



Preparatory Action on the Single Market Programme

Call for proposals

Upskilling and reskilling the Tourism Ecosystem | Tourism Knowledge
hub and Tourism Data Space – “Skill for tourism”

(PPPA-2024-Skill-for-tourism)

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EUROPEAN INNOVATION COUNCIL AND SMEs EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EISMEA)

Innovation Ecosystems, SMP/Entrepreneurship and Consumers
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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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O. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU action grants for implementation of the preparatory action in the field of tourism.

The regulatory framework for this Action is set out in:

- Regulation 2024/2509 ([EU Financial Regulation](#)¹)
- Annual work programme and financing decision on the financing of certain **pilot projects relating to 'Horizon Europe' and the 'Single Market Programme'** and on the adoption of the Work Programme for 2024 - Commission Decision C (2024) 1936 final of 27.3.2024.

The call will be managed by the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) ('Agency').

The call covers the following preparatory action topic:

- **PPPA-2024-Skill-for-tourism - Preparatory action - Upskilling and reskilling the Tourism Ecosystem I Tourism Knowledge hub and Tourism Data Space**

Applicants may NOT submit or participate in several proposals under this call. If they submit or participate in several proposals, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicant will be asked to withdraw from the other applications (or they will all be rejected).

We invite you to read the call documentation carefully, and in particular this Call Document, the Model Grant Agreement, the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#) and the [EU Grants AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- the [Call Document](#) outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
 - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
 - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
 - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
 - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
 - award criteria (section 9)
 - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
 - how to submit an application (section 11)

¹ [Regulation \(EU, Euratom\) 2024/2509](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) (OJ L, 2024/25/09, 26.9.2024).

- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the:
 - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal (**'Portal'**)
 - recommendations for the preparation of the application
- the [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#) contains:
 - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

You are also encouraged to visit [EISMEA's Website](#).

1. Background

1.1 General policy context

'A Europe fit for the digital age'² is one of the 6 priorities of the European Commission. Building on the three pillars of the 2015 EU Digital Single Market strategy³ (better access to digital goods and services, an enabling policy and regulatory environment, and maximising the growth potential of the digital economy), **the EU's digital strategy aims to make this transformation work for people and businesses**, while helping to achieve its target of a climate-neutral Europe by 2050.

In 2021, the European Commission presented a vision for Europe's digital transformation by 2030⁴, to build 'Europe's Digital Decade'. The Digital Compass⁵ evolves around four areas of actions, setting out targets to monitor progress: skilling and upskilling; secure and sustainable digital infrastructures; the digital transformation of businesses; and the digitalisation of public services.

The Transition Pathway for Tourism⁶, published by the European Commission in February 2022, sits precisely in broad policy framework, focusing on the need and opportunities to further digitise the tourism ecosystem, as well as on concrete actions to advance by 2030. It does so in full respect of the sustainable priorities set out by the Green Deal⁷ regulatory body, with sustainability as the twin transition to digitalisation.

Transition pathways were introduced in 2021 with the update of the EU Industrial Strategy⁸, which identified 14 sectors key to EU economy, and, over the course of 2021, supported tourism as the priority ecosystem for which to prepare a transition roadmap, following the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The latest Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA)⁹ data indicate that the EU tourism ecosystem suffered significantly from the pandemic, even losing EUR 500 million of gross value added daily in 2020 when compared to 2019¹⁰. The sector is recovering. Eurostat data shows that the nights spent at EU tourist accommodation reached a

² [A Europe fit for the digital age - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

³ [Digital single market for Europe - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁴ [Europe's digital decade: 2030 targets | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁵ [Europe's digital decade: 2030 targets | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁶ [Transition pathway for tourism published today - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁷ [The European Green Deal - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁸ [European industrial strategy - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁹ [Tourism Satellite Accounts in Europe – 2023 edition - Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹⁰ [Tourism: €572 billion gross value added in the EU - Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](#)

record of 1.2 billion nights in the first half of 2023, exceeding 2019 values¹¹. Nights by domestic guests exceeded the pre-pandemic level while the figure for foreign guests was down 2% from 2019 levels.

However, the recovery remains fragile, as tourism in Member States is suffering from **the effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, inflation and extreme weather**.

The Transition Pathway for Tourism outlines a number of objectives and of actions for all stakeholders – EU institutions, national, regional and local government, private sector, and destinations – to steer the ecosystem towards more sustainability, more pervasive and effective digitalisation, and towards improved resilience.

The Transition Pathway for Tourism identifies 27 areas of action to implement and monitor by 2030. This call for proposals aims at supporting the following topics as detailed in the Transition Pathway document:

- **Topic 5: Collaborative governance of tourism destinations**
- **Topic 9: Data-driven tourism services**
- **Topic 15: R&I for digital tools and services in tourism**
- **Topic 16: Support for digitalisation of tourism SMEs and destinations**
- **Topic 19: Awareness raising on skills needs for twin transition in tourism**
- **Topic 22: Pact for skills in tourism**

All digital developments benefit from access to, generation and management of data, for all stakeholders in the ecosystem – local authorities, regional and central governments, destination managers, businesses (mostly micro and SMEs), academia and visitors.

Competitiveness and sustainability of destinations and their stakeholders can be supported by data from different sources: surveys (e.g. to businesses, visitors, residents), automatic measurements (e.g. air quality), business transactions (e.g. reservations, selling of entry tickets), descriptive data (e.g. service characteristics) customer reviews (e.g. online reviews), behavioural data (e.g. location data, social media posts). Such data can be analysed real-time or with processing delays and can be structured or unstructured. Different types of data can provide a wealth of information regarding a variety of aspects: traveller intentions, actions, sentiments, for example. They can help provide better matching services for target groups or manage them at destination level.

Tourism data management depends on issues related to data generation, access, use, re-use, and exchange. The Data Governance Act¹² aims to create EU-wide interoperable data spaces in strategic sectors, overcoming legal and technical barriers to data sharing. It ensures secure handling of both personal and non-personal data, including sensitive business information, while providing high-quality industrial data to private and public players, minimizing environmental impact. In this context, the European Commission set up a Data Spaces Support Centre (DSSC)¹³, with the role to implement the EU common data spaces, focusing on the coordination of the deployment of sectorial data spaces. In 2023, two Coordination and Support Actions under the Digital Europe Programme developed a *Blueprint and Roadmap for*

¹¹ [Tourism statistics - nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments - Statistics Explained \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&code=sdg_8_8_1&plugin=1)

¹² [Regulation - 2022/868 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/868/oj)

¹³ [Data Spaces Support Centre \(dssc.eu\)](https://dssc.eu)

*deploying the European tourism data space*¹⁴, building, among other references, on the Code of Conduct on Data Sharing in the tourism sector¹⁵is prepared by stakeholders at EU level in 2022.

Importantly, in July 2023 the European Commission published a Communication *Towards a Common European Tourism Data Space: boosting data sharing and innovation across the tourism ecosystem*¹⁶, in which the vision and building blocks of the common European data space are laid out. This Communication also highlighted the need to set up a knowledge hub to support destinations in developing and implementing data-driven management as well as data-sharing competences and strategies.

1.2 Specific policy context

As such, in 2023 the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency published the PPPA-2022-TOTOLAB call for proposals for an EU Competence Centre to support data management in tourism destinations¹⁷. One co-funded project kicked-off in December 2023 under the name D3Hub¹⁸.

The specific tasks of the D3Hub project are:

1. To provide destinations with guidance and information related to data management, as well as business intelligence on how to source and use data and apply data-intensive information to address policy actions and strategies.
2. To support destinations in developing and implementing data-driven management as well as data-sharing competences and strategies with a long-term perspective, in line with the policy priorities at EU level and the work carried out by regional and national statistical offices, also in cooperation with Eurostat.
3. To establish cross-border/transnational cooperation between relevant organisations and actors in the destination ecosystem to support the creation and transfer of knowledge and best practice in data management and sharing.

In parallel, in 2023 the European Health and Digital Executive Agency published the DIGITAL-2023-CLOUD-DATA-AI-05 call for proposals Cloud, Data and Artificial Intelligence¹⁹. One co-funded project, [Deploytour](#)²⁰, kicked off on October 1, 2024 with the duration on 36 months, with the objective to develop and deploy the data space and its infrastructure based on two preparatory actions²¹ for the data space for tourism following the blueprint and roadmap published in autumn 2023 and to make use of the solutions identified by this action.

Furthermore, the European Commission is working on supporting the upskilling of the tourism workforce to create the conditions for the above-mentioned initiatives for data management and data sharing to be picked up and used more easily and profitably.

¹⁴ [DRAFT-BLUEPRINT-Tourism-Data-Space-v3.3_final.pdf \(tourismdataspace-csa.eu\)](#)

¹⁵ [Code of Conduct on Data Sharing in Tourism - ETC Corporate - ETC Corporate \(etc-corporate.org\)](#)

¹⁶ [Communication from the Commission -Towards a Common European Tourism Data Space - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹⁷ [EU Funding & Tenders Portal \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹⁸ [D3HUB Competence Centre \(d3hub-competencecentre.eu\)](#)

¹⁹ [call-fiche_digital-2023-cloud-data-ai-05_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

²⁰ [EU Funding & Tenders Portal | EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#)

²¹ [DATES project](#) (European Data Space for Tourism) and [DSFT project](#) (Data Space for Tourism)

Therefore, this call for proposals is also in line with the 2021 European Skills Agenda²², **the EU's high-level plan** that aims to equip individuals and businesses with the digital skills needed for life and work. The European Skills Agenda put forward 12 new actions, aiming to mobilise stakeholders and bridge the digital skills gap for citizens and companies. The first flagship initiative under the Skills Agenda is the EU Pact for Skills²³, which supports skills development for individuals and organisations, upskilling, reskilling, and lifelong learning for all.

To date, 20 large-scale skills partnerships (LSPs) have been established at EU level, in all industrial ecosystems. The large-scale partnership for tourism was launched in January 2022 and now comprises over 80 members representing industry, trade unions, VET providers and regional authorities. The LSP for tourism²⁴ is supported by four Erasmus+-funded projects, which collaborate to identify skills gaps and needs, refine skills intelligence, and set up and support national skills partnerships on the ground. These local partnerships contribute directly to training efforts towards achieving the objective of upskilling at least 10% of the tourism workforce each year.

Overall, a great number of initiatives are ongoing at EU level in support of the digitalization of the tourism ecosystem. To ensure that information is promptly available, and synergies can be established, the European Commission set up a Stakeholders Support Platform, **to streamline information and stakeholders' engagement**²⁵.

This T4T Stakeholders Support Platform²⁶ is a new way to access resources which are relevant for the user, considering the characteristics of each user and facilitating easy access to most relevant knowledge, resources, activities and contacts with other actors. The ultimate objective of this EU-level collaboration platform, with the first **concept implementation on the tourism ecosystem ("Together for EU Tourism" community)**, is to provide industrial ecosystem stakeholders (across the EU and for different types of public and private stakeholders) with easy access to the knowledge, resources and connections that support them in their transition to make their services and operations more green, digital and resilient.

The platform provides an integrated access point to information published by different actors based on their relevance for specific topics of transition pathway actions, including open funding opportunities on different levels (EU, national, regional), learning opportunities and resources, project results and relevant policy developments. The service contract following the open Call for tenders procedure EISMEA/2022/OP/0018²⁷ GRO-SME-22-13034 – European portal to support tourism SMEs – European Tourism Portal, was signed on 20 June 2023.

2. Objectives – Themes and priorities – Activities that can be funded – Expected impact

2.1. Objectives

This call for proposals aims at supporting the current policy work on data management and data sharing by developing guidelines on how to participate and use the D3Hub and the future common European tourism data space for destinations and SMEs in the tourism sector. The selected proposal must join the Pact for Skills and

²² [European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience \(europa.eu\)](#)

²³ [Tourism](#)

²⁴ [Tourism \(europa.eu\)](#)

²⁵ [EU Transition Pathways Platform](#)

²⁶ [EU Transition Pathways | EU Transition Pathways \(europa.eu\)](#)

²⁷ Call for tender [576824-2022 - Competition - TED \(europa.eu\)](#)

participate in the LSP²⁸ for tourism, in particular as regards the support for digital skills.

The support must take the form of clear and friendly guidelines for the use of destination management organizations (DMOs²⁹) and of SMEs and micro-enterprises, disseminated strategically over the target countries in order to maximise outreach. The guidelines must be published and be broadly disseminated, and accompanied by training opportunities.

2.2. Themes and priorities (scope)

The actions resulting from this call for proposals shall promote the following themes (the list is not exhaustive):

- To promote data-driven solutions in tourism by:
 - Supporting upskilling and training for DMOs and SMEs;
 - Ensuring synergies with existing measures (policy initiatives, tools and actions) at EU level;
- To encourage a better understanding and uptake of EU initiatives in place in the field of tourism digitalisation

To meet the objectives of this call, the proposal has to address the following priorities:

- To provide clear guidance on how to access resources for managing and sharing of data.
- To increase the use and adoption of digital tools, platforms and smart technologies by transferring knowledge to DMOs and SME on how to better use and take advantage of the digital tools available.
- To increase reliance on data: its generation, collection, use and re-use.
- To advise DMOs and tourism SMEs, in their transition towards more digital and sustainable activities.
- To improve access to training, upskilling and reskilling opportunities for DMOs and tourism SMEs.
- To promote the innovation and resilience of the tourism sector.

2.3. Activities that can be funded (scope)

The applicant consortia must carry out the following mandatory activities:

- a) Coordinate with existing measures. Applicants must set up a coordination mechanism to liaise with similar EU initiatives including the D3Hub and with the consortium winner of the DIGITAL-2023-CLOUD-DATA-AI-05³⁰ call for proposals Cloud, Data and Artificial Intelligence. The consortium is invited to include also

²⁸ Large scale partnership

²⁹ Within the scope of this call for proposals, a DMO is defined as a public or private stakeholder, an authority that manages a local, regional, or national tourism strategy in one of the countries forming part of the consortium. DMO responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, taking responsibility for the local tourism offer, sustainable tourism planning/development, and the impact tourism has on the territory.

³⁰ [call-fiche_digital-2023-cloud-data-ai-05_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

other relevant initiatives, both at EU and national level. If necessary, EISMEA and DG GROW will facilitate initial contacts with EU funded initiatives.

In their proposal, applicants shall clarify their coordination strategy with the above-mentioned initiatives. The strategy needs to ensure a systematic flow of information, which shall be maintained systematically and transparently.

The coordination mechanism shall be flexible in order to be adapted/modified in case of need during the implementation of the project. Changes must be agreed with and approved by EISMEA, the contracting authority (in consultation with DG GROW).

- b) Develop and publish the guidelines for the use of destination management organizations (DMOs) and of SMEs and micro-enterprises, to support them in understanding and accessing the knowledge hub D3Hub, and, as it develops over time, the common European data space for tourism.

The selected consortium needs to prepare a set of online guidelines for the use of destination management organizations (DMOs) and of SMEs and micro-enterprises, to support them in understanding and accessing the knowledge hub D3Hub, and, as it develops over time, the common European data space for tourism.

Based on *activity (a)*, applicants need to explain how they plan to keep the guidelines updated and accessible. The guidelines must be user-friendly, pragmatic, and formulated in such a way as to make it possible to update information swiftly and easily. They must only include official information as shared by the Contracting Authority, the D3Hub, the tourism LPS, and the Deploytour project.³¹

The Guidelines shall be drafted in high-quality English.

The Guidelines shall be published on the T4T Stakeholders Support Platform³².

Before publishing, the guidelines shall be agreed with and approved by the contracting authority (in consultation with DG GROW). If necessary, they shall be modified during the implementation of the project.

- c) Propose and set up a communication and dissemination strategy, which takes into account the initiatives already ongoing at European level as regards data management and data sharing in tourism, as well as the upcoming T4T Stakeholders Support Platform, and which aims at reaching DMOs and SMEs in the tourism sector, and sectors adjacent, across the EU.

(i) Development of the communication strategy

In their proposal, applicants must detail a comprehensive communication strategy covering the publication of the guidelines. Specifically, they must explain:

1. How the guidelines will be made accessible to the largest possible number of DMOs and tourism SMEs across the EU, also taking into account existing instruments at EU level, in particular the T4T Stakeholders Support Platform;
2. How the guidelines shall be made known and understood by largest possible number of DMOs and tourism SMEs across the EU. This must include a strategy to engage with stakeholders so as to address queries (such as requests for clarification and comments) in a timely and user-friendly manner. An analysis of the queries, aimed at understanding the main difficulties and challenges

³¹ [DEPLOYTOUR project: Driving digital transformation in European tourism | EU Tourism Platform](#)

³² <https://transition-pathways.europa.eu>

presented by SMEs and DMOs, must be prepared as part of the final report detailing the implementation and impact of the deliverables.

3. How the strategy will ensure a continuous and sustainable dissemination of the guidelines during the life of the project and afterwards.

The communication and dissemination strategy shall be agreed with and approved by the contracting authority (in consultation with DG GROW) and, if necessary, adapted during the implementation of the project.

(ii) Implementation of the communication strategy (dissemination)

The selected consortium shall raise awareness of the guidelines at national, regional and local level within Member States, reaching out to both the public and the private sector, with the goal of informing DMOs as well as SMEs in the tourism ecosystem, taking into consideration the barriers that SMEs face to access and understand the available information. Dissemination may include the organisation of (the list is indicative and not exhaustive):

- marketing or a dedicated communication campaigns;
- dissemination/networking events;
- publishing user-friendly material.

A report of the dissemination shall be submitted one month before the end of the project.

- d) Envisage capacity building measures aimed at DMOs and SMEs in the tourism sector across the EU. These include online and offline trainings, workshops, study visits, awareness raising activities; production of training and educational materials; webinars.

(i) Development of the capacity building strategy

In their proposal, applicants need to detail a comprehensive capacity building strategy on how they intend to provide expertise, training and capacity-building activities to ensure that guidelines are picked up and understood by stakeholders. The target audience of these activities must be DMOs, public sector bodies tasked with tourism management, such as regional and local administrations, other relevant collaborating stakeholders in destinations and tourism SMEs. This may be done in particular through the organisation of (the list is indicative and not exhaustive):

- Collaborative workshops, webinars, study visits, in-presence and online training courses;
- Tailored coaching for DMOs **based on destinations' needs**;
- Peer-to-peer learning by matching needs and solutions;
- Boot camps and hackathons;
- Production of training and educational material;
- Awareness raising activities.

(ii) Implementation of the capacity building

Applicant consortia must organise minimum 15 capacity building opportunities which must represent a balanced distribution of tourism SMEs and DMOs per eligible country. To ensure this, they must represent as a minimum:

- all different geographical areas,
- at least three training opportunities in each geographical area,
- at least twenty different EU member states

The geographical areas are defined as follows:

- Area 1: Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain;
- Area 2: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Ireland;
- Area 3: Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, Romania;
- Area 4: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden;

Applicants should strive to reach different levels of governance (national, regional, local) as well as a variety of tourism destinations (urban, maritime, mountainous, etc).

Each capacity building activity must be accompanied by a monitoring and reporting mechanism to assess the satisfaction of users and the understanding of the guidelines presented.

Applicants must demonstrate links of capacity building activities with, local, regional and/or national tourism strategies, as well as the 27 key topics identified by the Transition Pathway for Tourism. In particular, the proposal must demonstrate its relevance to the establishment of a future EU data space in the tourism sector and advancing public-private cooperation to support expanding official statistics on the impacts of tourism. Proposals without plans to develop transnational and cross-sectoral support schemes are not eligible.

All activities must be implemented in compliance with the relevant legal requirements to protect personal data under the GDPR³³ and applicable national legislation.

The ownership of the guidelines for the use of DMOs and of SMEs and micro-enterprises (mandatory deliverable 2, mentioned under par. 2.6 Description of the mandatory deliverables) developed by the selected consortium will be acquired/transferred to EISMEA as granting authority and to the Commission as of their finalisation and approval.

The ownership of all other results will remain with the beneficiaries.

³³ [Regulation - 2016/679 - EN - GDPR - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

2.4. Activities that cannot be funded

Development or improvement of physical infrastructures cannot be funded under this call for proposals.

2.5. Expected impacts

- Enhanced reliance on high-quality data: its generation, collection, use and re-use.
- Increased capacity of DMOs and tourism SMEs to successfully integrate and implement integrated data-driven solutions in their offer and strategy.
- Setting the ground for the development of new business models in tourism building on digitalisation, data and new technologies.
- Improved DMOs and tourism **SMEs' usage of** available tools and management strategies to increase their competitiveness and promote growth.
- Boosted quality and efficiency along the tourism value chain.
- Increased awareness by DMOs and tourism SMEs about existing EU programmes on digitalisation.
- Enhanced cooperation among existing measures at EU level as regards digitalisation of tourism.

2.6 Description of the mandatory deliverables

The proposal must include an outline of the following deliverables and how the deliverables will be achieved during the implementation of the project by the indicative due date:

1. A coordination strategy to ensure synergies with similar EU initiatives including the D3Hub and with the Deploytour project – due in Month 3.
2. A set of guidelines for the use of DMOs and of SMEs and micro-enterprises, to support them in understanding and accessing the knowledge hub D3Hub, and, as it develops over time, the common European data space for tourism, to be published online and be kept updated throughout the duration of the project, as needed (see activity (b) under 2.3. Activities that can be funded) – due in Month 6.
3. A technical progress report (not linked to a payment)– due in Month 12, with a summary of the activities undertaken until month 12, including, a capacity building strategy (see activity (d) under 2.3. Activities that can be funded) - due in Month 12.
4. A communication and dissemination strategy (see activity (c) under 2.3. Activities that can be funded) – due in Month 12.
5. At least 15 training opportunities which must represent a balanced distribution of tourism SMEs and DMOs (see activity (d) under 2.3. Activities that can be funded) - due by Month 22.
6. An impact report (not linked to a payment) by month 22 detailing the implementation and impact of all deliverables on the tourism ecosystem in general, and on the users and participants to the activities in particular, which will include:

- a. an analysis of the Q&A generated as a result of the publication of the Guidelines and outreach activities to users;
- b. an impact report of the capacity building initiatives, accompanied by the collected feedback by participants and the material prepared and used for capacity building, or a link to it if published online;
- c. an analysis of the challenges encountered by DMOs and SMEs in accessing the above-mentioned tools, and recommendations on how to address them.

3. Available budget

The available call budget is EUR 1 000 000.

We expect to fund one project.

We reserve the right not to award all available funds, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	28 November 2024
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>13 February 2025 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	February/March 2025
Information on evaluation results:	March-April 2025
GA signature:	May – June 2025

5. Admissibility and documents

Proposals must be submitted before the call deadline (*see timetable section 4*).

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [calls for proposals](#) section). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠️ NOT the documents available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

Proposals must be complete and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*)

- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)
- mandatory annexes and supporting documents (*templates available to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table/calculator
 - list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) (*template available in Part B*)
 - CVs (short outlines) of the core project team listed in section 2.3 of the Part B of the technical proposal. Please note that the detailed CVs must be uploaded in the Portal Submission System in the section dedicated to additional documents as a pdf file using the same format for each CV.
 - activity reports of last year: not applicable.

Please note that the amounts entered into the summarised budget table (filled in directly online) must correspond to the amounts calculated in the detailed budget table. In case of discrepancies, the amounts in the online summarised budget table will prevail.

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the mandate to act for all applicants. Moreover, you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that the participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Your application must be readable, accessible and printable.

Proposals are limited to maximum 50 pages (Part B only). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, financial capacity check, bank account validation, etc.*).



For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

6. Eligibility

Applications will only be considered eligible if their content corresponds wholly (or at least in part) to the topic description for which they are submitted.

6.1 Eligible participants (eligible countries)

In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must:

- be legal entities (public or private bodies).
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:

- EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc. (*see section 13*).

6.2 Specific cases and definitions


Exceptional funding — Entities from other countries (not listed above) are exceptionally eligible if the granting authority considers their participation essential for the implementation of the action.

Natural persons — Natural persons are NOT eligible (with the exception of self-employed persons, i.e. sole traders, where the company does not have legal personality separate from that of the natural person).

International organisations — International organisations are eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons³⁴.

EU bodies — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as **'sole beneficiaries'** or **'beneficiaries without legal personality'**³⁵.  Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (*e.g. entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)*³⁶ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)³⁷). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

EU conditionality measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to measures adopted on the basis of EU Regulation 2020/2092³⁸. Such entities are not eligible to

³⁴ See Article 200 (2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

³⁵ For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

³⁶ Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

³⁷ Commission guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

³⁸ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget (OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 94).

participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties, etc). Currently such measures are in place for Hungarian public interest trusts established under the [Hungarian Act IX of 2021](#) or any entity they maintain (see [Council Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2022/2506](#), as of 16 December 2022).



For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

6.3 Consortium composition

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium, which complies with all of the following conditions:

- minimum three (3) and maximum seven (7) applicants (beneficiaries, not affiliated entities);
- from minimum three (3) and maximum five (5) different EU Member States;
- minimum one (1) research, tertiary education institution, or training institution specialising in the tourism sector – to be clearly indicated in the proposal;
- minimum one (1) destination management organisation (DMO) – to be clearly indicated in the proposal;
- minimum one (1) public relations (PR) agency with expertise in EU-wide campaigns – to be clearly indicated in the proposal.

Applicants may NOT submit or participate in more than one proposal under this call for proposals. Multiple proposals will be rejected.

If an applicant is found to be involved in more than one proposal, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicant will be asked to withdraw from the other applications (or they will all be rejected)

6.4 Eligible activities

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above.

Projects should take into account the results of past and current projects supported by other EU funding programmes. The complementarities must be described in the project proposals (Part B of the Application Form).

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc.*). Projects must also respect EU values and European Commission policy regarding reputational matters (*e.g. activities involving capacity building, policy support, awareness raising, communication, dissemination, etc.*).

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

6.5 Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to activities taking place in the eligible countries (*see above*).

6.6 Duration

Project shall have a duration of 24 months.

Extensions are possible, only if duly justified and through an amendment.

6.7 Project budget

Project budget (requested grant amount) is expected be around EUR 1 000 000 per project.

This does however not preclude the submission/selection of proposals requesting other amounts. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

7.1 Financial capacity

Applicants must have stable and sufficient resources to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all these projects.

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the [Participant Register](#) during grant preparation (*e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc*). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

The check will normally be done for all beneficiaries, except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations
- if the individual requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

If we consider that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, we may require:

- further information
 - an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)
 - pre-financing paid in instalments
 - (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*);
- or
- propose no prefinancing
 - request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.



For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

7.2 Operational capacity

Applicants must have the know-how, qualifications and resources to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

This capacity will be assessed together with **the 'Quality' award criterion**, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following information:

Profiles of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project (qualification and experience):

- a) a project manager/coordinator with at least five (5) years of experience in transnational project management (CV);
- b) a deputy project manager/coordinator with at least three (3) years of experience in transnational project management (CV);
- c) a data expert with at least three (3) years of experience in data analytics and data management in a tourism-related field (CV);
- d) two experts with at least three (3) years of experience in communication and PR (CV);
- e) two experts with at least three (3) years of experience in capacity building activities;
- f) an expert with at least three (3) years of experience in tourism management at destination level and cooperation with SMEs.

The applicants have to clearly indicate in the CV of the project team and in the application form Part B (where appropriate) that operational capacity requirements are appropriately met.

Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity of any applicant.

7.3 Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an EU exclusion decision or in one of the following exclusion situations that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate³⁹:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for **the applicant's** debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with **unlimited liability for the applicant's** debts)

³⁹ See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

- guilty of grave professional misconduct⁴⁰ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- intentionally and without proper justification resisted⁴¹ an investigation, check or audit carried out by an EU authorising officer (or their representative or auditor), OLAF, the EPPO, or the European Court of Auditors.

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that⁴²:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

8. Evaluation and award procedure

The proposals will have to follow the standard submission and evaluation procedure (one-stage submission + one-step evaluation).

⁴⁰ Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

⁴¹ **'Resisting an investigation, check or audit'** means carrying out actions with the goal or effect of preventing, hindering or delaying the conduct of any of the activities needed to perform the investigation, check or audit, such as refusing to grant the necessary access to its premises or any other areas used for business purposes, concealing or refusing to disclose information or providing false information.

⁴² See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).


An evaluation committee (assisted by independent outside experts) will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

For proposals with the same score (within a topic or budget envelope) a priority order will be determined according to the following approach:

Successively for every group of *ex aequo* proposals, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order:

- 1) The *ex aequo* proposals will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Relevance'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Impact'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Quality'.
- 2) If this does not allow to determine the priority, a further prioritisation can be done by considering the overall project portfolio and the creation of positive synergies between projects, or other factors related to the objectives of the call. These factors will be documented in the panel report.

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (evaluation result letter). Successful proposals will be invited for grant preparation; the other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected.

 No commitment for funding — Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding. We will still need to make various legal checks before grant award: *legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc.*

Grant preparation will involve a dialogue in order to fine-tune technical or financial aspects of the project and may require extra information from your side. It may also include adjustments to the proposal to address recommendations of the evaluation committee or other concerns. Compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a complaint (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending are considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access (*see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)*). Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

9. Award criteria

The award criteria for this call are as follows:

- 1. Relevance:** clarity and consistency of project, objectives and planning; extent to which they match the themes and priorities and objectives of the call; contribution to the EU strategic and legislative context; European/trans-national dimension; impact/interest for a number of eligible countries ; possibility to use the results in other countries; potential to develop mutual trust/cross-border cooperation; (30 points)

2. Quality:

- **Project design and implementation:** technical quality; logical links between the identified problems, needs and solutions proposed (logical frame concept); methodology for implementing the project (concept and methodology, management, procedures, timetable, risks and risk management, monitoring and evaluation); feasibility of the project within the proposed time frame; cost effectiveness (sufficient/appropriate budget for proper implementation; best value for money) (30 points)
- **Project team and cooperation arrangements:** quality of the consortium and project teams; appropriate procedures and problem-solving mechanisms for cooperating within the project teams and consortium (30 points)

3. Impact: ambition and expected long-term impact of results on SMEs, in particular on their business management processes and practices; appropriate dissemination strategy for ensuring sustainability and long-term impact; sustainability of results after EU funding ends. Ambitious communication strategies will be assessed under this criterion. (10 points).

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	16	30
Quality – Project design and implementation	16	30
Quality – Project team and cooperation arrangements	16	30
Impact	6	10
Overall (pass) scores	70	100

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 16/30, 16/30, 16/30 and 6/10 points.

Overall threshold: 70 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding – within the limits of the available call budget (i.e. up to the budget ceiling). Other proposals will be rejected.

10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements

If you pass evaluation, your project will be invited for grant preparation, where you will be asked to prepare the Grant Agreement together with the EU Project Officer.

This Grant Agreement will set the framework for your grant and its terms and conditions, in particular concerning deliverables, reporting and payments.

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) can be found on [Portal Reference Documents](#).

10.1 Starting date and project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. A retroactive starting date can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: *see section 6 above*.

10.2 Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

A list of mandatory deliverables is provided in Section 2.6- '**Deliverables**'.

10.3 Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

The grant parameters (*maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc.*) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 5*).

Project budget (requested grant amount): *see section 6 above*.

The grant will be a budget-based mixed actual cost grant (actual costs, with unit cost and flat-rate elements). This means that it will reimburse ONLY certain types of costs (eligible costs) and costs that were *actually* incurred for your project (NOT the *budgeted* costs). For unit costs and flat-rates, you can charge the amounts calculated as explained in the Grant Agreement (*see art 6 and Annex 2 and 2a*).

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rates fixed in the Grant Agreement (90%).

Grants may NOT produce a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). For-profit organisations must declare their revenues and, if there is a profit, we will deduct it from the final grant amount (*see art 22.3*).

Moreover, please be aware that the final grant amount may be reduced in case of non-compliance with the Grant Agreement (*e.g. improper implementation, breach of obligations, etc.*).

10.4 Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

The budget categories and cost eligibility rules are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3, art 6 and Annex 2*).

Budget categories for this call:

- A. Personnel costs
 - A.1 Employees, A.2 Natural persons under direct contract, A.3 Seconded persons
 - A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence
 - C.2 Equipment

- C.3 Other goods, works and services
- D. Other cost categories: not applicable
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost⁴³: Yes
 - travel and subsistence unit cost⁴⁴: Yes⁴⁵
- equipment costs: depreciation
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
- indirect cost flat-rate: 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except exempted specific cost categories, if any)
- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost;
 - kick off meeting: costs for kick-off meeting organised by the granting authority are eligible (travel costs for maximum 2 persons, return ticket to Brussels and accommodation for one night) only if the meeting takes place after the project starting date set out in the Grant Agreement; the starting date can be changed through an amendment, if needed;
 - project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' **websites or social media accounts** are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible;
 - other ineligible costs: No.

⁴³ Commission [Decision](#) of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7715) as amended by Commission Decision C(2024)5328 of 30 July 2024.

⁴⁴ Commission [Decision](#) of 12 January 2021 authorising the use of unit costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs under an action or work programme under the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (C(2021)35) as last amended by Commission Decision C(2024) 5405 of 31 July 2024.

⁴⁵ See [EU Grants AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#), art 6 on eligible costs: travel and subsistence costs must be declared using the unit cost according to Annex 2a of the grant agreement. If a particular instance of travel, accommodation or subsistence in the action is not covered by one of the unit costs mentioned in Decision C(2021)35 the actual costs may be used.

10.5 Reporting and payment arrangements


The reporting and payment arrangements are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 21 and 22*).

After grant signature, you will normally receive a prefinancing to start working on the project (float of normally 50% of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force / 10 days before starting date / financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.

There will be no interim payments.

Payment of the balance: At the end of the project, we will calculate your final grant amount, following approval of the final report. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, we will ask you (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

 Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if one of your consortium members has outstanding debts towards the EU (granting authority or other EU bodies). Such debts will be offset by us — in line with the conditions set out in the Grant Agreement (*see art 22*).

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done and the costs declared.

10.6 Prefinancing guarantees

If a prefinancing guarantee is required, it will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4*). The amount will be set during grant preparation and it will normally be equal or lower than the prefinancing for your grant.

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

Amounts blocked in bank accounts will NOT be accepted as financial guarantees.

Prefinancing guarantees are normally requested from the coordinator, for the consortium. They must be provided during grant preparation, in time to make the prefinancing (scanned electronic copy by email/via Portal - if the grant is managed via the corporate IT tools - AND original by post).

If agreed with us, the bank guarantee may be replaced by a guarantee from a third party.

The guarantee will be released at the end of the grant, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Grant Agreement.

10.7 Certificates

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates. The types, schedules and thresholds for each certificate are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 24*).

10.8 Liability regime for recoveries

The liability regime for recoveries will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet point 4.4 and art 22*).

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
- unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*

or

- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts.*

In addition, the granting authority may require joint and several liability of affiliated entities (with their beneficiary).

10.9 Provisions concerning the project implementation

IPR rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 16 and Annex 5)*:

- list of background: No
- rights of use on results: Yes
- access rights to ensure continuity and interoperability obligations: Yes

Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 17 and Annex 5)*:

- communication and dissemination plan: Yes
- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes

Specific rules for carrying out the action: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 18 and Annex 5)*:

- specific rules for PPI Grants for Procurement: No
- specific rules for blending operations: No.

10.10 Other specificities

Not applicable

10.11 Non-compliance and breach of contract

The Grant Agreement (chapter 5) provides for the measures we may take in case of breach of contract (and other non-compliance issues).

 For more information, see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

11. How to submit an application

All proposals must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

Submission is a 2-step process:

a) create a user account and register your organisation

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to [create an EU Login user account](#).

Once you have an EULogin account, you can [register your organisation](#) in the Participant Register. When your registration is finalised, you will receive a 9-digit participant identification code (PIC).

b) submit the proposal

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section (or, for calls sent by invitation to submit a proposal, through the link provided in the invitation letter).

Submit your proposal in 3 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners) and the summarised budget for the proposal. Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file
- Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF file (single or multiple depending on the slots). Excel upload is sometimes possible, depending on the file type.

The proposal must keep to the page limits (*see section 5*); excess pages will be disregarded.

Documents must be uploaded to the right category in the Submission System otherwise the proposal might be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The proposal must be submitted before the call deadline (*see section 4*). After this deadline, the system is closed and proposals can no longer be submitted.

Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a confirmation e-mail (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the [IT Helpdesk webform](#), explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the [Online Manual](#). The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

12. Help

As far as possible, *please try to find the answers you need yourself*, in this and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):

- [Online Manual](#)
- FAQs on the Topic page (for call-specific questions in open calls; not applicable for actions by invitation)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates. (For invitations, we will contact you directly in case of a call update).

Contact

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions should be sent 5 working days before the call submission deadline to the following email address: EISMEA-SMP-COSME-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu.

Please indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (*see cover page*).

13. Important



IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait** until the end — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute technical problems. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- Consult the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System — By submitting the application, all participants accept to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- Registration — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- Consortium roles — When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as beneficiaries or affiliated entities; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. Associated partners and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). Subcontracting should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application.

- Coordinator — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- Affiliated entities — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any). If affiliated entities participate in your project, please do not forget to provide documents demonstrating their affiliation link to your organisation as part of your application.
- Associated partners — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- Consortium agreement — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc.*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No cumulation of funding/no double funding** — It is strictly prohibited to cumulate **funding from the EU budget (except under 'EU Synergies actions')**. Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances be declared under two EU grants. If you would like to nonetheless benefit from different EU funding opportunities, projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants cannot submit or participate in more than one proposal under this call for proposals. Multiple proposals will be rejected.

If an applicant is found to be involved in more than one proposal, **only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw from the other applications (or they will all be rejected)**.
- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this Call Document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be rejected. This applies also to **applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected**.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, see *section 12*).

- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

This includes:

- beneficiary names
- beneficiary addresses
- the purpose for which the grant was awarded
- the maximum amount awarded.

The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data protection** — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with the applicable legal framework. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication. Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).