fourth stage –** the collection of applications – is from 9 May to 22 May 2025 inclusive.
	7. During this period, the Competition Participants will develop and submit their business plans to the Competition Organisers for evaluation. During this period, group sessions on the module topics will be held to provide more specific advice and answer questions of the Participants. Business plans should be sent in electronic format to the following email address of the Competition Organiser: business\_aru@bcc.kz
	8. **The fifth stage –** evaluation of business plans – from 23 May to 1 June 2025.
	9. During this period, a Jury of representatives of the Organiser and the Competition Partners will carry out a detailed estimation of the Participants' business plans.
	10. **The sixth stage –** awarding ceremony and closing ceremony – on 7 June 2025 in offline format in Almaty.
	11. The winners of the Competition will be announced and awarded at this event.
	12. **The seventh stage -** grant allocation and implementation of business plans – is from 10 June to 31 December 2025.
	13. During this period, the winners of the Competition will implement their business plans, as well as provide reports on the use of grant funds and the progress of project implementation.
2. **CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION AND ESTIMATION OF BUSINESS PLANS**
	1. To participate in the Grant Competition the following are required:
	* Registration for the Competition;
	* Completion of all training modules (Annex 1);
	* Develop a business plan in accordance with the Competition Organiser's recommendation (Annex 2);
	* Timely submission of the business plan to the Competition.
	1. The results of the Competition are summarised by the Jury based on the evaluation of business plans.
	2. The Jury is formed by the Organiser from among the representatives of the Organiser and the Partners of the Competition.
	3. The Jury evaluates the business plan in accordance with the criteria listed in these Rules. The Jury carries out the estimation at its own discretion, and the Competition Participants do not question the decision of the Jury; moreover, the Organiser does not compensate the Competition Participants for any losses related to the non-recognition of individual Competition Participants as Winners, including those related to the non-conformity of the project with the specified criteria.
	4. The Competition Participants or any other persons may not interfere with the work of the Jury and/or request a review of the Jury's decision. The Jury's decision is final and not subject to appeal.
	5. Criteria for estimation of business plans of the Participants:

**Basic criteria: business model and financial viability**

* Clarity and credibility: Is the business plan well formulated and convincing?
* Scalability and growth potential: can the business grow sustainably and expand into new markets or customer segments?
* Revenue streams and profitability: is there a clear revenue model and does it demonstrate profitability?
* Financial sustainability: are the financial projections realistic and sustainable in the long term?

**Additional criteria: examples of added value in project evaluation**

* Creativity and uniqueness: how unique or original is the business idea or product?
* Digitalisation and technology integration: implementing digital solutions or innovative technologies.
* Environmental responsibility: minimising environmental impact, sustainable practices (e.g. waste reduction, recycling, renewable energy).
* Benefits for the community: whether the business has a positive impact on the local community, e.g. job creation, skills development for young professionals, etc.
* Social inclusiveness: whether the initiative promotes inclusiveness, e.g. empowering women, supporting vulnerable groups, rural development.
* Localisation of manufacturing: launching local manufacturing, whether the business uses local materials or resources, supporting local suppliers.
1. **PRIZE FUND**
	1. Number of grants to be allocated – 3, each of 10,000,000 (Ten million) tenge for the implementation of the proposed business plans.
	2. Three Participants of the Competition will be awarded with a grant according to the decision of the Jury.
	3. The Winner(s) of the Competition shall(will) be determined by the Jury and announced at the Winners Announcement Ceremony.
	4. Three Participants of the Competition, announced as Winners, will receive a grant in the amount of 10,000,000 (Ten million) tenge for the implementation of the proposed business plans.
	5. Additional prizes may be awarded at the discretion of the Jury in the form of access to EBRD educational or consulting programmes.
	6. In order to make the payment of grants, the Organiser requests from the Winner Participants the information necessary for the payment of the grant.
	7. Payment of the Grant shall be made by non-cash transfer of funds to the current (settlement) account of the Competition Winner.
	8. The project must be implemented within 4 months from the date of the grant agreement.
	9. Taxes on the grant shall be paid by the Winner. For this purpose, the Organiser withholds taxes from the grant in accordance with the current legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan and pays it independently to the budget of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
	10. The winners of the Competition are responsible for the targeted and timely use of the grant for the implementation of the declared business plans.
	11. The Winners of the Competition undertake the obligation to submit reports on the use of grant funds and on the progress of the project implementation.
	12. In case of improper execution of the project, misuse of grant funds and late submission of reports, the Winner undertakes to refund the grant funds in full.
2. **FINAL PROVISIONS**
	1. The Competition Programme, as well as other information about the Competition, is published on the Internet at the following address: https://www.bcc.kz/
	2. For any questions related to the Competition, the Participant may contact the Organiser by email: business\_aru@bcc.kz
	3. In case of a situation that allows for ambiguous interpretation of these Rules and/or issues that are not regulated by these Rules, the final decision is made by the Organiser in accordance with the requirements of the current legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In this case, the Organiser's decision is final and not subject to appeal.
	4. The Competition Partners and any of its affiliates are not the Organiser and are not responsible for the Organiser's compliance with the laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan and these Rules, and are not liable for any claims of the Competition Participants.
	5. By taking part in the Competition, the Participant confirms that he/she has read these Regulations and fully and unconditionally agrees with them.
	6. The results of the Competition are final and are not subject to revision.
	7. The Organiser and the Partners shall not be liable in the event of force majeure, such as natural disasters, fire, flood, military action of any nature, blockades, significant changes in legislation, and other circumstances beyond the control of the Organiser and the Partners.
	8. These Rules may be amended and/or supplemented by the Organiser during the Competition. These Rules may be amended and/or supplemented if they are approved by the Organiser and published in the same manner as specified for informing about the Rules. Such changes and additions shall come into force from the moment of publication, unless otherwise specially defined directly by the changes/additions to these Rules.