

# Strategic Ecology Support

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## What does this measure entail

This measure provides a financial incentive to companies that are going to make ecological investments in the Flemish Region. In this way, the Flemish government hopes to encourage investments in cutting-edge green technology (technology that by its unique business-specific character cannot be standardised).

The ecological investment must be “strategic”. This strategic character will be tested against the following conditions:

- The project offers a broad environmental or energy solution at company level with closed energy and material cycles and process-integrated solutions. The project is placed within a broad vision of the company regarding the environment or the sustainable use of energy in the company;
- The project strives for generic environmental or energy objectives.

N.B. The support scheme is an addition to the already existing ecology premium scheme (EP-Plus). In contrast to the ecology premium scheme, whereby a company must make a choice from technologies that are on the non-limitative technology list (LTL), the strategic ecological support satisfies specific and greater investment projects that, due to their unique business-specific character, cannot be standardised.

## Who is eligible

A company must satisfy the following conditions:

- the company realises its investments in the Flemish Region;
- the company carries out an acceptable main activity (NACE code);
- the company entered into the energy policy agreement applicable to her on the submission date of the support application ([www.benchmarking.be/en/default.asp](http://www.benchmarking.be/en/default.asp));
- the company demonstrates the stimulating effect of the ecology premium on the planned investments;

- on the submission date, the company has no debts in arrears with the National Social Security Office (‘Rijksdienst voor Sociale Zekerheid’, RSZ) and is not a party to a court case based on European or national law as part of which financial support that has been awarded is being reclaimed;
- the company must conduct a feasibility study demonstrating the technical and economic feasibility of the planned ecological investments.

## Which ecological investments are eligible

Strategic ecological investments with a minimum acceptable investment amount of € 3 million.

The Flemish Institute for Technological Research (‘Vlaams Instituut voor Technologisch Onderzoek’, VITO) will test the ecological investments based on the basic conditions of the European Environmental Framework Directive (‘Europese milieukaderregeling’) and will focus on:

- the exceeding of existing European standards (insofar as no stricter Flemish standards are applicable); For the purchase of new vehicles, only the European standards that have taken effect will be exceeded;
- the realisation of environmental objectives for which no European standards apply.

## Amount of aid

The amount of the support depends on:

- type of investment: environmental, energy-saving, renewable energy & combined heat and power;
- performance of the technology: ecological score 3 to 9/eco-class B to A;
- size of the company: small to medium sized company or large company;
- acceptable additional costs of the essential components.

| Ecoclass | Eco score | Support SME | Support LE |
|----------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| A        | 9-6       | 40%         | 30%        |
| B        | 4-3       | 30%         | 20%        |

The support for each company is limited to a maximum of € 1 million every three years.

An enterprise cannot have started the investments before the submission date of the ecology support! The date of the first invoice counts as starting date. The ecological investments must be ended within 3 years following the decision to grant an ecological grant. The termination takes place on the date of the last invoice. Enterprises thus have three years to realise their environmental investments.

## Application procedure

The application for strategic ecological support is carried out by means of the application form at [www.ecologie-premie.be](http://www.ecologie-premie.be) and must be submitted prior to the start of the investments.

The applications will be processed case by case and will be assessed in three steps, after which a proposal for granting the support will be presented to the Flemish Minister of Economy:

- Step 1: In this step the assessment committee will review the strategic character of the investment project.
- Step 2: In this step the case manager will assess whether the request is permissible and satisfies the legal conditions.
- Step 3: The VITO will assess the technical aspects of the investments:
  - the qualifying investments;
  - the additional costs;
  - the performance (ecological score/eco class).

## Payment procedure

The support will be disbursed in three parts:

- The first 30% instalment at the start of the investments and after the first invoice.
- The second 30% instalment following realisation of 60% of the investments.
- The third instalment of 40% after the realisation of the investments and after inspection.

## Contact

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