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ANNEX 1

ANNEX

to the

Commission Implementing Decision

**on the adoption of the work programme for 2018 and on the financing of the Programme
for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises**

ANNEX

Work Programme for the implementation of the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME)

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INTRODUCTION

The Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) - COSME - is the Union's programme to strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of enterprises, to encourage an entrepreneurial culture and to promote the creation and growth of SMEs. It contributes to the overall objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth while seeking to optimise synergies with other EU programmes such as Horizon 2020 and the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). As set out in the COSME legal base¹, these objectives will be met by:

- a) improving access to finance for SMEs in the form of equity and debt;
- b) improving access to markets, particularly inside the EU but also at a global level;
- c) improving framework conditions for the competitiveness and sustainability of enterprises, particularly SMEs, including in the tourism sector;
- d) promoting entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial culture.

COSME has an overall indicative budget of EUR 2.3 billion for the seven-year period 2014-2020. The programme is executed through an annual work programme, and through support measures which are adopted in a separate financing decision for an amount of approximately EUR 8 million. The enclosed work programme for 2018 has a total budget of €319 million of which some 60% is allocated to financial instruments and some 20% to activities promoting enterprises' access to markets – the two main priorities of the programme.

Programme Status

This year saw the launch of the interim evaluation of the programme, and this evaluation is due to be completed at the end of 2017. The first results indicate the relevance of the COSME actions and a strong stakeholder support for an SME specific programme which addresses the main obstacles small businesses are facing across the EU. Given that the main projects were only launched in early 2015, it is not possible to provide comprehensive overview of their results at this stage.

However, the implementation structures are delivering. In its 3 first years of activity, the Loan Guarantee Facility (LGF) supported some 173 000 SMEs in 22 countries which received almost EUR 7 billion of financing². Under the Equity Facility for Growth (EFG) 10 fund agreements had been signed for an overall amount of investments into eligible final recipients of EUR 656 million. On a yearly basis, The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) provides services to about 250.000 SMEs, including specialised advisory services to some 70 000 SMEs. The Your Europe Business Portal provides companies with practical information on doing business in the Single Market with 10 million visits in 2013-2016. Several COSME actions also contribute to improving framework conditions for enterprises and to promoting entrepreneurship. The network of SME Envoys promotes the implementation of SME policy across the EU. The annual SME Performance Review contributes to the evidence-based policy-making by providing facts and figures on EU SMEs, in particular for the European Semester. COSME supports the modernisation and smart specialisation of industries and the uptake of new business models by promoting innovative ecosystems and advanced technologies, while creating synergies with the EU regional and research programmes, such as the smart specialisation platform on industrial modernisation. Cluster initiatives reach out to groups of specialised companies and support strategic interregional and international

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1287/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing a Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME) (2014 - 2020).

² COSME Loan Guarantee Facility (LGF) Implementation Report as at 31/03/2017 available at http://www.eif.org/what_we_do/guarantees/single_eu_debt_instrument/cosme-loan-facility-growth/implementation_status.pdf

collaboration. Around 100 trans-national projects focusing on tourism have helped diversify the European offer and strengthen pan-European competitiveness in the sector. 150 partnerships between design, manufacture and technology have contributed to develop innovative consumer products. Last but not least, some 10200 entrepreneurs have participated in the 'Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs' exchange programme to promote entrepreneurship, skills and business development among the participants. 36.5% of the participating new entrepreneurs subsequently created their own business and 65% of the hosts extended their operations to other national markets.

The **2018 work programme** contributes to the implementation of the Commission's policy priorities, in particular the Single Market Strategy³, including the Communication on start-ups and scale-ups. The financial instruments continue to support SMEs and start-ups to access both equity and debt funding and the Enterprise Europe Network also continues to facilitate SMEs' access to markets both within the EU and beyond.

Public procurement and intellectual property are among the key areas for action of the Single Market Strategy. As part of the COSME work programme, the Commission will aim, among other things, to facilitate SMEs' access to public tenders and to improve SME's access to patent protection. Under public procurement, a new action will aim at supporting the procurement of innovation by public bodies. Under IPR, the SME helpdesks will be renewed.

A number of COSME 2018 actions are dedicated to promoting the modernisation of industry: the initiative to promote entrepreneurship and high-tech skills aims at responding to the "skills gap" identified by several stakeholders. Following the adoption of the Industrial Policy Strategy in September 2017⁴, all relevant actions will be encouraged to adapt their focus in line with the strategy objectives. One of the key objectives of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs mobility scheme is to help new entrepreneurs acquire and build managerial skills. The European Cluster Collaboration Platform will promote the development of more world-class clusters in Europe, with a view to fostering the competitiveness, sustainability and resource-efficiency of enterprises, notably SMEs. Finally, the EU Chemical Legislation Finder will provide a single entry point for companies to access information on regulation applicable to chemicals.

In addition to these operational objectives, the COSME work programme focuses on the multi-annual programming of activities. Actions to be awarded in 2019 have been moved for funding under the 2019 work programme and multi-annual activities have been regrouped to reduce the number of administrative operations that are required when concluding annual contracts.

The Commission has committed to mainstream climate action into Union spending programmes and to direct at least 20% of the Union budget to climate-related objectives. In this view, the need for enterprises to adapt to a low-carbon, climate-resilient, energy and resource efficient economy will be promoted through the implementation of the Programme.

While overall responsibility of COSME remains with the Commission, some implementing tasks are delegated to an executive agency, the European Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME), while the financial instruments are entrusted to the European Investment Fund (EIF).

³ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic And Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Upgrading the Single Market: more opportunities for people and business - COM(2015) 550 final: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52015DC0550&from=EN>

⁴ COM(2017)479

The Commission will draw up an annual monitoring report on the efficiency and effectiveness of supported activities, on the basis of a set of indicators set out in the COSME Regulation and in this work programme.

A. ACCESS TO FINANCE

GRO/SME/18/A/01 - FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS – LOAN GUARANTEE FACILITY INCLUDING THE SME INITIATIVE

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

Provide enhanced access to finance for SMEs in their start-up, growth and transfer phases through a debt financial instrument.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

One of the financial instruments set up under COSME is the Loan Guarantee Facility (LGF) which provides

- Counter-guarantees and other risk sharing arrangements for guarantee schemes including, where appropriate, co-guarantees;
- Direct guarantees and other risk sharing arrangements for any other financial intermediaries.

The LGF is the successor of the SME Guarantee Facility established under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme - CIP (2007 - 2013). Based on the experience gained under CIP and in line with requirements formulated for financial instruments under the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom N° 966/2012 of October 2012) the terms and conditions for the COSME financial instruments were adjusted.

The implementation of the LGF is entrusted to the European Investment Fund (EIF). A continuous open call for expression of interest was published by the EIF to which financial intermediaries may apply at any time until 30 September 2020. The call sets out the terms and conditions for the different implementing mechanism under the LGF (capped guarantees, guarantees for securitisation transactions). It may be complemented by calls for those Member States which opt to use the COSME resources for the SME Initiative as set out below.

The characteristics of the LGF in the form of capped (counter-)guarantees are:

- Guarantees for debt financing (including via subordinated and participating loans, leasing or bank guarantees) which shall reduce the particular difficulties that viable SMEs face in accessing finance either due to their perceived high risk or their lack of sufficient available collateral;
- Up to an amount of € 150,000 all types of SMEs (regardless of sector or size) are eligible for financing under the LGF. Above this threshold financial intermediaries must verify that the SME is not RDI driven and therefore is not eligible for financing under the Horizon 2020's SME & small midcaps debt financing window (InnovFin SME Guarantee Facility). As regards the level of the guarantee, the entrusted entity will provide guarantees to financial intermediaries which will cover a portion of the expected losses of a portfolio of newly generated, higher-risk SME transactions.
- The portfolios shall be composed of transactions which the financial intermediary would not have supported in the absence of the guarantee. The range of financial products which can be supported through the guarantees is intended to be broad so as not to discriminate amongst the SME population and to allow financial intermediaries to tailor products according to the specific needs of the market in which they operate.
- Individual guarantee agreements to be signed by the entrusted entity with a financial

intermediary will have a maximum duration of 10 years, whereby it shall be permissible that individual financing transactions have maturities exceeding 10 years. Individual financing transactions must have a minimum duration of 12 months.

The characteristics of the LGF in the form of guarantees for securitisation transactions are:

- Guarantees for the mezzanine tranche of securitisation of SME debt finance portfolios, which are coupled with a contractual undertaking by the financial intermediary to build up new SME debt finance portfolios. The amount of this new debt financing shall be calculated in relation to the amount of the guaranteed portfolio risk. This amount and the period of time shall be negotiated individually with each originating institution by the entrusted entity.

The LGF is demand-driven meaning that the allocation of funding will take place based on the demand expressed by financial intermediaries also taking into account the need for a broad geographical distribution (e.g. through incentives to be provided from the Commission to the entrusted entity).

Relationship with Horizon 2020

The LGF is part of the single EU debt financial instrument for EU enterprises' growth and research and innovation (R&I), together with the InnovFin SME Guarantee facility set up under the Horizon 2020 programme. The InnovFin SME Guarantee facility, which is also entrusted to the EIF for implementation, provides financing to SMEs and small midcaps with significant research, development and innovation (RDI) potential or investments in RDI activities, both with significant technological and financial risk provided that these are eligible under the innovation criteria as set out in the open call for expression of interest published for this facility.

Financial intermediaries are free to apply either for one or both facilities under COSME and Horizon 2020 in line with their business objectives and possibilities to reach the potential target group of the different facilities.

LGF contribution to the EU SME Initiative

The EU SME Initiative was conceived as an anti-crisis measure with budget commitments over 3 years (2014-2016); building on the EU financial instruments that support lending to SMEs (COSME LGF and/or InnovFin SME Guarantee Facility under Horizon 2020). However, in the context of the 2014-2020 MFF review, the Commission proposed a number of legislative changes, including the extension of the duration of the SME Initiative in the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR).

The SME Initiative is implemented as a "joint instrument", i.e. - a mechanism allowing Member States to allocate European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) under their responsibility to programmes managed directly by the Commission, with disbursement geographically linked to contributions. This mechanism is provided for by the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) governing the implementation of ESIF and the principle of such combination is also contained in the legal basis for COSME and Horizon 2020.

The SME Initiative is implemented in the form of uncapped portfolio guarantees and/or securitisation operations using funds from COSME and/or Horizon 2020 and ESIF combined with resources from EIB and EIF. Member States are free to decide on the desired implementation mechanism as well as on the central EU financial instrument with which the pooling of resources shall occur.

Under both uncapped guarantees and securitisation, ESIF will guarantee the most junior tranche of the portfolio (i.e. the highest risk) and a combination of ESIF, EU (i.e. COSME

and/or Horizon 2020) and EIF resources will cover the mezzanine tranche. The senior tranche will be covered by EIB and, if possible, national promotional banks. In the case of securitisation, the senior tranche should achieve high credit rating and could be sold to institutional investors.

Participation by Member States is entirely voluntary. So far the following countries have decided on pooling resources with Horizon 2020 for uncapped guarantees: Spain, Malta, Bulgaria, Romania, Finland.

Italy opted in 2016 for a combination of resources with COSME under the securitisation option of the SME Initiative. The related call for expression of interest published by the EIF closes on 30 September 2017.

Relationship with the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI)⁵

As the resources available under the LGF were not sufficient to satisfy market demand (i.e. total of applications received from Financial Intermediaries by the EIF) for the financing of SMEs, the LGF was enhanced in 2015 temporarily with additional risk-bearing capacity under EFSI so as to avoid disruptions in signing transactions with financial intermediaries.

This temporary front-loading was converted in 2017 into a permanent top-up of LGF resources with risk-bearing capacity provided under the SME window of EFSI for an amount of EUR 550 million.

Such combination of LGF resources with EFSI risk-bearing capacity will allow the EIF to sign a significantly higher number of guarantee transactions in EU 28 (as LGF resources for the whole programming period are reinforced by an additional 70%).

EXPECTED RESULTS

The EU added value lies in the fact that financial intermediaries are encouraged to finance transactions which they would not finance in the absence of the guarantee due to the higher risks involved. In addition, the expertise of the EIF allows dissemination of best practices to less developed SME financing markets via dedicated information tools and can support product innovation (e.g. facilitating the creation of mezzanine products).

It is expected that over the lifetime of the programme between 220,000 and 330,000 SMEs will receive financing for a total value ranging from EUR 14 to 21 billion thanks to the COSME budget. However, the numbers and volumes will even be higher due to the increase of LGF capacity through EFSI.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Indirect Management	Loan Guarantee Facility including SME Initiative	139 552 000

The budget amount of the LGF will be increased by the amount of annual repayments generated by the LGF and assigned to the LGF in accordance with Articles 21(3)(i) and 140(6) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012.

⁵ Regulation (EU) 2015/1017 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2015 on the European Fund for Strategic Investments, the European Investment Advisory Hub and the European Investment Project Portal and amending Regulations (EU) No 1291/2013 and (EU) No 1316/2013 — the European Fund for Strategic Investments

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Delegation Agreement signed with the entrusted entity	Q3 2014
Call for expression of interest launched by the entrusted entity	Q3 2014
First agreements signed with Financial Intermediaries	Q4 2014
First agreements signed benefitting from EFSI support	Q3 2015
Call for expression of interest launched for the SME Initiative in Italy	Q3 2016
Indicative total duration (months): The Delegation Agreement shall be valid until the last of the transactions under the programme is fully completed (latest by 2034).	

INDICATORS

Indicators for 2018 budget:

Volume of financing made available and number of firms benefiting from financing: Value of financing mobilised ranging from EUR 2.8 billion to EUR 4.2 billion; number of firms receiving financing which benefits from COSME guarantee ranging from 43 000 to 64 000.

The above values have been computed based on the leverage targets of COSME which calls for a leverage of 1:20 - 1:30 for the debt instrument. They refer to new SME loan portfolios built during the whole availability period (usually two to three years) of individual transactions with financial intermediaries authorised in 2018.

GRO/SME/18/A/02 - FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS – EQUITY FACILITY FOR GROWTH

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

Provide enhanced access to finance for SMEs in their start-up, growth and transfer phases through an equity financial instrument.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The Equity Facility for Growth (EFG) is one of the successor instruments of the High Growth and Innovative SME Facility (GIF) established under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme - CIP (2007 - 2013). It succeeds the GIF2 window set up under GIF to cover expansion stage investments into SMEs. Based on the experience gained under CIP and in line with requirements formulated for financial instruments under the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom N° 966/2012 of October 2012) the terms and conditions for the COSME financial instruments were adjusted.

The implementation of the EFG is entrusted to the European Investment Fund (EIF). A continuous open call for expression of interest, including the detailed terms and conditions, was published by the EIF to which financial intermediaries may apply at any time until 30 September 2020.

Through the EFG risk capital funds can be supported which invest into SMEs at the growth

stage, predominantly on a cross-border basis, or which help portfolio companies to grow beyond their national markets with a view to supporting the development of a self-sustainable pan-European risk capital market.

The characteristics of the EFG are:

- The entrusted entity shall make direct investments in intermediary risk capital funds providing investments for SMEs typically in their expansion and growth stage. These risk capital funds shall provide equity and mezzanine finance, such as subordinated or participating loans;
- Investments shall be long-term, normally involving 5 to 15 year positions, whereby the life of an investment shall not exceed 20 years;
- Investments may also be made into risk capital funds investing at the seed, start-up and early stage in conjunction with the Equity Facility for R&I (Research and Innovation) under Horizon 2020 whereby the investment from EFG shall not exceed 20% of the total EU investment;
- In the case of multi-stage funds, the COSME EFG and Horizon's Equity Facility for R&I will contribute pro rata to the funding of the risk capital funds based on the fund's investment policy.

The EFG is demand-driven, meaning that the allocation of funding will take place based on the demand expressed by financial intermediaries also taking into account the need for a broad geographical distribution (e.g. through fee incentives which the Commission has provided to the entrusted entity).

Pan-European VC Funds-of-Funds programme

An additional implementation mechanism under the EFG in the form of a contribution to the Pan-European VC Funds-of-Funds programme was put in place in 2017.

In addition to the existing continuous call for expression of interest published for the direct investments under the EFG, a separate call for expression of interest was launched by the EIF for the Pan-European VC Funds-of-Funds programme which closed end of January 2017.

Should the EFG allocation towards the Pan-European VC Funds-of-Funds not be fully used⁶, any non-used resources will be available to the EIF to make direct investments into individual funds fulfilling the EFG criteria of the continuous call for expression of interest.

Relationship with Horizon 2020:

The EFG is part of the single EU equity financial instrument for EU enterprises' growth and research and innovation (R&I), together with the early-stage equity facility under Horizon 2020 (InnovFin Equity). The InnovFin Equity has been revamped in 2017 to combine resources from Horizon 2020, the SME window of EFSI and resources from the EIF. This facility targets risk capital funds investing in seed, start-up and early-stage SMEs and small midcaps that are RDI-driven.

Financial intermediaries are free to apply either for one of the two facilities under COSME and Horizon 2020 or for both in line with the fund's investment policy. The InnovFin Equity succeeds the GIF1 equity facility under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme.

Relationship with the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI)

⁶ The final budget allocations from EFSI, InnovFin Equity and EFG depend on the proposals received to the call for expression of interest. At the time of drafting this work programme, the selection process is still ongoing.

In the course of 2016 a new Expansion and Growth Window was established under the EFSI Equity instrument. This window has largely the same investment focus as the EFG. However, the EFG is broader in scope as it can also invest in third countries participating to the COSME programme.

As a result, an order of priority has been established whereby the EIF shall endeavour to first absorb investment capacity available under the EFSI Expansion and Growth Window before making use of EFG resources.

Eligible investments into funds operating and investing in third countries will continue to be made under the EFG only.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The EU added-value will lay in the fact that support is provided for funds investing on a cross-border basis or funds which help SMEs to internationalise, thereby complementing national efforts which tend to concentrate on the development of national risk capital markets. The EFG will thereby have a catalytic effect for the development of a pan-European risk capital market.

It is expected that over the lifetime of the programme between 362 and 544 firms will receive venture capital investment with overall volume invested ranging from € 2.6 to € 4.0 billion.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Indirect Management	Equity Facility for Growth	59 808 000

The budget amount of the EFG will be increased by the amount of annual repayments generated by the EFG and assigned to the EFG in accordance with Articles 21(3)(i) and 140(6) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and by the amount of annual repayments generated by the second window of the High Growth and Innovative SME Facility established under Decision No 1639/2006/EC (GIF2) and assigned to the EFG in accordance with Articles 14(7) and 21(4) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012.

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Delegation Agreement signed with the entrusted entity	Q3 2014
Call for expression of interest for EFG only launched by the entrusted entity	Q3 2014
Updated call for expression of interest covering the EFG and the InnovFin Equity	Q3 2015
First agreements signed with Financial Intermediaries	Q4 2015
Pan-European VC Funds-of-Funds call for expression of interest (launched and closed)	Q4 2016 / Q1 2017

Indicative total duration (months): The Delegation Agreement shall be valid until the last of the transactions under the programme is fully completed (latest by 2034).

INDICATORS

Indicators for 2018 budget:

Overall risk capital invested and number of firms being supported: Overall value of risk capital investments ranging from EUR 0.2 billion to EUR 0.4 billion; number of firms receiving risk capital investments ranging from 30 to 50.

The above values have been computed based on the leverage targets of COSME which calls for a leverage of 1:4 - 1:6 for the equity instrument. They refer to investments made during the life-time of risk capital funds in which EFG investments were authorised in 2018.

GRO/SME/18/A/03 - FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS – ACCOMPANYING ACTIONS

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

Survey on SMEs' access to finance (SAFE):

- to collect timely information on the financial situation of SMEs;
- to increase availability and quality of data on SMEs access to finance for policy-making purposes, particularly concerning the start-up and growth of SMEs;
- to limit the statistical burden imposed on enterprises by the data collection requirements imposed by the Commission and the ECB and by conducting only one comprehensive survey.

Disseminating information to SMEs about access to EU sources of financing

- to inform SMEs how they can access EU financing from various EU financial instruments on a single web portal, to be accessed through Your Europe Business.

Communication activities

- to promote the use of guarantees, venture capital and alternative sources of finances for SMEs;
- to inform SMEs and the general public about the benefits of the COSME financial instruments;
- to contribute to the EU campaigns.

Studies and evaluations

- to support policy making initiatives;
- to monitor the recent developments of SMEs' access to finance in Europe, also taking available results from recent studies into account;
- to address the lack of evaluations of the longer term effects on employment and growth of EC guarantee schemes for SMEs.

Workshops

- to bring together all stakeholders (SME representatives, banks and other organisations);
- to improve policies on financing innovation and SMEs;
- to follow, discuss and make proposals concerning SME financing in the European Union;
- to monitor the SME financing environment, exchange good practices and communicate about European Union actions.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

Survey on SMEs' access to finance (SAFE):

Timely information on the financial situation of SMEs is necessary for evidence based

policymaking. Taking into account our obligation to limit the burden that data collection places on SMEs, the Commission and the European Central Bank (ECB) designed a joint survey on the financial situation of SMEs. The survey provides evidence on changes in the financial situation, financing needs and access to external financing of SMEs in the EU and compares it with that of large enterprises.

The Commission survey rounds are now conducted once a year. Previous Commission rounds of the survey were conducted in 2009, 2011 and each year starting from 2013.

Survey provides comparable results across EU Member States and other participating countries. The results allow for comparison with EU average for structural analysis and comparison with previous years for trend analysis.

Disseminating information to SMEs about access to EU sources of financing

The Commission will continue updating and promoting the single web portal on EU finance, to be accessed through Your Europe Business.⁷

Communication activities

Difficulties in accessing finance are one of the main reasons of obstructing growth of SMEs. There are multiple structural and cyclical causes for this. Information asymmetries between the supply and demand of funds play a major role. The Commission promotes the use of EU financial instruments and other sources of EU finance through communication activities (case studies, events, infographics and other publications) via a variety of channels (websites, audio-visual and social media).

Studies and evaluations

The studies will be carried out on SME financing in order to support policy making.

Loan guarantee instruments exist for more than 18 years at EC level, with the first SME guarantee facility put in place in 1998 under the Growth and Employment initiative 1998-2000. This first facility was followed by others, set up under the 2001-2006 Multi-Annual Programme for enterprises and entrepreneurship for SMEs (MAP) and under the 2007-2013 Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP). The COSME Loan Guarantee Facility is the successor of these earlier facilities. At this stage, however, only limited evaluations of the effects of these facilities took place as part of overall programme evaluation. Currently, there is only one evaluation available on the longer term impact on growth of and employment creation by SMEs which benefitted from these loan guarantee schemes⁸. It is therefore important to complement this evaluation by further research in the field, targeting different countries. Such econometric analysis would be outsourced to the EIF who is the owner of the underlying data, in line with Article 10 (Technical Assistance and Additional Tasks) of the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) signed between the Commission and the EIF in May 2014.

Workshops

Workshops with SMEs, banks and other financial institutions will be organised to monitor the market situation and to facilitate SMEs' access to finance. The workshops will be organised on an ad-hoc basis depending on interest/needs expressed by stakeholders, SME financing trends and political priorities.

⁷ See www.access2finance.eu

⁸ See 'The Economic Impact of EU Guarantees to SMEs – Evidence from CESEE Countries', Pierfederico Asdrubali & Simone Signori, EIF Research & Market Analysis, Working Paper 2015/29: http://www.eif.org/news_centre/publications/EIF_Working_Paper_2015_29.htm.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Improved understanding of SME access to finance issues and developments;
- Limited statistical burden on the SMEs and efficient use of resources for the statistical purposes;
- Input for the evidence-based policy making and identification of the needs to adjust policies on SME access to finance;
- The full report and descriptive statistics results of the survey are published at <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/safe>;
- Easier access by SMEs to relevant information about EU sources of finance;
- Positive feedback from participants on quality, relevance and added value of activities;
- Get econometric evidence on the longer term impacts on growth and employment of EC loan guarantee schemes for SMEs.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Specific contract under a framework contract	Survey on SMEs' access to finance	650.000
Specific contract under a framework contract	Disseminating information to SMEs about access to EU sources of financing	200 000
Specific contract under a framework contract	Study on access to finance	200.000
Direct service contract / Direct grant agreement (in accordance with Art. 10 of the FAFA)	Evaluation of impacts of EC SME guarantee schemes	200.000
Reimbursement experts	Workshops	100.000
4 Specific contracts under framework contracts	Promotional activities	100.000
TOTAL		1.450.000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Survey/evaluation/meetings/workshops/studies/single web portal/promotion/communication	Q1-Q4 2018
Total duration of the actions: 12 months	

INDICATORS

Survey on SMEs' access to finance (SAFE):

- Timely carry-out of the survey
- Geographical and thematic coverage of the survey

Disseminating information to SMEs about access to EU sources of financing

- Improving web metrics regarding access to the single web portal

Communication activities

- Timely preparation and coordination of all activities and material at the required level of quality;
- Feedback from speakers, participants and other stakeholders;
- Media coverage.

Studies and evaluations

- Timely carry-out of the studies/evaluation
- Positive feedback from the stakeholders on quality, relevance and added value of studies
- Geographical and thematic coverage of the studies/evaluation

Workshops

- Organise 3 to 5 events on issues relevant to policy making
- Positive feedback from participants on quality, relevance and added value of workshops
- Number of proposals generated or further developed through the workshops

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

N/A or up to 100% in case of a direct grant agreement

B. ACCESS TO MARKETS

GRO/SME/18/B/01 - ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The Enterprise Europe Network activities directly contribute to the overall Europe 2020 objectives of smart and sustainable growth, aiming at a competitive environment and stimulating the innovation capacity of businesses, especially SMEs. At the same time, the Network is a sounding board and a link between the Commission and the SME community in the implementation of the Think Small First principle and the Small Business Act. It aims to:

- Help EU SMEs finding international business, technology and research partners in the EU, COSME participating countries and third countries;
- Develop and provide a balanced integrated service range to SMEs to become active in the Single Market and beyond (e.g. regarding EU legislation and programmes, EU funding, intellectual property rights), linking up with regional actors and policies to ensure regional integration of the network's services;
- Increase competitiveness of SMEs by internationalisation and innovation support services;
- Contribute to the Start-up Initiative by providing advisory services to help scale-ups develop their activities outside their own country;
- Contribute to the SMEs feedback function to obtain SMEs opinion on Union policy options;
- Strengthen support for SMEs interested in participating in Horizon 2020 and corresponding calls for proposals, in particular encourage SMEs to participate in the SME Instrument; help them exploit their project results using EEN services.
- Develop a long term relationship and provide integrated services to the beneficiaries of the SME Instrument and possibly those who got a Seal of Excellence; seek cooperation with Horizon 2020 national contact points;
- Provide support to enable SMEs to turn the climate resource efficiency and renewable energy challenge into opportunities, including providing information, assistance in participation in European-funded projects, and partnering and advice on resource efficient practices (contributing to the Climate Action, Green Action Plan, Eco-innovation Action Plan and partner search for EU SME's clean energy solutions in countries outside the EU);
- Improve SME's awareness on access to finance including alternative sources of financing;
- Improve SME's awareness about other EU initiatives such as the Your Europe portal and the forthcoming Single Digital Gateway and connected assistance services;
- Ensure visibility, recognition and local awareness about the Network;
- Ensure follow-up and coordinate implementation of the priority actions defined in the Annual Guidance Note to the Network.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The Enterprise Europe Network provides business support services – in particular for SMEs – by offering information, advisory services, feedback and partnering services, innovation, technology and knowledge transfer services. The Network provides services encouraging the participation of SMEs in the COSME and Horizon 2020 programme as well as internationalisation services beyond the Single Market and informs SMEs on funding

opportunities under the European Structural and Investment Funds. It seeks cooperation and complementarity with the European Regional Development Fund programmes that invest under the current programmes over EUR 9 billion in providing advanced support services for SMEs, including for internationalisation, and technology transfer. The Network helps SMEs with regards to access to finance and EU funding and helps them to become more resource and environmentally efficient including through eco-innovation (e.g. Green Action Plan, verification of environmental technologies (ETV)).

The budget requested in the COSME work programmes 2018 will be mainly used to cover the third operational period for 2019. Applicant organisations have to be established in EU Member States or in countries participating in the COSME programme under Article 6 of the COSME Regulation; they are legal entities, fully or partly public or private bodies; corporate bodies must be properly constituted and registered under the law.

The **Network animation** tasks include:

- Governing the Enterprise Europe Network, in particular by organising the annual conference, Steering Groups, Working Group meetings or Network stakeholder meetings;
- IT tools and databases, in particular by operating, maintaining, improving and developing new IT tools and databases, ensuring data quality, and maintaining an IT helpdesk;
- Ensuring full operation of the Network in an efficient and proactive way;
- Helping the Network to provide its services in an efficient and effective manner and at the highest quality possible;
- Enabling Network partners to provide their services to European SMEs based on the "no wrong door principle".
- Network communication, information and support, implementation of the communication plan, prepare and make promotional material and infrastructure available, increase the Network visibility and facilitate networking;
- Training: implementing an operational training plan (following the guidelines defined in the training strategy for the EEN);
- Services to the Network, in particular managing knowledge contents, the forums system, valorising practices and running sector groups;
- Assistance to and mentoring of Network partners where quality of activities and services needs to be raised; regularly report on Network achievements, weaknesses, quality and risks. Report on Network achievements and performance indicators on a regular basis as defined in the monitoring and reporting guidelines, using an automated (IT developed) reporting system to avoid administrative burden where possible.

The budget for Network animation may also include the budget needed to facilitate the integration of EEN Business Cooperation Centres located in Third Countries (travel and subsistence costs for training, working groups, steering groups, annual conference or sector groups)

During the fourth year of the Network in the COSME programme, the aim is to organise the **Annual Conference 2018** for the Network for about 800 participants in the country holding the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union. The action includes all practical aspects for the conference (consisting of national meetings, opening session, parallel workshops, closing session, exhibition areas, catering etc).

JUSTIFICATION: An ad-hoc grant will be granted to cover part of the tasks without an open call for proposals under Article 190(1)(c) RAP, to the government (or its representative),

of the country that will hold the EU Council Presidency (Austria in 2nd half 2018).

EXPECTED RESULTS

The expected results are:

- Increased number of SMEs linked with other entities across Europe for cross-border business cooperation, technology and knowledge transfer and technology and innovation partnerships
- Better visibility of the EEN by promoting success stories
- Increased number of companies reporting a successful outcome on their businesses of advisory support services provided by the Network
- Higher rate of European SMEs exporting within the Single Market and outside the EU
- Higher rate of European SMEs participating in EU programmes
- Better understanding of European SMEs of EU legislation and of opportunities offered by EU programmes and EU access to finance
- Better knowledge in EU institutions of SMEs opinions, difficulties and expectations.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Specific grant agreement under framework partnership agreement	Enterprise Europe Network	54 100 000
60 Specific contracts under framework contract or low value procurement	Network Animation 2018	2 950 000
Grant - ad hoc grant Art. 190 RAP	Annual conference	150 000
TOTAL		57.200.000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Signature of the contracts for Network Animation	Q1- Q4 2018
Signature Grant agreements for EEN members	Q1 2019
Grant - ad hoc grant Art. 190 RAP – Annual Conference	Q4-2018
Indicative total duration: 12 months (2018) for Network Animation contracts. Duration of 12 months for Network grants of 2019	

INDICATORS

For the Network:

- Number of achievements (including business/technology/research Partnership

Agreements and Advisory Service Outcomes);

- Number of SMEs reached via (digital) information services;
- Number of SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions;
- Number of SMEs receiving support services (information, partnering, advisory services on EU legislation, access to financing, etc.);
- Impact on clients businesses: increased turnover, jobs created/maintained, new products or services developed, new markets accessed;
- Client satisfaction on the received services.

For the animation contract:

- Number of Network staff trained (centralised, de-centralised and e-learning);
- Number of Network staff having participated in staff exchange and mentoring activities;
- Number of visits to the public website of the Network.

For the annual conference:

- Satisfaction of participants;
- Number of participants.

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

60% for the Network grants

90% for the annual conference grant

GRO/SME/18/B/02 – ACCESS TO THE SINGLE MARKET: REINFORCING THE SINGLE MARKET TOOLS IN PREPARATION OF THE PLANNED SINGLE DIGITAL GATEWAY

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

Action 1. Single digital gateway preparatory study

- The Commission adopted the proposal for the single digital gateway on 02/05/2017. The single digital gateway aims to reduce the administrative burden that EU citizens and businesses, in particular SMEs, face when they expand their activities in other Member States. It is necessary to start exploring the options for its smooth implementation, in particular the ways to integrate its user interface and the Your Europe portal.
- The single digital gateway will provide access to EU and national rules, requirements and procedures that citizens and businesses from other Member States need to know about and comply with. The single digital gateway is part of the Single Market Strategy and the E-government Action Plan. It is a top priority for SME stakeholders.
- The implementation of the single digital gateway will take place between 2018 and 2021.

Action 2. Your Europe Business

- The Your Europe Business portal acts as an enabler for European companies to do business across the EU's single market. The objective of the action is to prepare Your Europe Business for its enhanced role in the future single digital gateway (see Action 1). In particular, the Your

Europe portal is supposed to i) provide EU level content and ii) integrate the user-interface for the Single Digital Gateway.

- The portal will be further improved to better address SMEs' needs in terms of information and assistance linked to cross-border operation in the single market. Your Europe Business continues to mainly cover EU level content on rights and opportunities for businesses, in particular SMEs, in the single market. It links up with national business portals covering country-specific rules (such as the PSCs, see Action 3) and provides access to business support, assistance and problem-solving services (such as Enterprise Europe Network, Your Europe Advice, SOLVIT, see Action 4).

Action 3. SOLVIT

– The SOLVIT action plan adopted under the compliance package on 02/05/2017 foresees actions to enhance the capacity of national SOLVIT centres to support businesses operating in the Single Market.

- The action concerns advanced training for staff in the national SOLVIT centres, focusing on specific legal issues of particular importance for the business community. It aims to improve market access for SMEs within the EU, by helping them to deal with difficulties they encounter with public authorities in the Member States when attempting to or operating cross-border.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

Action 1: Single digital gateway preparatory study

In preparation for the software development in 2019-2020, the 2018 project will explore the technical implementation options as follows:

1. Options for a common search facility is needed to find information based on the links provided by the Member States to their information online.
2. Options for the repository that contains links to the Member State information
3. Options for the user interface that presents the information to the user based on the search.
4. Options for an assistance service finder will be developed to guide users in cases further assistance is needed.
5. Options for a user feedback tool allows users to rapidly indicate quality problems in the linked portals from the beginning.

Action 2: Your Europe Business

- Based on the achievements of previous years and in close cooperation with the Member States, further work will in particular focus on the addition of EU content, better links with national information sources, increased user-friendliness, better findability and enhanced visibility.

Action 3: SOLVIT

- The action covers the preparation, execution and evaluation of a specific training programme for SOLVIT centres in legal areas of particular relevance for SMEs operating in the Single Market. The training programme will be conceived based on an analysis of the actual needs of the staff working in SOLVIT centres that will be conducted prior to the actual training programme. Participants in the training programme will be certified “fit for business” through a competency test. The training programme will be evaluated in view of potential further actions on the basis of the satisfaction level of the participants (see also indicators).

EXPECTED RESULTS

Action 1:

- When the options have been chosen and tested, a beta version of the single digital gateway can be put online. This is scheduled for Q2-Q3 2019.

Action 2:

- Companies will get quality online information on doing business in the Single Market adapted to their needs and expectations.
- Synergies with other services, such as the Points of Single Contact, the Enterprise Europe Network and SOLVIT, are exploited in the best possible way to improve the overall service offer to businesses.
- The number and loyalty of visitors will further increase.

Action 3:

- Reinforcing SOLVIT as an early problem solving tool for SMEs to facilitate their market access within the EU;
- Improving the quality of the service SOLVIT centres offer to SMEs and resolving more effectively problems they face with Member States' public administrations when attempting to or operating cross- border;
- Providing tailored support to Member States by strengthening their administrative capacity in legal areas particularly important for SMEs and enhancing the effectiveness of their SOLVIT centres.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Specific contract under a framework contract	Preparing for the single digital gateway	615 000
3 Specific contracts under a framework contract	Improved quality of the Your Europe Business portal as content provider and host for the single digital gateway	450 000
Call for tender or specific contract under a framework contract	Capacity building for SOLVIT to better serve SMEs	200 000
Total		1 265 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
1. Specific contract under a framework contract	Q2-Q4 2018
2. Specific contracts under a framework contract	Q1-Q4 2018
3. Call for tender or specific contract under a framework contract	Q1 2018
- Publication of the call	Q2 2018
- Award	Q2 2018
- Signature of the contract	
Indicative total duration: 12 months	

INDICATORS

Action 1:

- The study should result in producing preferred options and specifications for the technical implementation of the single digital gateway.

Action 2:

- Number of visits: increase by 20%
- User satisfaction: above 90%

Action 3:

- Number of participants to the legal training per SOLVIT centre, per year (target: after two trainings at least one person per SOLVIT centre has participated in the training).
- Number of participants to workshop certified for the legal training (target: 75% of the participants successfully certified).
- Satisfaction level of the participants, survey (target: 75% of the participants fully satisfied or satisfied with the training).

GRO/SME/18/B/03 - – EU OPEN FOR BUSINESS CAMPAIGN 2019

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

When it comes to the Single Market, small business operators often suffer from an information deficit: They do not know enough about their Single Market rights, nor about EU funding opportunities that are available to them nor about free-of-charge EU support networks and e-tools such as the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), SOLVIT, Points of Single Contact (PSC) and the Your Europe Business Portal. That's why chapter 2.2 of the New Single Market strategy says:

"The Commission will re-direct COSME funds to information campaigns targeting young innovative SMEs to encourage them to expand cross-border and make use of the possibilities offered by the Single Market."

The lack of knowledge about the available services and funding for SMEs could result in a misperception of the business environment.

This is why a corporate communication campaign is necessary to facilitate the access to the information on the services available for the EU business community (especially small and medium-sized enterprises - SMEs) and, as a consequent desired outcome, to increase their use by the target audience.

The more SMEs are informed on how they can benefit from the EU Single Market the more their confidence in the Single Market is boosted. Moreover, boosting the confidence in the Single Market will help stimulate economic growth.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The "EU Open for business" campaign 2019 will target small business operators in at least 5 target countries per year that will be selected on the basis of different criteria: (i) potential improvement of the economic outlook, (ii) improvable framework conditions for SMEs, Start-ups and Scale-ups (iii) improvable engagement with the European project, (iv) presence of active local partners (e.g. Enterprise Europe Network), (v) local interest in single market.

The campaign will be based on key messages addressing specific needs/problems that SMEs, Start-ups and Scale-ups are facing: e.g. finding new clients and new business partners, accessing finance.

The main communication tools will be: organisation of infodays for multipliers, advertising in print media, on the radio, on online and social media.

In order to better target the messages, focus groups will be created in order to provide feedbacks on each element of the campaign such as the creative concept, messages, media mix etc. These groups will be formed by experts and/or members of the target group (e.g. Enterprise Europe Network's local partners and/or entrepreneurs).

The campaign is part of a multiannual project targeting different Member States yearly. The first pilot campaign ran in 2015 and it was named "Corporate campaign on COSME benefits for SMEs" and it was only focused on the COSME programme. The first wave of the "EU Open for business" campaign, focused on Single Market opportunities for SMEs, ran from Q2 2016 in Denmark, Portugal, Poland, Ireland and Hungary. The second wave of the "EU Open for business" campaign will run from Q2 2017 targeting Lithuania, Estonia, Czech Republic, Slovenia and Bulgaria. The 2018 campaign will run from Q2 2018 (the 5 target countries have not been defined yet).

The campaign aims at increasing the use of the services/tools for SMEs provided at EU level by promoting the local networks and info access point (such as the Enterprise Europe Network and the relevant portals/web-sites).

EXPECTED RESULTS

The objectives of the campaign are in line with the Art. 11, 3(c) of the Regulation (EU) 1287/2013 establishing the COSME programme and in particular it will contribute to make it "easier for SMEs to access Union programmes and measures, in accordance with the SBA Action Plan".

The campaign is addressing directly the target audience with concrete and simple messages: e.g. EU can help you in finding new clients, new business partners and access to finance. For each message it will be identified a concrete "call to action" such as visit the Your Europe Business portal and/or contact the local branch of the Enterprise Europe Network.

We will measure the impact on SMEs and, therefore, the increase of their use of the promoted services through the following indicators: (i) increase of web traffic on the relevant websites, (ii) increase of the number of contacts of the local Enterprise Europe Network, (iii) increase of engagement on relevant social media accounts. More detailed information about impact indicators is available below.

The deliverables of the campaign are the radio spots and any other campaign material such as Adverts, banners, Advertorials, content for social media, infographics. In order to better convey the messages of the campaign, the materials will be customised taking into account feedback of the national partners. They will be available in Q2 2019 and they will be disseminated through the EC local networks (EEN, Representations) in order to effectively reach the target.

Internet addresses are already available (Your Europe Business portal, national Enterprise

Europe Network's web-sites).

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Specific contract under a framework contract	EU Open for business campaign 2019	2 000 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Signature of the contract	Q4 2018
Total duration of the contract is 12 months	

INDICATORS

TYPE OF ACTION/ ADVERTISING	OUTPUT (REACH WITHIN THE TARGET GROUP)	OUTTAKE (RECALL)	OUTCOME (ACTION BY THE TARGET GROUP)
Training sessions	N of participants Indirect audience reach: Opportunities to see (OTS) (when applicable) cost per contact	N of participants who declare the event met their expectations/overall satisfaction grade out of 10 N of participants who made useful contacts	N of participants stating their likelihood to share the information learnt N of participants engaging in follow-up activities
Print9	readers reached cost per mille	focus group recall recall (large-scale)	additional requests received by EEN (emails and/or calls) additional EEN visitors
Social media	impressions cost per click cost per like	likes favourites clicks click-through rate (CTR) video views (when applicable) cost per action engagement rate	re-tweets shares comments additional web-site visits N° of leads Additional fans/followers Bounce rate
online advertising	Impressions Cost per click Cost per like	clicks click-through rate (CTR) video views (when applicable)	dwelt time N° of leads increase of web-site visits bounce rate
Media relations	N of journalists mapped Number of journalists	Number of articles Tone of voice of article	/

	contacted		
Stakeholder relations	N of stakeholders mapped Number of stakeholders contacted	Number of stakeholders present at the training	Number of stakeholders active in the second phase
Integrated campaign	N of visits to the YEB platform N of visits to the EEN network	Recall of the campaign messages (aided and unaided)	additional requests received by EEN (emails and/or calls)

GRO/SME/18/B/04 - EU-JAPAN CENTRE FOR INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

To improve the access of European businesses in particular SMEs into the Japanese market, by providing them with the needed data on local conditions, by acquainting them with commercial and industrial practises and by providing them with material and immaterial logistic support. Also to promote the training on production technologies, quality management and innovation (e.g. Vulcanus, Human resources training programme, World class manufacturing) aiming at improving the competitiveness of EU businesses.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

In line with the EU and Japan's growth strategies and the priority topics of mutual interest, the EU-Japan Centre will continue and further expand its focus on the following main thematic areas: SMEs internationalization support (horizontal priority across all activities); Olympics 2020 business opportunities (i.e. Clean Energy, Raw Materials, Construction Products, Smart Cities, Public Procurement, Environmental Services; Healthy Ageing Populations; industrial innovation and business related R&D, including cooperation on yet unexplored high-tech sectoral niches such as satellite navigation industry and services (GNSS), awareness-raising of the Free Trade Agreement and possible outcomes for European SMEs.

Meanwhile, policy seminars on horizontal industrial policy elements (standardization, ICT, KETS (Key Enabling Technologies) etc.) and market access will remain constant priorities, together with the more ad-hoc events proposed for joint organization by the EU Delegation in Japan, the Member States and/or the Japanese authorities. Collaboration with EURAXESS¹⁰ Links, linking European and non-European researchers in a global community, should be developed.

In terms of priority activities, the EU-Japan Centre primarily intends to significantly consolidate its business support relevance, particularly for SMEs, by an enhanced use of Enterprise Europe Network, in synergy with the training and industrial innovation/R&D activities, by expanding its cluster related activities and particularly by maintaining two initiatives on business information support and logistic support. On information support: the comprehensive web info portal "EU-Japan Business Bridge" (<http://www.eu-japan.eu/publications/eu-japan-bridge-essential-guide-eu-business>) will be further developed and targeted at SMEs in both EU and Japan. On concrete logistic support, "Step in Japan" will

¹⁰ EURAXESS: Researchers in Motion is a unique pan-European initiative providing access to a complete range of information and support services to researchers wishing to pursue their research careers in Europe or stay connected to it

continue to offer free “soft-landing” type of support (hotdesk, meetings/seminar space, info, interpretation support) for EU SMEs, within the Centre’s premises. The Tax and Public Procurement Helpdesk for European SMEs a new service which intends to support the market access of European companies (particularly SMEs) to Japan. It takes the form of first-line information and advice on tax and public procurement (PP) and related issues, plus related training, materials and online resources.

Furthermore, in order to consolidate its policy analysis/think tank activities and output, a competitive fellowship scheme (“Minerva Fellowship”) will be continued. The fellowship will be targeted towards younger EU and Japanese academics, trade/ economic analysts and civil servants, with an active interest in Japan and EU-Japan cooperation from multiple perspectives (trade/market access, economy, industrial policy, business, R&D, etc.).The fellows undertake policy analysis on priority topics and support the regular policy agenda of the Centre.

EXPECTED RESULTS

1. At least 30 European participants per year for the “Vulcanus” in-company traineeships
2. Improved information services and helpdesk to SMEs
- 3 -Successful Organisation of a new session of the training programmes.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Action grant directly awarded on the basis of Article 190 (1)(d) RAP and Article 4 of the Council Decision 92/278/EEC	EU-Japan Centre For Industrial Cooperation	5 600 000
Total		5 600 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Invitation to submit a proposal	Q1 2018
Signature of the grant agreement	Q2 2018
Indicative total duration: 24 months (1 st April 2018 to 31 st March 2020)	

INDICATORS

1. Number of seminars organised and attendance
2. Number of enquiries addressed to the Centre and satisfactory replies provided
3. Number of students participating in Vulcanus and their level of competence
4. Number of participants to the executive training programme

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

90%

GRO/SME/18/B/05 – SUPPORTING EUROPEAN SMES WITH IP DISPUTES AND IP AWARENESS

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The actions aims at supporting the use of Intellectual Property system by SMEs through the implementation of a number of measures foreseen in the staff working document of the Start-Up and Scale-up Communication on SMES.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

Implement the measures announced in the Start-up and Scale-up Initiative - SWD(2016) 373, namely:

- Create and operate a cooperation platform with the support of Member States to: streamline European IP awareness schemes for SMEs, improve coordination of IP support funding schemes, and follow up the monitoring of the implementation of the supporting measures for SMEs actions and the evaluation of their impact.
- Create and train a network of experts enabling them to provide IP pre-diagnosis services to innovative SMEs on the basis of a common methodology
- Monitor the implementation of IP pre-diagnosis services by such experts and collecting all the data necessary for a future evaluation of this action
- Develop an EU IP mediation and arbitration network that SMEs will be able to use to obtain swifter resolution of disputes and avoid the financial risks of court litigation;
- Promote the creation of European-level insurance schemes for legal costs of IP litigation and for IP theft, e.g. through dialogues with the insurance industry and SME stakeholders;

EXPECTED RESULTS

The following results can be expected

Better coordination of EU and Member States efforts to reach and support SMEs in the use of the IP system

Increase the number of SMEs that are able to use intellectual property to their benefit, by removing or minimising obstacles such as lack knowledge and expertise as well as lack of resources to face the financial challenges posed by court litigation on IP

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for tenders/ proposals	Supporting the use of IP by SMEs	1 300 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q4 2017
Award	Q1 2018
Signature of the contract/grant agreement	Q2 2018
Total duration of the contract/grant agreement: 36 months	

INDICATORS

1. Number of meetings organised, and number of Member States represented therein, on IP Awareness to SMEs and support measures. 2. Number of experts trained and made available for providing IP Prediagnosis services funded by COSME 3. Level of satisfaction of beneficiaries of the IP diagnosis services 4. Number of IP specialised arbitration or Mediation centres linked to an European wide network 5. Number of insurance providers offering IP litigation insurance products the subscription of which by SMEs can potentially be co-funded by COSME
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MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

N/A or if call for proposals 90%

GRO/SME/18/B/06 – INTERNATIONAL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY SME HELPDESKS

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The International IP (intellectual property) SME Helpdesks will offer first-line advice and support to European SMEs wishing to operate in or influenced by markets outside of the European Union. By offering expert quality first line advice to individual business queries, e-learning tools, in-person workshops and awareness raising, it helps SMEs respond practically to such challenges as: - how European SMEs should design business relations with partners from markets outside of the EU to protect valuable IP of European enterprises (e.g. when doing business in the EU with external partners, developing the markets outside of the EU for own products, when following outside of the EU a company to which they have traditionally been a supplier or in the context of supply chains involving partners from outside of the EU); - counterfeit products entering the European market and other markets affecting the concerned SMEs; - how to find and constructively work with administrations or service providers to enforce their IP in such situations. - Other related actions to be defined

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The international IP SME Helpdesk is a continuation of similar services. These services will offer practical business advice from experienced professionals (lawyers, business executives, IP investigators) in person, on-line, and through workshops, e-learning materials, and training.
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The service would cover countries and regions, with focus on high-growth markets and where there are particular IP problems of importance to European SMEs that such service can address or where investors to Europe come from. The services will be provided both 'on the ground' to European SMEs already 'in country' and 'at home' in Europe, so that the relevant information on IP in the regions can be delivered where it is of most use, to serve European SMEs efficiently and effectively.

These helpdesks are based on the initial experience with the China IPR SME Helpdesk (since 2008), as well as the South-East Asia and Latin America Helpdesks IPR SME Helpdesks (started as ASEAN and MERCOSUR IPR SME Helpdesks in 2013). As an example of scale, in 2016 the international IPR SME Helpdesks organised 150 training events in the EU and outside, trained more than 6,000 SME participants, answered more than 1000 individual confidential business enquiries, published 20 guides (new and updated) and received more than 30,000 website visitors online.

The services will be offered in co-ordination with and in direct response to requests from European SMEs and their representatives (e.g. sectoral, regional, local associations of SMEs, chambers of commerce). Services will be co-ordinated also with relevant EU Member States SME support administrations, with EU and MS trade representations and with EU funded projects supporting SME internationalisation. The Helpdesks offer services that could not be easily provided individually by each Member State and allow to pool expertise to be available to any European SME. Such economies of scale also enable to customise the training or advice to specific sectors or business models. The service will also allow avoiding duplication of technical contacts with the relevant countries' administrations to 'signpost' SMEs.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The Helpdesks should contribute to significant capacity building of European SMEs operating on international markets or affected by them. This should be shown through a proactive approach of SMEs to the issue of protection of intellectual property on international markets.

The Helpdesks should also be highly visible among the EU and national constituencies of SME support services for doing business outside of the EU.

Ultimately it should lead to better business performance of the SMEs that relied on the Helpdesks contributing to higher growth and improved jobs.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for tenders	International IP SME Helpdesks	5 000 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q4 2017
Award	Q2 2018
Signature of the contract	Q2 2018

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Total duration of the contract: up to 36 months (extendable up to 54 months)	

INDICATORS

1. number of inquiries from EU SMEs answered
2. SME satisfaction and feedback on quality
3. number and quality of training and awareness events, including virtual events organised together with a number of SMEs and business support organisation participants
4. number of visits and hits on the website and SME user satisfaction of the website
5. number and quality of guides, factsheets, e-learning modules and other publications targeted at SMEs and business support organisations.
6. improved performance of beneficiaries in relation to targeted issue
7. clients performance assessment (growth of sales, jobs created/maintained, new products or services developed)

GRO/SME/18/B/07 – CO-FINANCING OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT CONSORTIA

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

In order to continue the efforts under the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) to help developing public procurement of innovation (PPI) consortia, it is proposed to set up a new co-financing programme under COSME in favour of consortia of public procurers.

Experience in the area under previous cofinancing programmes shows that SMEs are much more likely to be involved as suppliers of innovation than as suppliers of conventional products and services. In the first FP7 innovation procurement actions, SMEs won 2.5 times more contracts than in standard exercises (73% versus 29%). Recently, in its Communication Europe's next leaders: the start-up and scale-up initiative¹¹, procurement was mentioned as a key instrument for supporting the scaling-up of activities. As a result, a new call for proposals in the field of PPI would increase in significant proportions the access of SMEs to the public procurement market. Such a call is also likely to increase the visibility and awareness of the advantages of procuring innovation for an ever greater number of public buyers.

This action takes place in the context of how the public sector's demand can pull the offer and therefore contribute to growth and creation of jobs in the EU. It is closely linked to another action proposed under COSME with the same general objective, called the "innovation broker". The innovation broker is an entity embedded in the innovation lifecycle in a way that brings together public buyers and potentially aggregates their needs while presenting them with strategically chosen solutions coming from the networks it convenes with the industry, academia, etc.

The action also follows up on the commitment of the Commission contained in the Accelerating Clean Energy Innovation Communication¹² to boost market uptake of innovative clean energy solutions through public procurement.

¹¹ COM (2016) 733 final, 22 November 2016

¹² COM (2016) 763 final, 30 November 2016

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

Calls for proposals for setting up consortia of public procurers from at least two Member States would be launched. A gradual approach would be in principle favoured, by having a thematic call for proposals every year, for 3 years. This would enable the Commission to target priority areas like health, clean energy or intelligent transport. At the same time, such an approach would give the possibility to take into account the lessons learnt from the first call to feed into the other calls. The first call could start with a focus on health and clean energy, which are unanimously seen as very promising areas for PPI, with the greatest possible impact, while leaving the door open for other proposals.

The actions should typically last for 3 to 4 years.

The co-financing would cover the following phases of PPI:

Assessment of their needs by public procurers;

Capacity Building and coordination between procurers (e.g. training, exchanges, secondment of personnel);

Market consultation (supporting the process of dialogue with potential contractors to assess the state-of-the-art and technological limitations for potential innovative solutions);

Specification development (supporting contracting authorities to articulate their needs in a way that ensures the best response from potential contractors);

Definition and implementation of award criteria

Co-financing of purchasing costs.

Communication to the outside on the achievements of the projects

Proposals that envisage joint cross-border procurement would be given an advantage. This was an area where previous consortia, financed under the CIP, had experienced difficulties. Co-financing such initiatives will give the Commission first-hand feedback on the implementation of Article 39 of Directive 2014/24 (the Public Procurement Directive).

EXPECTED RESULTS

This action is expected to provide an impulse to the purchase of innovative solutions in the EU. The multiplier effect of previous Commission co-financing under CIP was, in some cases, staggering. For instance, the Pro-Lite project on innovative lighting, with a grant for EUR 2 million, is currently leading to an approximate EUR 1.5 billion procurement of innovative solutions by Transport for London, one of the project partners. A significant part of this procurement is being attributed to SMEs. In another instance, following the Ecoquip project, the Sant'Orsola Hospital in Bologna is procuring EUR 200 million worth of innovative ancillary hospital services where, again, SMEs are expected to win the lion's share, either directly or as subcontractors to a larger company. The city of Eindhoven, who was involved in the SPA project, decided to extend the scope of its planned renovation scheme of municipal buildings using innovative solutions to EUR 150 million. This makes a strong case, based on concrete examples, in favour of investing EU money into PPI projects.

The other benefit of such an action is the spreading of good procurement practices with a growing number of procurers. Again, we can rely on the previous calls for proposals under

CIP for evidence. The dissemination of information on how to procure innovation or the lessons learnt in the process was very broad. The key requirements of the call enabling this achievement should be the setting up of a dedicated website and the participation in specific fora of public procurers.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for proposals	Co-financing of public procurement of innovation consortia	4 000 000
TOTAL		4 000 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q1 2018
Award	Q2 2018
Signature of the grant agreement	Q3 2018
Total duration of the grant agreement: 36 – 48 months	

INDICATORS

- number of public procurers involved
- number of countries represented in the consortia
- number of suppliers involved in procurement (at consultation stage, at award stage), out of which proportion of SMEs
- number of jobs directly created by the project (with beneficiaries and with suppliers, the latter if feasible)
- direct procurement amount
- indirect procurement amount (after the end of the action, but still linked to the action)

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

It is proposed to co-finance 90% of collaborative actions (linked to the preparation, execution and follow-up of the public tender) and 25% of the actual purchase of innovative solutions.

Financing a higher proportion (75% or 90%) of the purchases would take away all risk from procurers and the need to optimise the results in view of the procurers' own interest.

C. FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS FOR ENTERPRISES

GRO/SME/18/C/01 - SME POLICY (SPR, Start-ups, outreach)

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The objective is to support the creation of a **better business environment** for SMEs with the following actions:

- the **SME Performance Review (SPR)**, providing an empirical statistical tool to monitor SME performance and guide policy making. It supports the Commission's monitoring of improvements in the framework conditions for enterprises, including the implementation of the Small Business Act (SBA);
- the **SME policy implementation** supporting the implementation of the SBA by ensuring the follow-up and monitoring including exchange of good practices;
- the **Outreach tools** providing communication and information tools to promote and inform on SME policy implementation including available support at EU and Member States level;
- the **follow-up of Start-up & Scale-up initiative, including second chance and transfer of business**, disseminating information on and providing support to the initiatives taken to improve the business environment for SMEs creation and scaling-up, facilitating transfer of businesses and helping entrepreneurs in difficulty.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The **SME Performance Review** is made up of annual reports and studies. The 2018 annual report to be issued in autumn will feed into the preparation for the European Semester Country Reports 2019, including an overview of the size, structure and importance of European SMEs, outline the major trends and provide a summary of recent policy developments. The country fact sheets will be instrumental in the monitoring of the SME Policy implementation. In addition, there will be thematic studies.

The **SME policy implementation** measure will cover the annual SME Assembly (including the European Enterprise Promotion Awards - EEPA), the SME Week and the Single Market Forum (SMF) events. It will also cover the meetings of the SME Envoys network, the SBA National Contact Points (Sherpas to the SME Envoys), the SME Week coordinators, the EEPA Single points of contact and other relevant experts meetings (SPR national experts, late payment directive national experts). The **Outreach tools** (web-based and audio-visual tools, printed leaflets, social media campaigns, SME definition tool) aim at communicating SME policy to SMEs and stakeholders. It will also cover communication activities linked to the SME Envoys network.

The **follow-up of Start-up & Scale-up Initiative (including second chance and transfer of business)** action will cover the organisation of events, workshops, analysis, platforms, mapping and any other action needed to support the follow-up of the Start-up and Scale-up Initiative adopted in November 2016 such as the Ideas from Europe initiative or the follow-up of the Transfer of business Conference held in 2017).

EXPECTED RESULTS

SME Performance Review:

- Improved knowledge and understanding of the situation of European SME complementing data from existing other Commission monitoring mechanism and building on the SME-related parts in current European Semester Country Reports;
- High quality estimation and analysis provides a basis for evidence-based policy making;
- Comparison against the large enterprises sector and benchmarking against the EU average.

SME policy implementation:

- Increased commitment of MS to implement the SBA through the good functioning of the SME Envoys
- Increased involvement of SME stakeholders in EU-level policy making through the annual SME Assembly and more frequent arrangements to collect feedback on future EU-initiatives.
- Maintain the SME week as a "vitrine" to allow Members States and other countries participating in COSME to showcase their SME policy instruments and activities

Outreach tools:

- Increased awareness of EU programmes and initiatives to support SMEs
- Increased awareness of the good practices in the area of SME policy

Follow-up of Start-up & Scale-up Initiative:

- Increased awareness of EU programmes and initiatives and of the good practices in the area.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Specific contracts under framework contracts	SPR	1 000 000
Contribution agreement under Framework Agreement (World Bank) / Cross sub-delegation with DG REGIO	SPR – Study (data gathering)	800 000
Administrative arrangement with JRC	SPR – JRC	200 000
Call for tenders and specific contracts under a framework contract	SME policy implementation (SME Assembly, SME Week, SMF)	2 200 000
Specific contracts under a framework contract	SME policy implementation (SME Envoys network, expert meeting)	700 000
Specific grant agreement under Framework Partnership Agreement (max co-fin. 95%) & specific contracts	Outreach tools	800 000
Call for tenders and Specific	Follow-up of Start-up &	900 000

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
contracts under a framework contract	Scale-up Initiative	
Total		6 600 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
SPR <i>Signature of the specific contracts</i>	Q2-Q3 2018
SPR- JRC <i>Administrative arrangement</i>	Q3
SME policy implementation (SME Assembly, SME Week, SMF) <i>Publication of the call</i>	Q1-Q2 2018
<i>Award</i>	Q3 2018
<i>Signature of the contract</i>	Q4 2018
SME Policy implementation (SME Envoys network, expert meeting) <i>Signature of the specific contract</i>	Q2-Q3 2018
Outreach tools <i>Signature of the specific contract/grant agreement</i>	Q2-Q3 2018
Follow-up of Start-up & Scale-up Initiative <i>Publication of the call</i>	Q1-Q2 2018
<i>Award</i>	Q3 2018
<i>Signature of the contract/grant agreement</i>	Q4 2018
Total duration of the contract/grant agreement: 12 to 24 months depending from the action	

INDICATORS

SME Performance Review:

1. The annual report on European SMEs published in due time to inform European Semester work
2. A complete set of SBA fact sheets (average length around 15 pages each) published in due time

3. Thematic studies published in due time

SME policy implementation:

1. Number of meetings organised and number of participants

3. Timely dissemination of the results

4. Progress achieved in the implementation of the measures in the 10 key areas of the SME policy

Outreach tools:

1. Timely production of tools (web-based, audio-visual and/or printed leaflets, social media campaigns)

2. Effective dissemination of tools and use in major events

3. Impact on target public (number of impacts, number of visits for websites, number of videos viewed online)

Follow-up of Start-up & Scale-up Initiative

1. Number of participants to the meetings

2. Timely dissemination of the results

3. Effective dissemination of tools and impact on target public

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

75% or 90%

Except max 95% for the specific grant agreement under Framework Partnership Agreement for some of the Outreach tools

GRO/SME/18/C/02 - EU REFIT STAKEHOLDER PLATFORM FOR BETTER REGULATION

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

Advise the Commission on issues concerning regulatory fitness, encouraging stakeholder input. The group has been created on 19/05/2015 (COM decision C(2015)3260).

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The REFIT Platform was launched as part of the Better Regulation Agenda to advise on how to make EU legislation and its implementation in Member States more efficient and more effective in achieving its objectives.

The REFIT Platform brings together representatives from the EESC and CoR and Member State experts, stakeholders, supporting the objective to foster smart growth by aiming to improve the regulatory environment.

The work of the Commission in this area involves contracting studies on issues of regulatory fitness.

IT tools like the Better Regulation portal, 'Lighten the Load Have your Say' website, REFIT Scoreboard , Stakeholders communication website, are needed to support these actions, ensure transparency and stakeholder consultations in particular. A communication plan will also be financed to promote the Better Regulation Portal more widely by targeting stakeholders on social media.

A Eurobarometer survey will be undertaken in 2018 to evaluate the progress and the

perception of the administrative burden reduction actions carried out so far.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The Platform advises the Commission based on issues raised by stakeholders and the Platform members on regulatory fitness at all levels of government in the EU.

The mandate of the Platform also covers the implementation of EU regulation: gathering evidence and opinions on the practical impact on-the-ground and any issues concerning Member State implementation.

Evidence gathering studies could support discussions within the Platform and the development of specific REFIT actions.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Experts reimbursements (Non remunerated experts) and costs for meetings or events (specific contract)	Meetings	150 000
5 Specific contracts under a framework contract and/or Open Call for tender	Studies	1 100 000
5 Specific contracts under a framework contract	IT Development	250 000
3 Specific contracts under a framework contract	Better Regulation Portal Communication	300 000
Total		1 800 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Conferences/meetings/events/workshops/studies/material	Q1 – Q4 2018
Total duration of the contract: 12 months	

INDICATORS

1. Number of plenary sessions and preparatory meetings (target: 2 Governmental experts sessions, 2 Stakeholders sessions and 3 joint (governmental and stakeholders) meetings;
3. Studies to measure regulatory burdens and costs, the results of EU actions or implementation best practice, Eurobarometer survey, Studies on burden quantification.
4. IT tool (Better Regulation Portal, REFIT/Scoreboard tool, Stakeholders communication web site) to be developed.

GRO/SME/18/C/03 – EUROPEAN CLUSTER COLLABORATION PLATFORM

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The objective of this action is to promote the development of more world-class clusters in Europe, with a view to fostering the competitiveness, sustainability and resource-efficiency of enterprises, notably SMEs. It aims at intensifying cluster collaboration across regional and sectoral boundaries and facilitating SMEs' access to clusters and internationalisation activities.

The ultimate goal is to better connect clusters and ecosystems across Europe in order to accelerate industrial modernisation and boost entrepreneurship in emerging industries with growth potential. It will facilitate more strategic inter-regional collaboration and internationalisation activities of SMEs as well as the implementation of smart specialisation strategies and cluster policies by linking up and supporting cluster stakeholders across Europe.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

This action will develop a renewed European Cluster Collaboration Platform to accelerate the partnering and knowledge-sharing among cluster organisations, their cluster firms and cluster policy-makers across Europe. The Platform will become the main online hub for cluster stakeholders across Europe by merging the European Observatory for Cluster and Industrial Change and the European Resource Efficiency Knowledge Centre into the current European Cluster Collaboration Platform to exploit synergies and efficiencies.

The main task of the renewed platform will be to provide consolidated and high-quality support services and tools for the mapping and evidence-based analysis of clusters, cluster organisations and cluster policies and to facilitate their partnering and joint actions to support SMEs to internationalise, innovate and become more resource-efficient. They will include, amongst others, the following actions:

1. Providing a consolidated cluster mapping and networking tool for intensifying cluster collaboration across regional and sectoral boundaries. This will bring together the mapping of clusters, cluster organisations, cluster initiative, cluster policies and other key cluster stakeholders in one single online tool that will provide up-to-date information at national, regional and sectoral levels on the cluster landscape within European and strategic third countries (e.g. on policies, programmes, funding, initiatives, strength, actors, labelling, etc.). It will represent the main instrument for European cluster organisations to profile themselves, exchange experiences and search for potential partners within and beyond Europe.
2. Offering statistical and trend analysis of clusters and industrial change. This will include inter-regional and cross-sectoral value chain analysis, statistical cluster analysis, foresight and trend analysis and inter-regional cluster mapping across Europe. It will identify favourable framework conditions and bottlenecks for the modernisation of existing industries and the development of new industrial value chains, emerging industries and international opportunities through clusters by a series of reports.
3. Providing customised policy advice to selected model demonstrator regions and facilitating mutual cluster policy learning, inter-regional and transnational

cooperation. This will provide a regular policy exchange forum and guidance to regional, national and European policy-makers for intensifying the exchange of information and the showcasing of good practice on the design, implementation and monitoring of modern cluster policies and smart specialisation strategies in support of SMEs internationalisation, industrial transformation and resource efficiency.

4. Organising a series of international cluster matchmaking events in the EU and third countries to strategically support joint actions and the internationalisation of their SME, notably in the context of major international trade fairs. This will bring together delegations of European cluster representatives to meet other European and international partners to promote strategic cooperation.
5. Promoting and facilitating exchanges, cross-fertilisation and learning among the pan-European Strategic Cluster Partnerships including those set up in the context of the Thematic Smart Specialisation Platforms, and forging international collaboration in areas of strategic interest within and beyond Europe. This will include the provision of advisory support services and the organisation of partnering and coaching events for European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for the implementation of smart specialisation or internationalisation strategies, to which the INNOSUP-1 cluster projects for new industrial value chains supported under Horizon2020 will also be invited.
6. Providing direct assistance and support to SMEs involved in European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for the implementation of operational collaboration activities with strategic partners. This will concretely contribute to scaling-up European SMEs internationalisation efforts by testing in a pilot the channelling of financial support to help SMEs in building and implementing inter-regional collaborative projects and partnerships within the EU and with third countries (i.e. Cluster Go International Mini Grants for SMEs).
7. Supporting cluster organisations and their SMEs to proactively promote and implement resource efficiency: This will provide and continuously update information, synthesised data and case examples of resource-efficient solutions through the European Resource Efficiency Knowledge Centre web section of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform as well as training and coaching of cluster managers so that they can support SMEs to improve their resource efficiency.
8. Disseminating information and awareness-raising: This will spread good practices, success stories, new developments from cluster organisations, associations, experts and policy-makers across Europe and worldwide as well as inform about partnering opportunities, through regular newsletters, webinars, interactive tools, social media communication, and events such as the European Cluster Conference.

The action builds upon and further develops work currently undertaken by the European Cluster Collaboration Platform under the Cluster Internationalisation Programme for SMEs (GRO/SME/16/C/05) and the European Observatory for Cluster and Industrial Change (GRO/SME/16/C/10-2), with a view to seek synergies and provide complementary support towards the cluster community across Europe through one single portal. It will liaise with and compliment other related networking and analysis tools, in particular those of the Enterprise Europe Network and the Smart Specialisation Platform. The action thus also facilitates the activities of interregional partnerships of the Thematic Smart Specialisation Platform on Industrial Modernisation¹³ and of cluster-related European Territorial Cooperation projects (in

particular Interreg Europe¹⁴) and relevant smart specialisation pilot actions¹⁵ as well as of INNOSUP-1 cluster projects for new industrial value chains under Horizon2020.

As cluster organisations are also ideally positioned to reach SMEs to encourage, inform and support them to become more resource-efficient and undertake related investments, the European Resource Efficiency Excellence Centre (ENT/SME/15/C/N09) will thus be integrated in the European Cluster Collaboration Platform. The dedicated web section under the platform will be continuously updated to capture the latest technological developments in resource efficiency, taking account of the evolution of prices and availability/scarcity of different resources, with a view to supporting permanent competitiveness improvements of European SMEs. This will provide direct information to SMEs as well as more advanced technical information to cluster organisations. Together with related training and coaching offerings, it will enable cluster organisations to advice their SMEs and support their resource efficiency actions.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The action shall accelerate the development of more world-class clusters in COSME participating countries by establishing a one-stop-shop for cluster collaboration and evidence-based policy-making in Europe. It will reinforce cluster cooperation within and beyond Europe and boost SMEs internationalisation and innovation efforts, including on resource-efficiency, and thus boost their growth and create high-value jobs.

The action shall contribute to the development of better evidence-based cluster policies and cluster initiatives that should assist enterprises, particularly SMEs, in developing new, globally competitive advantages in new industrial value chains that cut across sectors and competences, thereby being well positioned to adjust to industrial change and to reap growth opportunities. It will therefore support policies and actions for the modernisation of industry and the implementation and linking of smart specialisation strategies. Thereby it also aims to help improve the linking-up, quality, durability and impact of the around EUR 2.3 billion investments planned for cluster support and business networks under the current European Regional Development Fund.

The action is expected to significantly raise the extent and level of strategic inter-regional collaboration and facilitate investments across borders. It will not only continue to map and profile more than 500 cluster organisations and their ecosystems across Europe to facilitate networking, but also concretely support the collaboration efforts of cluster organisations and their SMEs within and beyond European Strategic Cluster Partnerships. As cluster organisations can act as effective springboards and transformation and growth accelerators for SMEs, they can help them to innovate, facilitate access to and strategic positioning in new and global value chains and develop business collaboration with long-term impact.

The action foresees to create concrete opportunities and incentives to engage in strategic inter-regional collaboration, such as through the organisation of international cluster matchmaking events, supporting stronger connections among stakeholders of the Thematic Smart Specialisation Platforms and the testing of direct support to European SMEs for the development of joint collaborative projects with international partners (Cluster Go International Mini Grants for SMEs).

The action will further contribute to the long-term sustainable competitiveness of European

SMEs by encouraging and widening the uptake and implementation of resource efficiency measures across value chains, including a targeted reach out through cluster organisations.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for tenders	European Cluster Collaboration Platform	5 500 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q2 2018
Award	Q4 2018
Signature of the contract	Q2 2019
Total duration of the contract: 24 months (with the possibility of renewal for 2 more years)	

INDICATORS

1. Quality, impact and visibility of the supported actions on raising cluster collaboration, to be measured by the number of cluster organisations, their businesses – notably SMEs – and cluster policy-makers from different COSME participating countries having benefited from the supported actions; the number of SMEs directly supported; the number of cluster matchmaking meetings, coachings, policy learning events organised and the number of participants; the number and impact of partnership agreements and collaborative projects resulting from the supported action within Europe and beyond as well as through surveys;
2. Quality, impact and visibility of analysis, policy recommendations and good practices identified as well as of the services and events organised to facilitate mutual policy learning, to be measured by the number, coverage and level of regional and national policy makers having actively participated; the number, coverage and level of references to the Platform's work in policy discussions, events and policy documents; the number and scale of follow-up measures for the implementation of smart specialisation strategies, industrial modernisation, internationalisation and resource-efficiency policies, including the mobilisation of European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon2020 and other public and private funds in support of modern cluster policies; as well as through satisfaction surveys;
3. Quality, impact and visibility of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform web sections, to be measured by key performance indicators for its web sections, the use of the consolidated cluster mapping and networking tool, the European Resource Efficiency Self-Assessment Tool for SMEs and other tools, the number of downloads of deliverables and reports on clusters, industrial change, SME internationalisation and resource efficiency, and the number, coverage and level of references to the platform and its work.

GRO/SME/18/C/04 – EUROPEAN CLUSTER EXCELLENCE PROGRAMME

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The objective of this measure is to strengthen cluster excellence management to address the innovation, growth and globalisation challenges that SMEs are facing by helping cluster organisations to develop strategic plans for a better cooperation at European and international level,

Cluster organisations are enhancing collaboration, networking and learning on innovation, channelling specialised and customised business support services to SMEs. High quality cluster management is a key element of successful world-class clusters **to foster SMEs competitiveness and for assisting companies to access global markets successfully.**

Moreover cluster excellence management in the EU requires cluster managers' skills following industrial trends and major business opportunity that comes along with industrial change.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

To further develop cluster cooperation projects and partnerships:

We propose to support Cluster Excellence management skills in cluster organisations as instrumental towards world-class clusters. A particular emphasis will be placed on the relevance of cluster managers skills and cluster development based on smart specialisation strategies in the regions. At this point of development of the programme, the Commission considers necessary to further develop the European cluster benchmarking and labelling system in synergy with collaboration activities by the Smart Specialisation Platform by Interreg Europe within the EU and the European Cluster Collaboration Platform at international level in order to scale-up partnerships already under development.

Support to cluster Excellence management will range from strategic analysis of cluster potential by taking in consideration:

- the potential for cluster innovation and growth in the framework of the European value-chain where it is located against the emerging trends in industry such as digitisation, circular economy, talent development, world markets;
- the SMEs revealed priorities to develop within the cluster through surveys and workshops and other means; to be extended to technology centres and incubators or accelerators, risk-capital providers relevant to the smart specialisation strategy of the region on one hand and innovation in the European value-chains that the clusters are part of.

This measure builds upon the European Cluster Excellence Initiative (ECEI) launched in 2009 to create more world-class clusters across the EU by strengthening cluster excellence. At the end of the initiative in 2011, two separate independent spin-off organisations were set up by two consortium partners to carry on with the work: The **European Secretariat for Cluster Analysis (ESCA)** and The **European Foundation for Cluster Excellence (EFCE)**.

By mid-2017, 925 cluster organizations from 41 countries have applied the EU benchmarking methodology, 756 acquired the Bronze label of cluster excellence, 84 cluster organizations got the Silver label and 83 cluster organizations the Gold label.

Since 2011, more than 60.000 SMEs have been involved as members of the labelled clusters organisations, actively contributing to clusters activities in 15 technology areas.

EXPECTED RESULTS

By addressing both smart specialisation strategies in the regions, innovation in the value-chains to which the cluster belongs and positioning in global value chain as well as on the basis of good results achieved since 2009 in quantitative terms, with about 925 cluster organizations having received the cluster excellence label thereby upgrading skills and improving performance in support of SMEs, this measure attends to support Excellence management to materialise on:

- strategic analysis of cluster potential to grow and innovate through taking advantage of smart specialisation strategies in the region.
- strategic analysis of innovation potential in the European value-chain the cluster belongs to. It includes surveying SMEs, and innovation-support structures such as technology centres, incubators, risk-capital.
- cluster development roadmap for implementation of a cluster strategy based on smart specialisation strategy in the region and innovation and growth potential in the European value-chains
- analysis of cross-sector inputs to enhance cluster competitiveness
- cluster managers skills improvement through mutual learning between cluster organisations in focussing on relevance to smart specialisation strategies and innovation in European and global value-chains
- cluster managers skills improvement in through skills upgrade on supporting incubators, accelerators and early-stage and venture-capital organisations in the cluster
- enhanced awareness on and exposure to start-up incubators, accelerators and risk-capital in the region by cluster managers,
- review of cluster Excellence benchmarking labelling by the grant beneficiary in the light of regional smart specialisation strategies and value-chain innovation; expanded number of Cluster organisations benchmarked under Cluster Excellence management criteria and labelled, as well as the number of upgraded labels from bronze to Gold, both activities exclusively for individual located in less developed regions,

Key deliverables are number of strategic analysis and key related surveys per main topic (cluster own potential, value-chain positioning, ie European, global, relevance to regional smart specialisation strategies, cross-sector input analysis for competitiveness and innovation), skills upgrade on incubators, accelerators, risk-capital), educational visits, benchmarking Excellence labelling where appropriate.

The action will also aim to help improve the quality, durability and impact of the around EUR 2.3 billion investments planned for cluster support and business networks under the current European Regional Development Fund programmes.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for proposals (to support 6 to 8 new projects/partnerships)	European Cluster excellence Programme	900 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q2 2018
Award	Q3 2018
Signature of the grant agreements	Q4 2018
Total duration of the grant agreements: 18 months	

INDICATORS

Strategic analysis produced by main topic, cluster innovation and growth potential, value-chain analysis, European and global, smart specialisation analysis and inter-action and meetings with regional authorities, European Structural and Investment Funds managing authorities and implementing bodies, strategic analysis of cross-sectors inputs, including emerging trends in industry towards digitisation and resource efficiency (circular economy) and including SMEs and other cluster members surveys and workshops.

Cluster development plan and implementation roadmap. New or enhanced mission statements and Vision statements for the cluster.

Educational visits and key networking activity such as visits (regional authorities, incubators, accelerators, risk-capital providers).

Number of new cluster organisations benchmarked on cluster Excellence management and labelled, or labelling upgrades by clusters in less developed regions.

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

EC contribution: 75%

GRO/SME/18/C/05 – LIGHT INDUSTRIES (TEXTILE/CLOTHING, FOOTWEAR AND LEATHER SECTORS) INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY PROJECT

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The action will contribute to the general objective of reinforcing the competitiveness of European SMEs active in light-industries, namely textile, clothing, footwear and leather sectors. It is aimed at exploiting new business opportunities and enhancing their market performance. The main focus is, in particular, the deployment and integration of new technologies, tools and manufacturing techniques into their business models, which enable the creation of new products or services.

The operational objectives of the Light Industries Innovation and Technology project are:

- Promoting cross-EU cooperation between SMEs from light-industries and providers/owners of novel and innovative technologies;
- Promoting the use of technology-ready solutions to improve productivity, value chain integration, resource efficiency and create new high added-value niche-market products.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The project will support partnerships between SMEs, notably manufacturers, active in traditional light-industries, namely textile, clothing, footwear and leather sectors on the one hand and, on the other hand, providers/owners of novel and innovative business solutions based on technology (almost) ready for scale up and deployment such as:

- Start-ups and SMEs active in the field of innovative technologies (digital and key enabling technologies)
- Technology Innovation Centres
- Incubators and accelerators
- Research Centres
- Universities.

These partnerships will receive technical and economic advice, and financial support (lump-sum) to integrate and/or use innovative technology-based solutions, including digital and advanced manufacturing tools, in the manufacturing process or business model. Moreover, coaching and tailor-made advice (e.g. patents, IPR, royalties) will be provided to partnerships.

The project will be implemented via a trans-national platform, which will be responsible for:

- Selecting, via transparent calls, the participants of the project,
- Organising and validating partnerships,
- Ensuring tailor-made support through the duration of the partnerships,
- Ensuring information and publicity of the project,
- Managing the implementation of the project.

Final beneficiaries of the project will be both the SMEs active in light-industries, and providers/owners of novel and innovative technologies. On the one hand, SMEs active in light-industries sectors will develop new and innovative products, processes or services with technological high-added value to improve their competitive position and, on the other hand, providers/owners of novel and innovative technologies will develop new market opportunities for the technology-ready solutions.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The project is expected to achieve the following results:

- Identification of the major obstacles which characterise the gap between innovation/research and uptake into the market,
- Development and testing of concrete actions focused on faster market up-take of innovation for the establishment of policy solutions,
- Increase investment in new and innovative technologies, production processes and other solutions to create new added-value products, jobs and services while improving productivity and resource efficiency.
- Support SMEs to overcome obstacles to deploying/using advanced technologies, and entering niche markets for new products and services.
- Creation of stronger links between businesses active in light-industries on the one hand and researchers and technology centres, on the other hand.
- Development of new products and services provided by the SMEs involved in the partnerships.
- New market opportunities for the owners/providers of advanced technologies and technology-ready solutions.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for tenders	Light Industries (Textile/Clothing, Footwear and Leather sectors) Innovation and Technology project	3 000 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q1 2018
Award	Q3 2018
Signature of the contract	Q4 2018
Total duration of the contract: 48 months	

INDICATORS

- Number of transnational partnerships created
- Number of SMEs willing to participate and having benefited from the project
- Number of technology providers willing to participate and having benefited from the project
- Number of innovative technologies, tools or solutions being deployed
- Number of innovative products or services being launched on the market or presented at relevant trade fairs and exhibitions.

GRO/SME/18/C/06 – ENHANCING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE EUROPEAN TOURISM SECTOR

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The general objective of the tourism actions is to strengthen the competitiveness of the tourism sector and increase its contribution to economic growth and jobs in the EU. The actions under COSME will particularly aim at improving the business environment for tourism enterprises, through enhanced socio-economic and market intelligence and exchange of best practices, as well as at diversifying and increasing the visibility of Europe's transnational tourism offer and promoting Europe as a tourism destination in third markets. The action will also seek complementarities, as far as possible, with tourism related investments under the European Structural and Investment Funds, in particular European Regional Development Fund investments in tourism assets, services and promotion, and European Territorial Cooperation programmes.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The following types of activities will be implemented under the two operational objectives:

I) Creating conditions for a favourable and competitive environment for tourism businesses, in particular through enhanced socio-economic and market intelligence and

exchange of best practices

The main actions under this objective will contribute to improving the competitive environment for businesses, in particular SMEs, in the tourism sector.

(1) Continuation of the cooperation with OECD on, among others, the bi-annual report "Tourism Trends and Policies".

(2) Organisation of a number of events to debate with Member States, the industry, trade unions, academies and other stakeholders the main challenges and key priorities for the competitiveness of the sector. This will include the organisation of the European Tourism Forum (Presidency event) and the European Tourism Day, but also of other meetings and/or workshops.

II) Diversifying and increasing the visibility of Europe's transnational tourism offer

Under this objective, the following actions will be carried out:

(3) Implementation of targeted actions under the 2018 EU-China Tourism Year, announced by President Juncker on 12 July 2016, through contribution and support to networking activities, technical meetings and organisation of dedicated thematic (e.g cultural tourism, film festivals, etc.) activities.

(4) Co-funding of projects which support the promotion and development of transnational thematic tourism products (e.g. partnerships, including destinations and SMEs, developing transnational tourism products linked to cultural and creative industries).

(5) Continuation of the EDEN project, which contributes, amongst others, to create new tourism offer in less known European destinations. The action under the current Work Programme will consist in selection of new European Destinations of Excellence.

(6) In order to attract increased international tourist arrivals from third countries to Europe, cooperation will be continued and strengthened with the European Travel Commission (ETC) through an ad-hoc grant for extensive actions to promote Europe as a tourist destination. The focus will be on transnational thematic products such as cultural tourism, creative industries and high-end products, gastronomy, natural heritage, etc. in selected third country markets (to be decided together with the member states).

EXPECTED RESULTS

All the actions will contribute to enhancing the competitiveness of the tourism sector. More concretely, amongst others, the actions will provide the following expected results:

- More complete statistics and qualitative market intelligence to help better assess the position of EU tourism in the world tourism market, tourism sector contribution to growth, employment and its effects on other economic sectors. They will also help public authorities to design their tourism policies and business managers to take knowledge-based decisions for their marketing and promotion activities.
- Consolidated, regular dialogue between and exchange of views and of good practices with the public and private stakeholders.
- Contribution to promoting Europe as a tourism destination in China through facilitating business partnerships and increasing the interest of Chinese tourists in spending their holidays in Europe.
- Enlarged and diversified European transnational thematic tourism offer and enhanced synergies between tourism and cultural and creative industries (CCIs).
- Selection and promotion of up to 25 lesser known/emerging European Destinations of

Excellence and better awareness among potential tourists of lesser known tourism destinations.

- Increased third country tourists' motivation to travel to European destinations and increased tourist flows to Europe from strategic third country markets.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Ad-hoc grant	1. Cooperation with OECD	400 000
4 Specific contracts under Framework Contracts, Reimbursement of experts	2. Events, dissemination and exchanges of good practices in tourism	300 000
6-8 Specific contracts under Framework Contracts, Reimbursement of experts	3. EU-China Tourism Year Implementation	500 000
Call for proposals	4. Support the development and promotion of transnational thematic tourism products exploiting synergies between tourism and CCIs	2 000 000
Ad-hoc grants	5. Diversifying and increasing the tourism offer – European Destinations of Excellence: Selection 2018	500 000
Ad-hoc grant	6. Cooperation with European Travel Commission on the promotion of Europe as a tourism destination in third country markets	2 400 000
TOTAL		6 100 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

1) Improving socio-economic knowledge of the sector through cooperation with OECD (Ad-hoc grant)

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of call	Q2 2018

Award	Q3 2018
Signature of Grant Agreement	Q4 2018
Total duration of the grant agreement: 24 months	
MAXIMUM RATE OF EU CO-FINANCING	
75%	
2) Events, dissemination and exchange of good practices in tourism (Specific contracts under framework contracts and experts' reimbursement)	
INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE	
MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Signature of the contracts	Q1-Q3 2018
Total duration of the contracts: 12 months	
MAXIMUM RATE OF EU CO-FINANCING	
N/A	
3) EU-China Tourism Year Implementation (Specific contracts under Framework Contracts and experts' reimbursement)	
INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE	
MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Signature of the contracts	Q1-Q3 2018
Total duration of the contracts: 12 months	
MAXIMUM RATE OF EU CO-FINANCING	
N/A	
4) Support to the development and promotion of transnational thematic tourism products exploiting synergies between tourism and CCIs (Call for proposals)	
INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE	
MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q2 2018
Award	Q1 2019
Signature of Grant Agreements	Q2 2019
Total duration of grant agreements: 24 months	
MAXIMUM RATE OF EU CO-FINANCING	

75%

5) European Destinations of Excellence: Selection 2018 (Ad-hoc grants)

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q1 2018
Award	Q4 2018
Signature of Grant Agreements	Q1 2019
Indicative total duration: 18 months	

MAXIMUM RATE OF EU CO-FINANCING

50%

Previous action sets the co-financing at 50%. This is necessary in order to allow the limited budget to cover participation of up to 25 participating countries, while at the same time ensuring the quality of results of the actions undertaken within each project.

6) Cooperation with the European Travel Commission on the promotion of Europe as a tourism destination in third country markets (Ad-hoc grant)

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q2 2018
Award	Q3 2018
Signature of Grant Agreements	Q4 2018
Indicative total duration: 24 months	

MAXIMUM RATE OF EU CO-FINANCING

75%

INDICATORS

- 1) Improving socio-economic knowledge of the sector through cooperation with OECD
 - Number of policy/thematic analyses/reports (co-)produced by OECD
- 2) Events, dissemination and exchange of good practices in tourism
 - Number of events, conferences, workshops, expert meetings organised
 - Number of registered participants per event
- 3) EU-China Tourism Year Implementation
 - evolution of the intention to travel to/from EU/China (Long Haul Travel Sentiment Index)
- 4) Support to the development and promotion of transnational thematic tourism products exploiting synergies between tourism and CCIs
 - Number of countries participating in transnational cooperation projects
 - Number of SMEs involved in the development of transnational cooperation projects

- Increased awareness about and visibility of transnational thematic tourism offers exploiting synergies between tourism and CCIs (survey of key stakeholders)
- 5) European Destinations of Excellence: Selection 2018
 - Number of lesser known/emerging destinations selected as European Destinations of Excellence,
 - Increased awareness about and visibility of lesser known/emerging European Destinations of Excellence (survey of key stakeholders)
- 6) Cooperation with the European Travel Commission on the promotion of Europe as a tourism destination in third country markets
 - Increased number of third country tourism arrivals to Europe

GRO/SME/18/C/07 - NEW SKILLS FOR INDUSTRY

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The New Skills Agenda for Europe¹⁶ adopted by the European Commission in June 2016 refers to the **Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp)**¹⁷, offering a shared definition of entrepreneurship as a competence, with the aim to raise consensus among all stakeholders and to establish a bridge between the worlds of education and work. The framework is going to be a central instrument for the promotion and uptake of entrepreneurship education across Europe. It is essential to help public authorities, educational institutions and the private sector to use it. The new measure will bring together relevant players in a small group of countries to test how the framework can function as a catalyst and a tool to foster the entrepreneurial skills of young people.

The New Skills Agenda also stresses the importance of sectoral cooperation on skills (Blueprint) and of **high-tech skills**¹⁸ related to new key enabling technologies (KETs). In support of the acquisition of these skills, the measure will focus on the creation of new services¹⁹ and envision a future where a larger number of people would be employed in delivering new meaningful and profitable services for the society. A complementary measure will aim at better anticipating the future evolution of the supply and demand of KETs skills. It will develop an innovative pan-European methodology to produce trusted statistics and robust forecasts to support evidence based skills policies across Europe.

These measures on new skills for industry are addressing COSME objectives related to:

- Business environment for enterprises, including the competitiveness of enterprises and sectors;
- Promoting Entrepreneurship.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

Entrepreneurship:

European Entrepreneurship Framework

Objectives: The measure will include²⁰ (i) bringing together key stakeholders for interactive discussions around the Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp), with the

¹⁶ COM (2016) 381 of 10 June 2016. See: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2039_en.htm

¹⁷ The framework develops 15 broad competences along an 8-level progression model and proposes a comprehensive list of 442 learning outcomes. DG GROW is cooperating with DG EMPL to promote its implementation and follow-up activities.

¹⁸ See http://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/skills_en

¹⁹ Services already represent more than 70% of global GDP and manufacturing includes more and more services.

²⁰ In complementarity and synergy with other EntreComp actions

objective to build collaboration between education and training providers, enterprises and other stakeholders and to actively involve the target user groups in a co-design process; (ii) understanding and defining the role of each category of stakeholders in the usage of the framework; (iii) adapting and updating the framework to local needs, taking into account the specific educational settings and cultures involved; (iv) translating the learning outcomes included in the framework into concrete programmes and activities to take place at school, at university and in informal and non-formal settings; (v) assessing results in terms of an improved offer of entrepreneurship education and of the impact on skills acquired by young people. Eligible projects will include the development of education and training focused on entrepreneurial competences, in either formal, informal and non-formal settings, as set out in the framework. They will clearly articulate what innovative teaching and assessment methods were used to nurture the entrepreneurial competence in the different settings, highlighting the role of practical entrepreneurial experiences in the learning process.

Previous measures: the Commission launched in the past several actions to support entrepreneurship education and the development of entrepreneurial skills. In 2015 a European Entrepreneurship Education Network (EE-HUB) was created through a COSME grant: it brings together existing knowledge, serving as a hub for sharing good practice examples and for peer-learning.

European added-value: the European added value will lie in: 1) helping COSME countries and EU Member States in implementing the European Entrepreneurship Framework in practice; 2) bringing a group of countries (and/or regions) together to exchange experience and best practice in building a coherent methodology to support the development of entrepreneurial skills at national and local level; 3) disseminating, at the end of the action, lessons learnt from the process to stakeholders and policy makers from any other country.

High-tech skills:

Fostering new services and jobs creation

Objectives: The measure will provide an analysis on the state-of-play regarding services science²¹ including the provision of new services (with a particular focus on the needs of medium to low skilled people) and will try to provide a forward vision of new services jobs (and related skills) which could be taken up by people empowered by KETs within the next five years. It will also identify and promote best practices both in terms of relevant policies, concrete experiences and success stories. There is significant employment potential in several important services areas²². The measure will focus on the opportunity to create new services jobs contributing to increase employment.

Previous work: The measure will build on the results of the KETs skills initiative and the further work on high-tech leadership skills for Europe²³. Several studies²⁴ drawn attention to challenges for the labour market that the digital disruption may lead to, with replacement of some jobs, especially in the middle of the income distribution, leading to job market polarisation. There may be friction and anxiety due to uncertainty and the number of

²¹ Service science is a new field emerging from the rapid development of services across the industrial world and it is based on an interdisciplinary approach to the study, design, and implementation of services systems – complex systems in which specific arrangements of people and technologies take actions that provide value for others. It is rooted in the interdisciplinary study of computer science, research, engineering, mathematics, business strategy, management sciences, decision theory, social and cognitive sciences, and legal sciences.

²² For example, with an ageing workforce and society, the need to deliver more and better lifelong learning opportunities and caring services is increasing.

²³ In particular, DG RTD has been involved in these two previous actions and will continue to be closely associated.

²⁴ Starting with a widely noted study published in 2013, Carl Benedikt Frey and Michael Osborne from Oxford University examined the probability of computerisation for 702 occupations and found that 47% of workers had jobs at high risk of potential automation. More recent analyses “Why Are There Still So Many Jobs”, Autor, 2015; “The Risk of Automation for Jobs in OECD Countries”, Arntz et al. 2016 have considered the automation of some tasks that together constitute a job, and predict a much lower impact on employment of around 9%. DG CNECT is studying the impact of digital technology (on-going) and artificial intelligence (under preparation) on work and jobs. The new measure will not address this issue to avoid duplication of efforts.

unemployed people may increase. It is important to recognise that it is unsettling for people's lives; necessary to address their concerns; and to foster actively new jobs opportunities.

European added-value: In the same way as manufacturing evolved from craftsmanship to scientific production in the early 20th century, efforts need to be made to promote a more rigorous, coherent and scientific approach to the design and the delivery of services using a combination of human capability enhanced by KETs, where the benefits for Europe would be very important. The measure will be implemented in close synergy with the Blueprint for cooperation on skills which be implemented (starting in 2017) in several pilot sectors.

Anticipating the future evolution of supply and demand in the area of KETs skills

Objectives: European industry has a growing demand for highly-skilled KETs professionals and business leaders – people capable of leading innovation and transformation of industries, and of taking innovative products from laboratories to production lines and the markets. Previous work demonstrated that there were no detailed statistics covering all Member States nor a forecast based a robust methodology. To overcome this, the action will develop and implement a new innovative methodology covering KETs skills to forecast the supply and demand. The action aims at providing detailed trusted statistics and forecasts on KETs skills, to support evidence based policy making. In addition, it will identify and share best practices on high-tech innovation leadership skills and talent development to facilitate their take-up by industry and the public sector across Europe.

Previous Measures: In 2014, the European Commission launched the KETs skills initiative building on the recommendation of the High Level Group on KETs. It identified the multidisciplinary KETs skills needed by industry and delivered two reports²⁵ in 2015 presenting a vision for the development of skills for KETs and an analysis of the state-of-play in Europe with examples of best practices. In 2016, further work on high-tech leadership skills for Europe identified the key challenges in this area and formulated detailed recommendations. The action will build on these results and implement the most important recommendations as follow-up activities.

European added value: The measure will provide robust pan-European statistics and forecasts by geographical location, category and group of workers, differentiated by skills levels and skill sets. Results would be published and disseminated using already existing platforms, such as the KETs observatory. The results of the project would be used as input to future policies.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Entrepreneurship skills:

European Entrepreneurship Framework: The action will enable the introduction of the Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp) in the field and to translate it into concrete activities in a small number of pilot countries or regions that will develop and test the concept; and to build and test a model for the use of the framework that could be replicated – on a voluntary basis - in any other country or region.

High-tech skills:

Fostering new services and jobs creation: the action will provide an in-depth assessment of the state-of-play regarding services science and foresight scenarios regarding the creation of new services and jobs (with a particular focus on the needs of medium to low skilled people) in major service sectors such as training and healthcare as well as the sectors selected for the implementation of the Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills. It will also deliver a shared

²⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=8764

vision and long-term agenda to promote the services jobs of the future (and related skills) enabled by KETs. It will deliver and promote best practices in terms of relevant policies and experiences of implementation.

Anticipating the future evolution of supply and demand in the area of KETs skills: The action will produce robust sectoral and member state level forecasts of supply and demand of high-tech leadership and innovation skills. The monitoring and forecasting exercise will allow European and national policy makers to launch new initiatives and measure their impact based on trusted and high quality data. The sharing of best practices will allow member states' central and regional administrations as well as industry to take up proven and successful types of leadership skills and talent development, and implement them across Europe faster.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Entrepreneurship skills:		
- Call for proposals	Support for the implementation of a Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp)	1 000 000
High-tech skills:		
- Call for tenders	Fostering new services and jobs creation	500 000
- Call for tenders	Anticipating the future evolution of supply and demand in the area of KETs skills	500 000
Total		2 000 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Entrepreneurship skills:	
• Publication of the call	2Q2018
• Award	4Q2018
• Signature of the grant agreement	4Q2018
High-tech skills:	
• Publication of the calls	1Q2018
• Awards	3Q2018
• Signature of the contracts	3Q2018
Entrepreneurship skills: Total duration of the grant agreements:	36 months
High-tech skills: Total duration of each of the two contracts:	24 months

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER

INDICATORS

1. Number of participating countries and stakeholders;
2. Relevance of the recommendations and of good practices identified;
3. Satisfaction survey regarding the relevance of the results and the quality of the deliverables;
4. Number of follow-up measures taken by the Commission, public authorities and stakeholders;
5. Improvement of the talent pool and reduction of skills shortages;
6. Number of countries and regions where the European Entrepreneurship Framework was introduced and tested;
7. Effective model for the introduction of the framework in any potentially interested country or region was created;
8. Number of educational institutions and public or private stakeholders that benefited from this measure;
9. Number of participants and of countries represented in the final dissemination events.

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

Call for proposals (entrepreneurship): 90%

GRO/SME/18/C/08 – ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMUNITY OF PRACTITIONERS FOR THE EUROPEAN CATALOGUE OF ICT STANDARDS

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

In the procurement market of digital goods and services, SMEs are not participating on an equal footing with larger companies because of various barriers: lack of transparency in procurement rules, lack of knowledge of the procurer's needs making it difficult to target tenders, too expensive market research costs when it comes to exporting their product in other countries (level of national competition and national constraints other than EU rules).

The procurement of ICT solutions could also be made more professional from the procurer's side. Current focus is set on legal issues and while there are EU networks which provide assistance on legal procurement issues, there is little help available on the technology side. Yet, there is a core set of knowledge related to the procurement of digital solutions: interoperability and standards, technology maturity, etc. And the need for such professionalisation is increasing because governments more and more rely on digital goods and because of the fast-paced evolution of technology. Member States are reinventing the wheel, creating costly digital solutions which are slowing down the digitalisation of public administrations and creating unnecessary red tape due to a lack of interoperability.

This aims to build a community of users for the European Catalogue of ICT procurement to exchange practices for the procurement of digital goods and services. The Catalogue takes a sectoral approach (transport, energy, etc.) identifying and cataloguing the procurement needs for each sector. It will make all this information visible to SMEs and enable contacts with procurers.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

Creating an efficient informal community of practitioners is essential. The action includes

- Social media campaigns targeting practitioners and suppliers in different sectors (currently: ICT, cloud, efficient use of energy systems, electronic tolling systems, eGovernment including ECRIS (criminal records) and EESSI (social security system). This includes webinars and dissemination material.
- Development of the content of the European Catalogue whose aims is to centralise and consolidate the numerous existing guidelines.
- Suggest and analyse possible extensions for the European Catalogue (automatic link to the TED tenders linked to a specific procurement need, best practices on how to integrate portability and interoperability costs in the award criteria, etc..).

EXPECTED RESULTS

The European Catalogue's content will be hosted in the online platform Joinup which is managed by DG DIGIT under the ISA programme (Interoperability Solutions for public administrations, businesses and citizens). The expected result of this COSME action is a live community contributing to the online platform with synergies with the currently established networks such as the central procurement bodies (which so far deal mainly with legal and budgeting issues) and sectoral communities (possibly not focused on procurement).

This action seeks to enhance competitiveness of the procurement market and reduce fragmentation in the digital single market by

- establishing smarter and coordinated procurement,
- raising the awareness on ICT interoperability and standards (currently 12% of infringements in tenders making reference to unlawful standards),
- increase competition (currently 26% of tender notices with only one offer),
- and facilitate the entry of SMEs in the procurement market (currently only a third of awarded tenders go to SMEs).

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for tenders	Establishment of a community of practitioners for the European Catalogue of ICT standards for public procurement	500 000
TOTAL		500 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q1 2018
Award	Q2 2018
Signature of the contract	Q2-Q3 2018

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Total duration of the contract: 24 months	

INDICATORS

1. Number of practitioners participating to the community – per sector
2. Number of updates of the contents of the European Catalogue (liveliness)

GRO/SME/18/C/09 – EUROPEAN UNION OBSERVATORY ON NANOMATERIALS

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The European Union Observatory on Nanomaterials provides businesses, SMEs, workers and consumers with relevant information concerning nanomaterials on the market by collecting data from both existing sources and new market studies. It contributes to COSME's objective of improving framework conditions for the competitiveness and sustainability of EU businesses as follows:

Nanotechnology has been recognised as a Key Enabling Technology (KET) and its applications will be increasingly essential for the competitiveness of a wide range of EU products in the global market. Therefore, it is important to ensure confidence in the application of the technology among users, consumers and the general public. Confidence can be boosted by providing transparency of information concerning nanomaterials on the market. This is crucial in order to create an environment favourable to the growth of the nanotechnology field. In turn, the growing use of nanotechnology can unlock potential new innovations, thereby contributing to the competitiveness of EU businesses across sectors.

Furthermore, publicly available information on nanomaterials on the market can help businesses identify market trends across Europe. This will enhance market access for companies, in particular SMEs.

In addition, the European Union Observatory on Nanomaterials constitutes an industry-friendly alternative (particularly for SMEs) compared to other legislative measures to increase transparency, which would introduce burdensome reporting obligations to industry.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The European Union Observatory on Nanomaterials collects relevant information on nanomaterials on the market and presents it in a clear and user-friendly way to businesses, users, workers, consumers and authorities. The Observatory links and evaluates available data from existing databases, registries and studies, as well as new information gathered through further market studies and industry surveys. Collaboration (sharing data or interlinking) with other international initiatives may also be sought. Attention is given to the validation and verification of existing data (e.g. through peer review) before incorporating it in the European Union Observatory on Nanomaterials. Member States collecting data at national level for instance through voluntary industry surveys can complement the existing information of the Observatory by ensuring regular contact with nanomaterial manufacturers and taking stock of the nanomaterials that are being manufactured and used. Given the complexity of the market and the importance of creating a level-playing field across Member States, the Observatory can be of significant added value to businesses. Furthermore, it responds to the calls Member States made upon the Commission to establish transparency measures on an EU level.

The action will continue the operations of the European Union Observatory on Nanomaterials which has been set up through a Delegation Agreement with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) under the COSME Programme for the financial years 2016-2020. The financial framework is in line with the indicative amount identified in the Delegation Agreement (600.000€ for 2018).

EXPECTED RESULTS

Increased transparency on nanomaterials on the market and increased confidence in the use of nanomaterials in products. Increased amount of information available to industry (in particular to SMEs).

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Delegation agreement to ECHA	European Union Observatory on Nanomaterials	600 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Signature of the transfer of funds agreement	Q3 2018
The European Union Observatory on Nanomaterials is part of a five years delegation agreement signed in December 2016 for five financial years (2016-2020). For the financial year 2018, a transfer of funds agreement needs to be signed for tasks that need to be completed within 18 months of transfer of funds (Article 4 of Delegation Agreement).	

INDICATORS

- Maintenance and improvement of the European Union Observatory on Nanomaterials
- Publication of information clearly going beyond currently available tools
- Efficient system for the evaluation of information
- Clarity and user-friendliness of websites and information for workers and consumers
- Number of hits of the website

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

N.A. (Delegation to ECHA)

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The objective pursued by the ‘EU chemical legislation finder’ is to improve the business environment for EU companies and SMEs in particular with regard to access to information on regulation applicable to a given chemical substance.

Currently, a given chemical substance can be subject to several EU legislations pursuing different objectives (REACH, biocides, pesticides, cosmetics, fertilisers, drug precursors, etc). This information is however not accessible from one single entry point. This renders the access to information burdensome and costly, in particular for SMEs that have to deal with chemical substances as producers or downstream users. The creation of an EU chemical legislation finder would address this issue.

Considering that compliance with EU legislations is often mandatory in order to sell and distribute substances, this initiative can facilitate access to markets for SMEs.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The action to be financed consists in the first stage of implementation of the EU chemical legislation finder.

The project will be based on the outcome of the feasibility study already financed by the COSME funds (support measures 2016). This feasibility study will define the business model of the project (i.e. scope of the EU legislation to be covered, service level, organisation aspects and financial needs for the set-up and the update of the IT solution and related services).

Generally speaking ECHA will follow the following approach:

- Feasibility study Q1-Q4 2017, the purpose is to achieve a go/no-go decision and the expected level of service in case of positive decision on the project.
- If the go ahead is granted the work will unfold as follows:
 - IT architecture study Q4 2017 – Q1 2018 (that could be financed under COSME support measures 2017), the purpose is to define the IT solution and its costs for the project.
 - Proposal making Q2 2018, the purpose is to define the project (it includes the ex-ante evaluation mandated by the Financial Regulations): scope, timeline, efforts, resourcing and stakeholders engagement.
 - The Inception, construction and transformation phases, necessary to achieve the launch of the EU chemical legislation finder service based on the approved scope, could happen from Q1 2019 onwards.

EXPECTED RESULTS

What are the achievements in terms of policy?

Once completed, the project will contribute to the creation of a better business environment for companies whose access to information will be greatly facilitated. There will be also positive consequences for EU and national administrations since this tool can also be used to verify to which extent a given substance is already regulated or not. This is thus in line with Better Regulation principles.

What will be the impact on SMEs?

The project will allow SME to reduce regulatory and compliance costs since access to information on a given substance will be possible without the recourse to costly services

Are there concrete deliverables?

The outcome of the project will be a first stage of a portal where companies will be able to identify their EU legal obligations for a given substance. This will be at no charge for SMEs.

ECHA will also provide users support according to a service level agreed with the stakeholders and compatible with the resourcing. ECHA will finally maintain the service as content updates and new functionalities become necessary.

Hence, further deliverables will be: i) Change managements service; ii) User support service; iii) IT operations service

When will they be available?

First version of the portal: Q1 2020.

Since the feasibility study is not completed, no timeline can be given at this stage for the final project; however, incremental deliveries of viable intermediate stages of the web service will be considered.

Where (internet address) will they be available?

The final web service will be available on ECHA's website: echa.europa.eu

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Delegation to the European Chemicals Agency.	First stage of Implementation of an EU Chemical Legislation Finder	1 000 000
Total		1 000 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Delegation agreement with ECHA	Q4 2018
Award of the contract by ECHA	Q1 2019
Completion of the 1 st stage of the project	Q1 2020
Total duration of the contract: up to 18 months	

INDICATORS

- Number of unique users
- Number of page views
- Yearly satisfaction survey

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

Up to 100%

GRO/SME/18/C/11 - ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMATION AND ADDRESSING SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

Artificial intelligence (AI) is already part of the daily life of enterprises, opening up multiple possibilities for industrial transformation, entrepreneurship, and also having a major impact on economy as a whole. AI could contribute up to \$15.7 trillion to the global economy in 2030 and is still at a very early stage of development overall. While North America and China are expected to witness the greatest gain from AI, from a macroeconomic point of view, there are opportunities for Europe to leapfrog its more advanced counterparts.

Currently, European companies, and notably SMEs do not profit enough from the opportunities of big data and AI. Therefore, European policy makers need to embrace a common understanding of AI and outline the opportunities and challenges for further uptake notably with focus on industrial applications and the competitiveness of SMEs. Policy makers are called to urgently design policies to promote a favourable environment and level playing field for the development and uptake of AI solutions while, at the same time, ensuring that its applications remain secure, transparent, controllable and ethical.

The objective of this action is to identify an optimal mix of policy measures at European level (regulatory, business, financial, etc.) that are deemed necessary to create a favourable framework for the development and uptake of AI applications by European SMEs, so they can gain a fair share of the expected economic growth triggered by AI. A balanced EU policy approach should also consider how to prepare industry and SMEs for a successful transition that embraces fully the benefits of AI and mitigates the risks associated to it. Currently, Europe has shown that it is a strong player in AI and machine learning²⁶. By quickly putting a favourable and stable business environment in place, Europe can still compete on both the development and uptake of AI supported solutions to modernise its business base and create value for its citizens.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

This action will identify policy development and investment options within a fast changing, innovation-driven technological and geo-economic context, with a view to prevent the deployment of a fragmented or conflicting regulatory and business environment not fit for purpose for this major innovation in the EU Internal Market²⁷. The action will be aligned with the guidance of the high-level AI Leaders' Group to be set up by DG Connect.

²⁶ E.g. brilliant AI SMEs - start-ups such as DeepMind, Magic Pony Technology, Movidius, Vision Factory, and Dark Blue Labs were later acquired by US companies.

²⁷ E.g. the EU regulation on accreditation and market surveillance dates back from 2008 and may need to be reviewed in the light of AI developments.

The action will:

1. Take stock of previous and on-going work²⁸ to assess emerging policy developments in the field of AI, with a view to spot competitiveness opportunities for SMEs and niches for smart investments. As EU Member States and the international scene (e.g. WEF, G7, G20, USA, Japan, etc.) are rapidly placing AI at the top of the policy agenda and are initiating policy dialogues and support programmes, this analysis will keep providing evidence and identify areas for coordinated action at EU level, thus preventing the risk of fragmentation or going in opposite directions. Results will feed into, be published and disseminated through existing monitoring platforms, such as the Digital Transformation Monitor and Scoreboard, the DESI monitor, the innovation scoreboard, etc.
2. Monitor and analyse emerging applications of AI and foresee potential disruptions and opportunities this may create to the business environment in particular sectors, such as for energy and resource efficiency; connected and automated driving; drones; healthcare; value chain optimisation; education; financing, and many more. This will focus on industrial applications and new business opportunities. It will depict the emerging transformation of the European business landscape and will provide a taxonomy of the major challenges brought by AI (regulatory, competition policy²⁹, liability, transparency issues, financial) that may hamper the uptake and implementation of AI solutions by SMEs. Results will feed into, be published and disseminated through existing monitoring platforms.
3. Complementing DG Connect work in the area, identify policy measures from an industrial and business perspective that could help industry and businesses benefit from AI while mitigating its risks.
4. Building on the Smart Specialisation Platform on Industrial Modernisation, facilitate and accelerate important investments in the uptake of AI applications by SMEs. E.g. by designing suitable financial mechanisms and funds (e.g. combining current financial instruments and programmes, such as COSME, Horizon 2020, ESIF, EFSI, forthcoming MFF) to encourage SMEs to embrace AI technologies into their core businesses and to create new value; and by reinforcing collaboration among industry stakeholders, SMEs, start-ups and the academic community to spark progress in the uptake of AI applications. Organise workshops, networking events and matchmaking events among SMEs, academia, industry and start-ups to shape and support joint strategic actions in the domain of AI.
5. Disseminate information and raise awareness: This will help shape spread good practices, success stories, new developments across Europe, through regular social media, webinars, relevant press, and relevant events such as the WATIFY campaign and Smart Specialisation Platform on Industrial Modernisation events.

This action will complete and further enhance the action “Accelerating the uptake of big data and supporting the establishment of B2B digital platforms in Europe” (COSME 2017), the action on “Cities/Regions as engines of digital transformation” (COSME 2016) and the Smart Specialisation Platform on Industrial Modernisation, and also establish synergies with the action on high-tech skills under "New Skills for Industry" (COSME 2018) .

²⁸ In particular current and forthcoming actions listed in the 2018-20 Horizon 2020 ICT Work Programme will be carefully analysed to develop synergies and to avoid overlaps and inefficiencies.

²⁹ In “Artificial Intelligence & Collusion: When Computers Inhibit Competition”, April 2015, identified different AI applications that could manifest anti-competitive conduct.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The action shall offer evidence-based tools, monitoring, analysis, support and advice to inform new policy developments and investments for SMEs in the emerging area of AI. It shall analyse the state of play in Europe and internationally, monitor the most significant policy developments in this area, and advise on EU policy development in this fast-evolving technology and its numerous applications.

The action shall contribute and accelerate the development of consistent, stable, favourable business environment in Europe in the field of AI and industrial transformation. This will complement and be implemented fully in close collaboration with other on-going and forthcoming actions funded by DG Connect and other services on AI and robotics.

This will assist enterprises, particularly SMEs and start-ups, to realise the benefits take up AI applications to innovate and extend their business.

The action will prepare the ground for cross-regional investment through the Smart Specialisation Platform on Industrial Modernisation.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for tenders	Artificial Intelligence: opportunities for industrial transformation and addressing societal challenges	1 000 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q1 2018
Award	Q3 2018
Signature of the contract	Q4 2018
Total duration of the contract: 12 months (with the possibility of renewal for 2 more years)	

INDICATORS

1. Quality, soundness and visibility of the deliverables, including analytical methodology, reports and quality and relevance of policy recommendations and potential pilots identified. 2. Quality of the stakeholders community, i.e. policy makers, professionals, experts participating actively in the market and policy analysis of the issues related to AI and
--

- industrial transformation, in policy shaping and the policy support services provided.
3. Quality of follow-up measures taken by public authorities at EU, national, regional and local level and/or private investors, European partnerships and other stakeholders, as a result of the suggested analysis and policy recommendations.

GRO/SME/18/C/12 - IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN CONSTRUCTION 2020

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

Implementation of the Action Plan Construction 2020, as defined in the Communication on the Sustainable Competitiveness of the construction sector³⁰ and taking into account the recommendations from the related High Level Forum, in order to:

- Facilitate a more rapid adaptation of the construction sector to the evolution of the markets;
- Promote a more rapid uptake of innovative approaches and research results in areas such as energy efficiency, circular economy, environmental protection and digitalisation;

Create a coherent policy and regulatory framework for the development of the enterprises and the cooperation amongst them, the Internal Market for construction products and services and industrial cooperation with selected non-EU countries.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The measure will be implemented through a series of capacity building measures, roadmaps, market analyses and collection/dissemination of good practices and an annual report on the results achieved with the Action Plan implementation. It foresees also the technical secretariat support for the High Level Forum and the Thematic Groups set up with the context of Construction 2020. It includes:

- Capacity building measures: promote exchange of good practice at policy level that could support Member States in the implementation of the strategy and establishing links with platforms, think-tanks and forum at national level to ensure commitment and capacity building of the different actors;
- Road maps for implementing the different parts of the strategy tailored to the state of development in the various Member States and sector organisations;
- Market analysis and collection/dissemination of good practices relating to different elements of the strategy and recommendations from the High level Forum. These activities would deal with specific domains or measure of the Action Plan Construction 2020 related to investment needs (e.g. for building and infrastructure renovation, recycling construction and demolition waste, smart construction, innovation), the anticipation of future sector skills and education/training needs, health and safety aspects, administrative and regulatory barriers to construction services provision, positioning of EU operators with respect to non EU operators;
- Gathering a strong factual basis on market conditions and competitive pressures on

³⁰

COM(2012)433 of 31.7.2012

various market segments (residential, non-residential, infrastructure including for transport), employment and the level of skills in construction enterprises, the access to finance and delays of payment, investments in R&D, the cost of energy and raw materials, insurance and liability related matters, the access to non-EU markets and competition issues; a state of play of national regulatory measures with respect to sustainability in construction (energy efficiency, renewable energy production and consumption, water consumption, waste, natural resources);

- The assessment of the impact of national policy measures on the construction sector with respect to the 5 objectives of Construction 2020;

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Initiatives related to skills/traineeship on new working practices, resource efficiency, key-enabling technologies, new materials, etc. in connection with EU Skills and Human Capital Agenda;
- An annual report about the results achieved with the implementation of the Action Plan. This report will be presented and discussed with the Construction 2020 High Level Forum.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Contract renewal	Implementation of the Action Plan “Construction 2020” – European Construction Observatory	400 000
Contract renewal	Implementation of the Action Plan “Construction 2020” – Technical secretariat	174 600
Total		574 600

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION: OBSERVATORY	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Signature of the renewal of contract	Q4 2018
Start of the services	Q1 2019
Total duration of the contract: 12 months (up to 48 months – 3 possible renewals).	

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION: TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Signature of the renewal of contract	Q4 2018
Start of the service	Q1 2019
Total duration of the contract: 12 months (2 more possible renewals).	

INDICATORS

FOR THE OBSERVATORY

Indicator 1: Number and quality of the deliverables

- Quality of the developed methodology;
- Number and quality of the produced country profiles and policy measures fact sheets;
- Quality of the semi-annual analytical reports

Indicator 2: Utilisation of the website

This indicator should focus on the number of times that the EUROPA webpages are used. It concerns especially:

- Number of hits of the webpages;
- Number of unique visitors;
- Number of documents downloaded by type of documents;
- Duration of visit, repetition of visitors, geographical coverage;

Indicator 3: Dissemination and promotion

- Coherence and effectiveness of the dissemination strategy;
- Quality and completeness of the EUROPA webpages;
- Number of the disseminated leaflets.

FOR THE SECRETARIAT

Supporting the preparation of the meetings of the High Level Forum and Thematic Groups:

- number of people attending the meetings
- accuracy in definition of the agenda of the meetings
- quality of the briefings for the participants and the chair
- quality of the minutes of the meeting

Ad hoc research on specific themes:

- accuracy of the approach and of the methodology
- quality and quantity of data collected
- pertinence and value of the findings

Contribute ideas and writing for external communication about the Action Plan and its outcomes (press releases, webpage on Europa, etc.);

- number of ideas/writing submitted
- quality of the input submitted
- effective use of the input submitted

D. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE

GRO/SME/18/D/01 – ERASMUS FOR YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The objectives of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs mobility scheme are:

- Helping new entrepreneurs acquire and build managerial skills and further develop their business plan/activity by learning from experienced entrepreneurs;
- Learning on the job by the new entrepreneurs by working with the host entrepreneur on concrete business projects;
- Supporting the host entrepreneur in researching, developing and testing or piloting new business concepts, products or services by the new entrepreneur's bringing in fresh ideas from another environment (in national, academic, market etc. terms);
- Raising entrepreneurs' awareness for the benefits from going international and, in particular, from exploiting the potential of the Single European Market by getting hands-on know-how about other national markets within the EU;
- Intensifying the networking and business relationship between entrepreneurs from different participating countries, especially laying the ground for further internationalisation of SMEs' businesses and for further spreading of innovative methods or products in the Single European Market.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is a mobility scheme that allows potential or newly established entrepreneurs to spend a period of time collaborating with an experienced entrepreneur in another participating country. These mobility actions aim to help the entrepreneurs enrich their experiences as well as learn and network with entrepreneurs in other participating countries. This measure will expand and strengthen the existing network of Intermediary Organisations (IO) which act as local contact points in participating countries. The IOs are in charge of recruiting and matching the entrepreneurs and facilitating the mobility actions. They also promote the programme and its benefits at local and national level.

Activities to support the network are carried out, including regular meetings with the IOs to foster networking. A Support Office assists the Commission in the promotion, the coordination of the IOs' network and the day-to-day support. This measure is a follow-up of the preparatory action carried out in 2009-2011, under the EIP objective Entrepreneurship and Innovation Culture in 2012 and 2013 and under the consolidation and further development of the action under COSME since 2014.

The interim evaluation of the preparatory action confirmed the added value of this action and the lack of similar schemes at national level. It also confirms the efficiency of the operational set up to fulfil the pursued objectives and the quality of the exchanges carried out. The cross-border nature of the action makes it unique as a way of promoting entrepreneurship and is directly relevant to a key EU policy objective of internationalisation and helping new and growing businesses to take advantage of the EU's Internal Market. Promotion of the benefits and achievements of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs and technical support to users will be provided.

The initiative will be implemented via Call for Proposals. The 2018 and 2019 budget will partly be used to co-finance selected proposals via Specific Agreements (SGA) to cover the second operational period 1/02/2019-31/01/2021 following the call for proposals for Framework Partnership Agreements 2016-2021. The consultation for SGAs will be open only for legal entities that have been awarded an FPA in 2016.

Selected entities can be public or private whose core activity is in the field of business support.

The rate of Union co-financing shall be up to 75 % of the programme management costs and 100 % of the sum allocated by beneficiaries (IOs) to third parties (sub-grantee. i.e. new entrepreneurs) participating in a mobility action.

Financial assistance to new entrepreneurs participating in a mobility action shall take the form of a scale of unit cost of maximum EUR 6 600 per entrepreneur for the maximum duration of 6 months stays abroad. This allocation shall not be subject to taxation, fees or similar charges imposed by national authorities.

Additionally, budget is needed for a service contract for the “Support Office” activities from May 2019 ensuring coordination and coherence in the programme and particularly supporting the Intermediate Organisations in their work. Budget is also needed for the EYE IT tool and communication activities.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The initiative expects to have achieved the following results by January 2021:

- Circa 1000 exchanges matched;
- Circa 2500 entrepreneurs registered;
- Circa 100 Intermediary Organisations involved in the implementation of the programme;
- At least 28 countries covered;
- Rate of successful exchanges above 90%.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Consultation for Specific Grant Agreements under Framework Partnership agreements	Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs	10 000 000
Specific contract(s)	IT Tools development and maintenance	300.000
Specific contracts(s)	Promotional activities	40.000
Extension of the current contract or Call for tender for Support Office	Support office	700 000
TOTAL:		11 040 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the consultation for the SGAs	Q2 2018
Communication of results to applicants	Q4 2018
Signature of the grant agreements	Q4 2018
Start of implementation of the EYE projects	Q1 2019
Renewal of current contract or publication of new Call for tender for the Support Office	Q3 2018
Signature of renewal/new contract for the Support Office	Q1 2019

INDICATORS

1. Number of entrepreneurs registered for the programme
2. Number of entrepreneurs matched (i.e. relationships achieved)
3. Number of intermediary organisations involved in the implementation of the programme
4. Number of countries covered by the Intermediary Organisations
5. Index of satisfaction of the participants (entrepreneurs)
6. Level of implementation efficiency by the Intermediary Organisations

Long term indicators:

1. Number of resulting joint projects/cooperation agreements;
2. Number of jobs created;
3. Number of start-ups created.

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

75 % for programme management costs

100% for financial support to third parties (new entrepreneurs)

**GRO/SME/18/D/02 – SOCIAL BUSINESS INITIATIVE: ACTIONS TO PROMOTE
BEST PRACTICES FOR SOCIAL PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AND CROSS
BORDER ACTIVITIES FOR SOCIAL ECONOMY ENTERPRISES.**

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

Social economy is mainly composed of local SMEs. Social enterprises have recently emerged as an effective tool to deliver policy objectives in two key areas of social and economic policy: goods and service delivery and social inclusion.

Such enterprises combine societal goals with an entrepreneurial spirit and focus on achieving wider social, environmental or community objectives. Policy makers at EU, Member States and regional level recognize the benefits of social economy and social enterprises and have undertaken efforts to consolidate the sector by providing adequate support services, including access to finance, knowledge sharing and business support services.

The Commission aims to create a level playing field in order to stimulate social economy, social entrepreneurship and reinforce all the different actors that are part of the social economy ecosystem to make them compete effectively and fairly in the Single Market, without regulatory discrimination and taking into account their particular needs.

By implementing specific actions, the Commission intends to increase the political visibility of a sector that constitutes an important pillar in terms of employment and social cohesion across Europe.

If provided with specific guidance, social economy and social enterprises will get better **access to markets** and could boost their growth, their capacity to create jobs and innovation, objectives mentioned in the Communication *"Europe's Winners of Tomorrow: the Start-up and Scale-up Initiative"* adopted in November 2016.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The action to be financed is entitled " **Social Business Initiative: Actions to promote best practices for social public procurement and cross border activities for social economy enterprises.**

These activities build on previous activities under the SBI and recommendations from the GECES to stimulate social economy and social enterprises development.

The action is presented in **two lots.**

Lot n°1 : **Guide on best practices for social public procurement**

Preparing a **Guide** for public purchasers to better explain how social criteria could be applied to public procurement, along with communication tools to raise awareness on the topic of socially responsible public procurement and disseminate the related good practices and data. This new Guide will also provide a much-anticipated update to the existing Buying Social guidance, drafted in 2011 by DG EMPL in cooperation with the then DG MARKT.

The project is a follow up of the 2017 COSME project GRO/SME/17/D/03 – SBI: promoting social considerations into public procurement.

Actions should focus on :

- **collecting, screening and selecting best practices** in Europe following the implementation of the new Directive (2014/24);
- **proposing key recommendations** on procurement life cycle/tendering procedures, both in terms of legal compliance and efficiency of the process, so as to promote the integration of social considerations among public purchasers (national/regional/local level).
- **producing communication tools** (e.g. infographics, leaflets, web pages) to be used for dissemination and further awareness-raising on good practices and statistical data in the field of socially responsible public procurement.

When drafting this Guide, the contractor will widely consult public authorities in the Member States and many other interested parties and stakeholders. This Guide will be produced chiefly for public authorities, but in the hope that it will **inspire private-sector purchasers** too.

Lot n°2 : **Guide to promote cross borders activities for social economy enterprises**

Actions should focus on :

- investigate **barriers and obstacles** that refrain associations, foundations and mutual societies from developing cross borders activities. Such investigations should be carried out as well for cooperatives that have not been set up in the form of European Cooperative Societies.
- **collect and diffuse best practices** of the aforementioned entities regarding cross-border activities so that they can fully benefit from the Internal Market. These best practices will be based on examples financed via EU programmes (e.g. Interreg) or developed at national or regional level by such enterprises.
- **propose policy recommendations** on how to stimulate cross border activities when the statute of the company can be an issue.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Lot n° 1 :

- to raise **contracting authorities' awareness** of the potential benefits of social responsible public procurement;
- to explain to public authorities, **in a practical way**, the opportunities offered by the new Directive on public procurement in order for them to take into account social concerns in their public procurement procedures, thus paying attention to the different options offered;
- to provide a supporting tool for contracting authorities wishing to use social considerations in public tenders, so that they may **reach the desired social policy goal efficiently** and, at the same time, in compliance with EU Law.
- to facilitate **the understanding of the Directive** by social economy actors and non-profit social and health service providers so that they can participate in the exercise more easily.

Lot n°2 :

- a guide on **EU best practices promoting cross-border activities** for social economy enterprises;
- increased number of **cross-border operations** from social economy actors that do not have a European Statute;
- **better understanding** of the role of those entities where legislative recognition is not provided by national law (especially mutual societies);
- creation of **better business opportunities** allowing these entities to operate more competitively within the Single Market.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for tenders	<u>Lot 1</u>	
	Guide on best practices for social public procurement	400 000
	<u>Lot 2</u>	
	Guide to promote cross borders activities for social economy enterprises	200 000
TOTAL		600 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q2 2018
Award	Q4 2018
Signature of the contract	Q4 2018
Total duration of the contract: - Lot 1 : 18 months - Lot 2 : 18 months	

INDICATORS

Lot 1 :

- Number and quality of best practices collected + Geographical coverage;
- Number of public authorities and stakeholders consulted during the preparation of the guide;
- Number and quality of recommendations proposed;

Lot 2 :

- Number and quality of best practices collected + Geographical coverage;
- Number and quality of recommendations proposed;

GRO/SME/18/D/03 – SOCIAL INNOVATION NETWORKS FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ACCESS TO VENTURE CAPITAL

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

This is a project aimed to study the role of virtual social networks to promote social entrepreneurship and provide social entrepreneurs with access to funding. To do so, a vibrant (virtual) network of 6000 entrepreneurs will be created across different regions of Europe. The entrepreneurs will be supported by business training and an enhanced access to venture capital. The impact of the intervention will be assessed through a Randomized Controlled Experiment (RCT).

Innovative ideas and finance are the key engines required for the promotion of social entrepreneurship. The intervention will recruit social entrepreneurs (aspiring or already established) from diverse European regions and allow them to establish virtual social networks through a specific platform designed to reproduce the way networks of entrepreneurs are spontaneously formed in many face-to-face environment. The development of the platform will build on and seek for synergies with already existing communities of practice at European level (e.g. COPSE project – Community of Practice and Social Entrepreneurship, EUCLID network, Social challenges innovation platform, Social Innovation Community...) to test the extent to which access to rich social networks is a key component of successful entrepreneurship and innovation. The rationale underlying the project is that peer social networks play a key role in the development of ideas, which in turn translate into sound and successful businesses. Nowadays, rich interactions can be conducted through virtual platforms. The important advantage of this approach is two-fold. First, it allows distant (and hence possibly very diverse) entrepreneurs to interact, across different sectors and regions of Europe. Second, it renders the mechanism easily scalable, thus capable

of involving a large number of entrepreneurs. The project, therefore, has a very high impact potential on promoting innovative ideas and, thus, entrepreneurship, employment and growth.

The project will also provide social entrepreneurs participating to the initiative with preferential access to funding through a wide collection of venture capitalists associated to the project. The network of venture capitalists dedicated to this project will leverage on existing networks at EU level. This ad-hoc network will evaluate the business proposals elaborated by social entrepreneurs and ease access to start-up and scaling capital for the most innovative and promising companies, which will have the opportunities to present their business ideas in pitching events.

The concept of the project has been validated in a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) implemented in Africa between 2015 and 2017 with the involvement of a JRC.B7 colleague. The sample of aspiring entrepreneurs will be divided by a lottery into three subpopulations:

(a) A *control subpopulation* whose individuals are provided with training on how to prepare an application to get funding from Venture Capitalists (VCs) and then given the opportunity to submit their business proposal for funding from VCs.

(b) A *first treatment subpopulation* whose individuals are provided the same conditions as in the former case, but also meet regularly in **face-to-face meetings**. During the meetings, they can exchange ideas and gain knowledge that can potentially help them to get a better-quality application.

(c) A *second treatment subpopulation* whose individuals are provided with conditions analogous to the previous case, but they get access to the virtual **social-network**.

The intervention is designed so that individuals in the treatment subpopulations have strong incentives to exchange information and collaborate.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The development and implementation of the RCT can be divided in three main parts: (i) preparation, (ii) implementation, and (iii) evaluation of the RCT. The preparation phase will include the following main activities:

- Design of the RCT and of the mechanisms to incentivize interaction with the aim to test the impact of peer network on innovation and entrepreneurship (for an overview of all the main hypothesis tested see the last section),
- Creation of an ad-hoc e-learning business training and of the virtual platform on the basis of existing communities of practice at European level (eg COPSE project, EUCLID, Social challenges innovation platform);
- Build contacts with local partners necessary to develop the face-to-face network;
- Create a network of venture capitalists leveraging on the existing EU network;

The implementation phase will include the following main activities:

- Launch of the recruitment campaign via social media and through the EU network in a number of different sectors (dealing, among others, with social economic mobility or environmental issues);
- Administration of surveys to all the participants and of the e-learning course;
- Implementation of the randomization and promotion of the virtual interactions;
- Gathering of the business plan proposals and applications for funding from all the

participants; evaluation of the business plans by the venture capitalists.

The last phase is the evaluation of the RCT. This includes:

- Execution of state-of-the-art econometric estimations;
- Drafting of research and policy papers and dissemination of knowledge.

This project represents the first RCT impact assessment in Europe of the role of virtual social network for innovativeness and social entrepreneurship.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Achievements:

- Creation of a large virtual social network of 6000 social entrepreneurs across Europe Deliverable by Q2-Q3 2018;
- Creation of a network of venture capitalists across Europe that will join the platform as partners ready to evaluate the business proposal and eventually finance the most promising ones. Deliverable by Q3-Q4 2018;
- Ex-post quantitative impact assessment of the intervention. Deliverable by Q1-Q2 2019;

Impact on SMEs

- Promotion of knowledge diffusion and cooperation culture through the (virtual) network;
- Support of the social entrepreneurs participating in the network with an e-learning business course and especially targeted to apply for venture capital;
- Ease the access to finance for start-ups and aspiring social entrepreneurs thanks to the creation of a network of dedicated venture capitalists.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Administrative arrangement between DG GROW and JRC	Social innovation networks for social entrepreneurship and access to Venture Capital	360 000

This project is in partnership with DG JRC and co-financed on a 60/40 basis between DG GROW and the JRC, (DG GROW = EUR 360 000 and JRC = EUR 240 000), and comprises the following task breakdown:

1. Recruitment of entrepreneurs and data acquisition (EUR 120 000)
2. Network of venture capitalists and selection of business ideas (EUR 100 000)
3. Implementation of randomisation (EUR 150 000)
4. Econometric analysis of data (EUR 230 000)

It is estimated that tasks for a total cost of +/- EUR 350 000 would be externalised through a call for tenders

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Definition of the design of the RCT, contacts with local partners and VCs, creation of the virtual platform	Q2-Q3 2018
Implementation of the RCT in the regions selected	Q3-4 2018
Analysis of data and drafting of the policy and academic papers	Q1-2 2019

INDICATORS

Indicators:

- Number of social entrepreneurs enrolling and finishing the program
- Number of interactions occurred on the virtual platform
- Number of business ideas financed
- Number of VC participating in the program

Econometric statistics:

- Summary statistics and distribution of the quality of the business proposals submitted for funding
- Empirical estimates to assess the role of social network on the quality and innovativeness of the business proposals (implementing the project as an RCT allows for a rigorous quantitative impact assessment)

GRO/SME/18/D/04 – EU LABEL FOR TRAINING HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHERS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

In higher education there is in general a shortage of entrepreneurship courses and activities, in particular outside business schools and economic faculties. This is true for social entrepreneurship as well. The objective of this action will be to support the design, development and organisation of entrepreneurship training courses with a European dimension, to be delivered to professors and lecturers in higher education institutions in order to enhance their capacity to teach entrepreneurship to their students. Training will include a specific focus on social entrepreneurship.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The philosophy of the action will be to promote an inter-disciplinary approach and thus support the introduction of entrepreneurship education also outside the traditional domain of

business schools and economic faculties (e.g. in scientific and technical studies, in arts and design studies, etc.)

This initiative follows two previous calls for proposals (in 2009 and 2012) that allowed so far funding 4 projects to train higher education teachers in entrepreneurship in the period 2010-2016. Such initiative proved successful: around 700 university professors and lecturers across Europe have been trained in entrepreneurship, and were thus able to deliver improved entrepreneurship education to their students or to start new entrepreneurship programmes at their universities; moreover, several universities involved in those projects established a durable cooperation for training teachers in entrepreneurship³¹. Therefore it is proposed to ensure continuity to teacher training activities funded by the EU.

This action will be implemented in close collaboration with DG EAC, and will establish synergies with the existing HEInnovate self-assessment tool for universities.

In a first step, the best training courses will be identified in entrepreneurship available for educators in higher education institutions throughout Europe and beyond (such as in the US). On that basis, a comprehensive model of an entrepreneurship programme for trainers will be developed (through a call for tender), adapting the training objectives and methodologies to different disciplines of studies. Information on EU level support for entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs will be part of the model course.

As a second step, this model course will be tested by those higher education institutions that are associated to and/or partners in the awarded bid on a selected group of their staff of professors, lecturers, assistant lecturers and researchers.

Once tested, and improved based on feedback from participants, the model course and its related teaching materials will be made freely available to all European universities with an EU label.

EXPECTED RESULTS

This course will aim to deliver the entrepreneurial skills that young people need to be successful in the 21st century, and will be especially focusing on European Entrepreneurship: it means both promoting an EU model of entrepreneurship (responsible, with a social impact, etc.) and supporting entrepreneurial activity on a European scale (cross-border, making the most of the Single Market).

While the training will be mainly targeted to educators (i.e. professors and lecturers), it will include pedagogical tools and course contents that they will be able to deliver to their students. This activity will help to create a multiplier effect, as participants will impart advanced education on entrepreneurship to large numbers of students in their courses. Moreover, the EU label will help universities to signal to students that entrepreneurship education with a European dimension is offered as part of their studies

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
	Setting-up a model for an	400 000

³¹ See for instance : <http://www.coneect.eu/>

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for tenders	entrepreneurship programme for trainers	

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q1 2018
Award	Q4 2018
Signature of the contract	Q4 2018
Total duration of the contract: 36 months	

INDICATORS

– Number of higher education institutions participating; – Number of educators directly trained in entrepreneurship; – Number and quality of pedagogical materials and methods offered for general use; – Number of students potentially impacted by the new courses; – Number of relevant European Structural and Investment Fund (in particular European Social Fund) managing authorities and implementing bodies receiving information on the project and its results.
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ANNEX I: OVERVIEW TABLE OF THE COSME 2018 WORK PROGRAMME

REFERENCE	TITLE	BUDGET
GRO/SME/18/A/01	Financial instruments - Loan Guarantee Facility	139.552.000
GRO/SME/18/A/02	Financial instruments - Equity Facility for Growth	59.808.000
GRO/SME/18/A/03	Financial instruments - accompanying actions	1.450.000
	subtotal	200.810.000
GRO/SME/18/B/01	Enterprise Europe Network	57.200.000
GRO/SME/18/B/02	Access to the Single Market: Reinforcing the Single Market tools in preparation for the planned Single Digital Gateway	1.265.000
GRO/SME/18/B/03	EU Open for business campaign 2019	2.000.000
GRO/SME/18/B/04	EU Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation	5.600.000
GRO/SME/18/B/05	Supporting European SMEs with IP disputes and IP awareness	1.300.000
GRO/SME/18/B/06	International IP SME Helpdesks	5.000.000
GRO/SME/18/B/07	Cofinancing of public procurement of innovation consortia	4.000.000
	subtotal	76.365.000
GRO/SME/18/C/01	SME Policy	6.600.000
GRO/SME/18/C/02	EU Refit Stakeholder Platform for Better Regulation	1.800.000
GRO/SME/18/C/03	European Cluster Collaboration Platform	5.500.000
GRO/SME/18/C/04	European Cluster excellence Programme	900.000
GRO/SME/18/C/05	Light Industries Innovation and Technology project	3.000.000
GRO/SME/18/C/06	Enhancing the competitiveness of the European Tourism Sector	6.100.000
GRO/SME/18/C/07	New Skills for Industry	2.000.000
GRO/SME/18/C/08	Establishment of a community of practitioners for the European Catalogue on ICT standards	500.000
GRO/SME/18/C/09	EU Observatory on Nanomaterials	600.000
GRO/SME/18/C/10	EU Chemicals Legislation Finder	1.000.000
GRO/SME/18/C/11	Artificial intelligence: opportunities for industrial transformation & societal challenges	1.000.000
GRO/SME/18/C/12	Implementation of the Action Plan Construction 2020	574.600
	subtotal	29.574.600
GRO/SME/18/D/01	Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs	11.040.000
GRO/SME/18/D/02	Social Business initiative: Actions to promote best practices for social public procurement & cross border activities for social economy enterprises	600.000
GRO/SME/18/D/03	Social innovation networks for social entrepreneurship & access to venture capital	360.000
GRO/SME/18/D/04	EU Label - Intensive cross-European seminars for training higher education teachers in entrepreneurship	400.000
	subtotal	12.400.000
	subtotal of objectives 2, 3, 4	118.339.600
	TOTAL (million EUR)	319.149.600

ANNEX II: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND SELECTION AND AWARD CRITERIA

Eligibility criteria

Applicant organisations must be established:

- in EU Member States;
- or in countries participating in the COSME programme under Article 6 of the COSME Regulation.

When relevant, additional eligibility criteria are indicated in the action description and in the call text.

Selection and award criteria

As regards all grants envisaged in this work programme, each proposal will be evaluated on the basis of the selection criteria specified in the respective calls for proposals. Essentially, these criteria are based on the following:

- Financial capacity to complete the proposed operation;
- Stable and sufficient sources of finance to ensure the continuity of the organisation throughout the project and to play a part in financing it;
- Operational (technical and management) capacity to complete the operation;
- Capacity to manage activities corresponding to the size of the project for which a grant is requested;
- Adequate professional qualifications and experience of the team responsible for the project/operation.

An evaluation of the quality of proposals, including the proposed budget, will be based on the following award criteria:

- Relevance of the actions proposed in view of the objectives established in the call;
- Quality of the proposed actions;
- Impact on target audience;
- Budget and cost-effectiveness.

All actions under the first objective – Access to Finance will be funded on budget line 02 02 02. All other actions will be funded on budget line 02 02 01.

Framework contract

A procedure for the conclusion of a framework contract to allow the issuing of specific contracts for economic studies and analyses on competitiveness as well as dedicated studies to support the Integration and Competitiveness report, and strengthen the evidence base for contribution to the European Semester process is to be launched in Q4/2017. It will consist of one single lot. The maximum budget is expected to be around €5 million.