



European
Commission

Executive Agency for
Small and Medium-sized Enterprises



Guide for Applicants

COSME calls for proposals 2017

Version 1.0
May 2017

CONTENTS

I. Introduction	3
II. Preparation of the proposal	3
II.1 Relevant documents	3
II.2 Participants	3
<i>Consortium coordinator</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Consortium partners</i>	<i>4</i>
II.3 Registration and validation of participants	4
III. Proposal Submission	5
III.1 Description of the Action (DoA)-Technical Annex 1	6
<i>Section A: Project summary</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Section B: Action: objectives, management structures and work plan</i>	<i>6</i>
III.2 Budget	7
<i>Budget Overview</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Detailed budget (Technical Annex 2)</i>	<i>8</i>
IV. General rules on the budget of the action	8
V. Evaluation of Proposals	9
V.1 Administrative review procedures	9
<i>Admissibility and Eligibility Review procedure</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Evaluation review procedure</i>	<i>10</i>
VI. Award	10
Annex - Checklist	11

I. Introduction

The Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME) manages EU programmes and initiatives on behalf of the European Commission. It implements part of the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME) programme, in particular calls for proposals included in the yearly work programme.

This Guide for Applicants contains information aimed at guiding potential beneficiaries through the mechanics of preparing and submitting a proposal. It provides guidance on how to complete and submit a proposal from the content point of view, and to prepare the estimated budget.

This Guide is based on the rules and conditions of the COSME programme,¹ the COSME work programme 2017² and the derived calls for proposals. The Guide does not in itself have legal value and does not supersede those documents.

II. Preparation of the proposal

II.1 Relevant documents

COSME grant opportunities are published in the [Europa website](#). With the exception of ad-hoc grants, COSME calls are also published in a dedicated section of the Research and Innovation Participant Portal (the [Participant Portal](#)).

The main documents relevant to any COSME call are the following:

- Call for proposals
- Guide for applicants
- Model grant agreement

These documents are made available in the dedicated part of the Participant Portal under the heading "Topic conditions and documents".

II.2 Participants

The call text sets out the possibilities and requirements in terms of the number of potential beneficiaries of the grant covered by the call. Two types of grants may be distinguished with regards to the number of beneficiaries of the action:

- Mono-beneficiary grants: The grant agreement is signed between the EASME and one beneficiary entirely responsible for the implementation of the action.

- Multi-beneficiary grants: The grant agreement is signed between the EASME and a consortium of multiple beneficiaries led by a consortium coordinator. The consortium is responsible for the implementation of the action.

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) and repealing Decision No 1639/2006/EC

² Commission Implementing Decision on the adoption of the work programme for 2017 and the financing for the implementation of the COSME Programme available at <http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/21624>

Two types of beneficiaries may be found in COSME actions: “consortium coordinator” and “consortium partners”. In addition, the call text allows the participation of “affiliated entities” in the consortium.

Consortium coordinator

In case of a proposal submitted by a single applicant (mono-beneficiary grant), the coordinator is the sole entity to fill in the forms and in the event the proposal is accepted, the coordinator will be the sole beneficiary of the grant and the sole responsible for its proper execution.

In case of a multi-beneficiary grant, the lead organisation is the coordinator of a consortium established between several applicants (consortium partners) submitting a joint proposal. The lead applicant is the intermediary for all communication between the co-beneficiaries and the EASME and responsible for supplying all documents and information to the EASME.

Consortium partners

If provided for in the call for proposals, applicants may act in a consortium, submitting a joint proposal. Each co-applicant (consortium partner) will be considered as co-beneficiary if the proposal is awarded a grant.

The coordinator and the partners of a consortium shall agree upon appropriate arrangements between themselves for the proper performance of the action.

If a grant is awarded, consortium partners would forward to the coordinator the data needed to draw up the report, the financial statements and other documentation required by the grant agreement. They shall immediately inform the coordinator of any event liable to substantially affect or delay the implementation of the action.

Linked third parties, i.e. legal entities having a legal or capital link with applicants, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, may take part in the action as **applicants** in order to declare eligible costs.

II.3 Registration and validation of participants

Before being able to apply to any COSME call for proposals, all beneficiaries (coordinator and partners) have to be registered in the [Commission Beneficiary Register](#).

COSME shares with the Horizon 2020 programme (H2020) a common procedure for the registration of potential applicants. The procedure is based on the assignation of a unique Participant Identification Code (PIC) to each organisation wishing to participate in H2020 or COSME actions.

The PIC is a unique 9 digit number that makes it possible for the Commission to identify a participant. It is used in all grant-related interactions between the participant and the Commission.

Any organisation that has participated in proposals under the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Development, the Horizon 2020 programme or in calls launched by DG Enterprise/DG GROW since 2012 is likely to have already received a valid PIC.

If a PIC is not yet available for an organisation, applicants shall [register](#) their organisation in the Participant Portal.

Once the Commission has validated the documents submitted by the applicant the temporary PIC becomes final. However, it should be stressed that any organisation in possession of a temporary PIC is allowed to submit proposals in response to COSME and H2020 calls. The final PIC may be obtained at a later stage.

Further information on the registration and validation procedure can be found in the [H2020 Online Manual](#).

III. Proposal Submission

Proposals must be submitted electronically, using the Submission and Evaluation of Proposals programme (SEP). Proposals arriving at the EASME by any other means are regarded as not submitted, and will not be evaluated.

A link to the submission platform is made available in the dedicated part of the Participant Portal under the heading "Submission Service".

Where a proposal is submitted by several applicants, a lead applicant (the coordinator) has to be designated. The coordinator submits the application on behalf of all applicants (the consortium).

The electronic submission set comprises two parts:

- **Administrative Forms** to be completed on line in SEP
- **Part B and Annexes** to be uploaded (in pdf format) by the coordinator

The **Administrative Forms** contain the proposals' general information (title, summary, name of participants and budget overview) and the participants' administrative data (e.g. organisation's name, legal status, contact information). This information will be encoded in a structured database for further processing to produce, for example, statistics or evaluation reports. This information will also support the EASME staff during the evaluation process.

Part B and Annexes contains the substantive part of the proposal. The set of documents included in this section is specific to each call but it will contain at least the Description of the Action (Technical Annex 1) and the detailed budget (Technical Annex 2).

Editable templates of all the specific documents contained in Part B can be downloaded from the submission platform. Only the documents indicated in the submission platform should be uploaded. Unless specified in the call, any hyperlinks to other documents, embedded material, and any other documents (company brochures, supporting documentation, reports, audio, video, multimedia etc.) sent electronically or by post, will be disregarded.

Once the documents have been duly completed by the consortium partners, the coordinator is requested to upload the final proposal to the submission platform. The final documents should be converted (not scanned) into pdf format.

A maximum length may be specified for the different sections of Part B, or for Part B as a whole. Applicants must keep their proposals within these limits. Where no page limits are given, or where limits are only recommended, it is in the interest of applicants to keep the text concise to ease the reading of evaluators.

The proposal may be submitted in any of the official languages of the European Union. If the submitted proposal is not in English, a translation of the full proposal would be of assistance to the evaluators. An English translation of the abstract shall be included in Part B of the proposal.

Proposals must be submitted before the deadline specified in the Call for proposals. It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure the timely submission of the proposal. SEP will be automatically closed at the call deadline.

Errors discovered in proposals submitted to SEP can be rectified by simply submitting a corrected version. For as long as the call is open, the new submission will overwrite the previous one. Once the deadline has passed, however, the EASME can accept no further additions, corrections or re-submissions. The last version of your proposal received before the deadline is the one which will be evaluated, and no later material can be submitted.

Proposals should be registered with the correct call. If registered with another call by mistake, the proposal will be regarded as not submitted.

Applicants may withdraw a proposal before the deadline by clicking the withdraw proposal button.

Further information on the submission procedure can be found in the [H2020 Proposal Submission Service User Manual](#).

III.1 Description of the Action (DoA)-Technical Annex 1

The description of the action should be provided using a standard template which can be downloaded in the dedicated part of the submission platform (Technical Annex 1). The structure of the DoA is the following:

Section A: Project summary

In this section applicants have to provide basic information on the organisations taking part in the action and the work packages in which the action is structured. The deliverables associated to the implementation of the action and a list of milestones functioning as “control points” have also to be presented.

Finally, applicants are expected to list the externalities which may hamper the implementation of the project and the mitigation measures foreseen by the consortium to address those critical risks.

Section B: Action: objectives, management structures and work plan

Section B.1: Objectives of the Action

In this section, applicants are requested to describe the specific objectives of the project, which shall be consistent with the objectives of the call for proposals. The specific objectives of the action should be clear, realistic and measurable through a set of performance indicators.

Applicants shall also describe what the target audience of the action is, and which tools and methodologies will be used by the beneficiaries to reach the proposed target group.

Applicants shall propose (if not pre-defined by the call text) a set of performance indicators to measure the impact and success of the action. Those indicators must be quantifiable. Applicants shall define a “target” for each performance indicator which should be achieved by the end of the action’s implementation.

Section B.2: Management structure and procedures

In section B.2 applicants shall first explain how the profile of the proposed participant(s) is aligned with the objectives of the call for proposals. Moreover, the managerial capacities of the consortium shall be demonstrated. Elements such as the consortium organisational structure and the decision-making process shall be described in detail.

Applicants shall also demonstrate that the skills and expertise of the staff implementing the action enable them to fulfil the role they have been assigned to. A brief summary of the CVs of key staff shall be provided in table B.2.2. Full CV’s shall not be included in the proposal.

Section B3: Work plan

As a general rule, COSME calls are structured into pre-defined Work Packages (WP). A WP is a building block of the work breakdown structure that allows the project management to define the steps necessary for completion of the action.

For each WP, applicants are requested to describe:

- The specific objectives which shall be achieved by the completion of the WP.
- The specific tasks and activities which shall be implemented by the participants.
- The list of beneficiaries (coordinator and partners) implementing the WP (including their role and main tasks).
- The necessity of subcontracting any of the tasks (including a brief explanation on how the selection of the subcontractor shall be performed).
- The indicators used to measure the performance of the beneficiaries in that Work Package.
- The human resources allocated to the implementation of the WP (person-months).

III.2 Budget

Budget Overview

The Administrative Forms in the submission platform contain the budget overview which should be filled in online by the applicants.

The Budget Overview breaks down the estimated budget of the proposal per participant according to the following categories:

- (A) Direct personnel costs;
- (B) Direct costs of subcontracting;
- (C) Other direct costs;
- (D) Direct costs of providing financial support (only applicable if explicitly accepted as eligible costs in the call for proposals)
- (E) Indirect costs (calculated automatically as 7% of A+B+C);
- (F) Total estimated eligible costs (calculated automatically as A+B+C+D+E)
- (G) Reimbursement rate (defined in the call for proposals)
- (H) Maximum EU contribution (calculated automatically as F*G)
- (I) Requested grant³

³ The Requested grant shall be equal or lower than the Maximum EU contribution.

Detailed budget (Technical Annex 2)

The estimated budget of the project should be further detailed using a standard template which can be downloaded in Part B of the submission platform (Technical Annex 2). This section addresses the steps applicants need to follow when filling in Technical Annex 2.

The detailed budget form supports consortia of up to 20 partners. Should your consortium involves more than 20 organisations, please contact the functional mailbox mentioned in section 14 of the call for proposals.

Proposal Cover Sheet

Applicants shall fill in the project's name (full title) and its acronym. Standard Latin alphabet and numbers, spaces or underscore shall be used. Any other special characters or symbols shall be avoided.

Tables 1 and 2 Expenditures and Revenues

Table 1 break down the estimated expenditure of the project per participant and type of cost. Most of the information in this table is taken automatically from the data of the participants through protected links. Applicants shall only input in this table the Requested grant per Consortium partner.

Table 2 summarises the estimated revenues of the project. All amounts in these forms should be given to the nearest whole Euro (no decimals!).

Applicants shall ensure that the total estimated eligible costs are equal to the total revenue of the project.

Applicants shall also ensure that the information in these two tables is entirely consistent with the information contained in the budget overview (see section III of this Guide).

Participants Budget

These worksheets gather all financial data of an individual participant. They need to be filled in for each participant (including the co-ordinator). All amounts in these forms should be given to the nearest whole Euro (no decimals!).

IV. General rules on the budget of the action

The budget must cover all eligible costs of the project. The description of all items must be sufficiently detailed and all items broken down into their main components. The number of units and unit rate must be specified for each component on the basis of the indications provided.

The forward budget must:

- show all the costs and revenue that the applicants considers necessary to carry out the project.
- give an indication on the different types of human resources and their related costs (technical, administrative, etc.);
- be sufficiently detailed to allow identification, monitoring and control of the operation(s) proposed;
- be in balance, i.e. total revenue and total expenditure must be equal

The EASME reserves the right not to consider unexplained costs items in the amount granted.

Amounts must be in **Euro** with no decimals.

Applicant organisations in countries where the Euro is not the national currency are asked to use the official EU exchange rates that can be found on the [Europa](#) website:

During the execution of the grant agreement, costs which have been incurred in other currencies than the Euro shall be converted according to the provisions of the grant agreement.

The call for proposals details the rules concerning the eligibility of costs.

V. Evaluation of Proposals

The brief electronic message given by the SEP system after each submission is simply an acknowledgement of receipt. This message does not imply that a proposal has been considered admissible or accepted as eligible for evaluation.

All applications will be examined by an evaluation committee assisted by independent experts. The assessment of each proposal will be based on the information provided by the applicants in the proposal submitted in reply to the call for proposals.

The information will be assessed in light of the eligibility, selection and award criteria set out in the call for proposals.

The evaluation committee may ask an applicant to provide additional information or to clarify the supporting document submitted in connection with the application, in particular in the case of evident material errors.

At the end of the evaluation, applicants will be informed in writing that their proposals have been:

Proposed for award, based on the score obtained after evaluation, and indicating the proposed amount to be awarded. This communication should not be regarded under any circumstances as a formal commitment by the EASME to provide financial support, as this depends on the satisfactory and timely conclusion of the award phase.

The EASME may draw a reserve list composed of proposals which have obtained a score above the thresholds mentioned in the evaluation criteria.

Rejected, stating the reasons for rejection.

V.1 Administrative review procedures

Admissibility and Eligibility Review procedure

Any unsuccessful applicant may request a review within 30 days from the date of the rejection letter by the EASME. The rejection letter shall indicate the means for submission of the request for review.

Complaints on failed submission proposals due to an online submission system fault have to be submitted through the IT Helpdesk within 4 calendar days from the call closure date.

The scope of the review will be limited to assess the fulfilment of either admissibility or eligibility criteria as laid down in the call for proposals.

An internal Admissibility and Eligibility Review Committee will be convened to examine each case. The Committee provides specialist opinions in the form of a report with recommendations on line of action for each request. In the light of its review, the Committee will recommend a course of action to the responsible authorising officer. Three recommendations are foreseen: (i) that the complaint is not

eligible for admissibility/eligibility review; (ii) that the complaint is rejected as unfounded; (iii) that the complaint is founded, which may lead to the evaluation of the proposals/the participation in the action."

Evaluation review procedure

Unsuccessful applicants may request the review of the evaluation procedure of their proposals within one month after the dispatch of the communication to the applicants of the evaluation results. In case of proposals submitted on behalf of a consortium of applicants, the request must be raised by the coordinator.

The scope of the review will be limited to procedural aspects of the evaluation which includes procedural errors, factual errors, and manifest errors of assessment of the evaluation.

An internal Review Committee will be convened to examine each case. It is out of the scope of the Committee to review the merits of the proposal. The role of the Committee is neither to call into question the judgement of appropriately qualified experts and therefore it does not cover assessment by these experts with relation to the evaluation criteria.

The Committee provides specialist opinions on the implementation of the evaluation process on the basis of all the available information related to the proposal and its evaluation in the form of a report with recommendations on line of action for each request. In the light of its review, the Committee will recommend a course of action to the responsible authorising officer. Three recommendations are foreseen: (i) that the complaint is rejected as unfounded; (ii) that the complaint is upheld but the problem concerned did not jeopardise the decision whether or not to fund the proposal; (iii) that the complaint is upheld and a re-evaluation is recommended.

In all cases, a reply will be sent to the applicant within two weeks (ten working days) of the date of reception of the request for review. The Committee shall inform the applicant about the result of the evaluation review at the latest 2 months after the meeting of the Committee.

VI. Award

The Award phase spans from the communication of the evaluation outcomes to the applicants to the signature of the grant agreement.

Despite substantial changes to the original proposal are not accepted in this phase, the EASME may decide to request applicants, whose proposals have been proposed for award by the evaluation committee, to make certain limited adaptations to their proposal (e.g. corrections to ensure conformity with applicable financial and legal rules; corrections of clerical errors or clear inconsistencies). A proposal might be rejected if the applicant refuses to ensure a positive follow-up to the request or if the revised proposal represents a substantial change to the original proposal.

In the event that the original budget of the action is increased or that selected proposal(s) fail to conclude the grant agreement, a grant may be awarded to proposals from the reserve list.

Should the EASME decide to award a grant to any of the proposals placed on the reserve list, the applicants will be informed. Once the call budget has been used up, the EASME will reject the remaining proposals on the reserve list and inform the applicants about it (proposal rejection letter to the coordinator).

Annex - Checklist

Please use the following questionnaire to help you present a complete proposal.

Be as precise as possible. Incomplete proposals run the risk of being ineligible.

This checklist and the questions below will help you submitting a complete proposal. It is not to be uploaded in SEP, nor to be submitted otherwise.

TIME TABLE			
	Yes/No		Answer
My proposal respects the scheduled start date :		Start date of proposal:	
My proposal respects the maximum duration of the action		Duration of the action:	
FINANCING			
My budgetary proposal respects the maximum EU co-financing rate in %		My proposed EU co-financing rate in% is:	
My budgetary proposal respects the maximum EU co-financing ceiling in €		My proposed EU co-financing in € is:	
I have duly filled in the budgetary form (Technical Annex 2) providing the sources of co-financing		My co-financing amounts to – in €:	
I have duly filled in the budgetary form (Technical Annex 2) for all Consortium partners		My costs amount to – in €:	
I have duly filled in the budgetary form Technical Annex 2 for staff costs		My costs relating to staff amount to – in €:	
I have duly filled in the budgetary form (Technical Annex 2) for subcontracting costs		My costs relating to subcontracting amount to – in €:	
ADMISIBILITY AND ELIGIBILITY			
My proposal respects geographical conditions for eligibility		Partners of my proposal are legally established in the following countries:	
My proposal respects the legal status criteria for applicants		My proposal involves the following co-applicants:	
Neither I nor my co-applicants are in any of the exclusion situations (art. 106/107 FR)			
My proposal corresponds to the definition of the target organisation (in accordance with the call for proposals)		My organisation is/my partner organisations are: (explain how they correspond to the target organisation)	
My proposal is strictly non-profit-making			

SELECTION			
I, (and partners) have the required economic and financial capacity			
I (and partners) have the required operational capacity			

Of importance for the consortium in general, but in particular for the coordinator:

Preparing your proposal

Does your planned work fit with the call for proposals? Check that your proposed work does indeed address the topics open in this call.

Is your proposal complete? Proposals must comprise a Part A, containing the administrative information including participant and project cost details on standard forms; and a Part B. A proposal that does not contain both parts will be considered ineligible and will not be evaluated.

Does your proposal follow the required structure? Proposals should be precise and concise, and must follow exactly the proposal structure described in this document, which is designed to correspond to the evaluation criteria which will be applied. This structure varies for different call for proposals. Omitting requested information will almost certainly lead to lower scores and possible rejection.

Have you maximised your chances? There will be strong competition. Therefore, edit your proposal tightly, strengthen or eliminate weak points. Put yourself in the place of an expert evaluator; refer to the evaluation criteria indicated in the call text. Arrange for your draft to be evaluated by experienced colleagues; use their advice to improve it before submission.

Final checks before submission

- Do you have the agreement of all the members of the consortium to submit this proposal on their behalf?
- Check once more the eligibility criteria mentioned in the call for proposals! This includes any budget limits. Remember – the information given in part A is considered definitive.
- Is your Part B in portable document format (PDF)?
- Is the filename made up of the letters A to Z, and numbers 0 to 9? You should avoid special characters and spaces.
- Double check that you respect the font size and the page limitations for the different chapters!
- Have you virus-checked your computer? The SEP will automatically block the submission of any file containing a virus.
- Have you made yourself familiar with the SEP in good time?
- Have you allowed time to submit a first version of your proposal well in advance of the deadline (at least several days before), and then to continue to improve it with regular resubmissions?
- Have you completed the submission process for your latest version?

Following submission

Information submitted to the SEP remains encrypted until the deadline and can only be viewed by the applicant.

It is strongly recommended that you check that all your material has been successfully uploaded and submitted; that you have submitted the correct Part B files and that they are readable and printable.

You can revise and resubmit your proposal at any time up to the call deadline.