



# Preparatory Action

## Call for proposals

EU Competence Centre to support data management in tourism  
destinations  
(PPPA-2022-TOTOLAB)

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## EUROPEAN INNOVATION COUNCIL AND SMEs EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EISMEA)

EISMEA.I – Innovation ecosystems, SMP/Entrepreneurship and Consumers  
**EISMEA.I.02 –SMP/ SME Pillar**

### CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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## 0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** for implementation of a preparatory action in the field of tourism relating to the Single Market Programme.

The regulatory framework for this Action is set out in:

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))

The call is launched in accordance with the Commission Decision C(2022) 654 of 9.2.2022 on the financing of certain pilot projects and preparatory actions relating to 'Horizon Europe' and the 'Single Market Programme' and on the adoption of the Work Programme for 2022 and will be managed by the **European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA)** ('Agency').

The call covers the following **preparatory action**:

- **Preparatory Action — EU Competence Centre to support data management in tourism destinations<sup>1</sup> (PPPA-2022-TOTOLAB)**

**Applicants cannot submit more than one proposal under this call. Applicants may not participate in several proposals.**

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> The Commission Decision C(2022) 654 of 9.2.2022 on the financing of certain pilot projects and preparatory actions relating to 'Horizon Europe' and the 'Single Market Programme' and on the adoption of the Work Programme for 2022 refers to this action as 'Operationality of Tourism of Tomorrow Lab (To To Lab)'

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

You are also encouraged to visit the [EISMEA](#) website to consult the list of projects funded previously.

## **1. Background**

### 1.1 General policy context

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

In 2021, the European Commission presented a vision for Europe's digital transformation by 2030, to build 'Europe's Digital Decade'. The Digital Compass<sup>2</sup> evolves around four areas of actions, setting out targets to monitor progress: skilling and upskilling; secure and sustainable digital infrastructures; the digital transformation of businesses; and the digitalisation of public services.

The Transition Pathway for Tourism<sup>3</sup>, published by the European Commission in February 2022, sits precisely in broad policy framework, focusing on the need and opportunities to further digitise the tourism ecosystem, as well as on concrete actions to advance by 2030. It does so in full respect of the sustainable priorities set out by the Green Deal regulatory body, with sustainability as the twin transition to digitalisation.

Transition pathways were introduced in 2021 with the update of the EU Industrial Strategy<sup>4</sup>, which identified 14 sectors key to EU economy, and, over the course of 2021, supported tourism as the priority ecosystem for which to prepare a transition roadmap.

This was due to the fact that tourism – which contributes to 11% of the EU's GDP – has been one of the sectors most acutely, and pervasively, affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Travel bans, lockdowns and safety concerns all contributed to curtailing the growth and development of the tourism ecosystem across the EU, particularly for accommodation services, air travel, trade fairs and cultural events, with serious spill-over effects on the economic outlook of the Union.

### 1.2 Specific policy context

The Transition Pathway for Tourism<sup>3</sup> outlines a number of objectives and of actions for all stakeholders – EU institutions, national, regional and local government, private

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<sup>2</sup> [Europe's Digital Decade: digital targets for 2030 | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Transition Pathway for Tourism - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> COM(2021) 350 final.

sector, and destinations – to steer the ecosystem towards more sustainability, more pervasive and effective digitalisation, and towards improved resilience.

It also makes a reference to the inter-connections between tourism and other industrial ecosystems (such as, but not limited to agri-food, construction, health, retail, proximity, social economy and civil security). In light of this, measures and actions to support the twin transition of tourism need to take into account its cross-cutting nature, with a horizontal approach whereby coordination among governance levels, and if needed, cross-fertilisation across sectors, are ensured.

The Transition Pathway for Tourism identifies 27 areas of action to implement and monitor by 2030. About half of these topics are either digital-specific, or reliant on the need to develop appropriate levels of digitalisation skills, tools and infrastructure:

- Topic 1: Fair measures for short-term rentals (STR)
- Topic 2: Regulatory support for multimodal travelling
- Topic 3: Improving statistics and indicators for tourism
- Topic 4: Comprehensive tourism strategies development or update
- Topic 5: Collaborative governance of tourism destinations
- Topic 9: Data-driven tourism services
- Topic 10: Improving the availability of online information on tourism offer
- Topic 11: Easily accessible best practice, peer learning and networking for SMEs
- Topic 14: Technical implementation for tourism data space
- Topic 15: R&I for digital tools and services in tourism
- Topic 16: Support for digitalisation of tourism SMEs and destinations
- Topic 19: Awareness raising on skills needs for twin transition in tourism
- Topic 22: Pact for skills in tourism

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

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

Data management and its specificities in the tourism sector, therefore, will depend on the issues related to generation, access, use, re-use and exchange of data. At the same time, a governance of these key elements must be informed by expertise on which data is needed, and how it is used, in the tourism ecosystem.

As regards a governance for data access, the European Data Strategy<sup>5</sup> announced legislative measures to create the necessary overarching governance framework for a data-agile economy and to address common data-sharing issues between different sectors and domains. Such measures are intended to:

- create trust and fairness in data access and reuse;

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<sup>5</sup> [European data strategy | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/en/press-summaries/default/1234567890.pdf)

- to prevent any harmful fragmentation of the internal market through inconsistent actions between sectors and between the Member States;
- to develop a general cross-sectoral data governance framework;
- to make available more socio-economic high value and high quality public sector data for businesses, including SMEs;
- to enable better access to and control over the data to ensure a fair distribution of value generated by data along the data value chain; and
- in general, to untap the full potential of data as an enabler of social and economic welfare in Europe.

A pillar of this strategy is the Data Governance Act (DGA)<sup>6</sup>, proposed by the Commission in 2020. Among the priorities it set out, the DGA put forward the goal to create EU-wide common, interoperable data spaces in strategic sectors. This aims at overcoming legal and technical barriers to data sharing – where personal as well as non-personal data, including sensitive business data, are secure and high-quality industrial data is made available to both private and public players, while minimising the human carbon and environmental footprint.

In this context, the European Commission set up a Data Spaces Support Centre (DSSC)<sup>7</sup>, which will have a very important role to the implementation of the EU common data spaces, being the operational hand of the European Data Innovation Board (as announced in the Data Governance Act), and focusing on the coordination of the deployment of sectorial data spaces.

A first push to fund and support sectoral data spaces has been made within the Work Programme 2021-2022 of the Digital Europe Programme, where two projects under the Coordination and Support Actions for a preparatory study for a data space in tourism<sup>8</sup> are currently being funded. In parallel, a Code of Conduct on Data Sharing in the tourism sector is being prepared by stakeholders at EU level, and will be published in the beginning of 2023.

As regards the specificities of data management in tourism, a pilot project funded by the European Commission in 2020 has delivered a study on the most common uses of data by destinations in the EU, with recommendations for actions.<sup>9</sup>

Additionally, in 2021 the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency published the SMP-COSME-2021-TOURSME call for proposals COVID Recovery Through Sustainable Tourism Growth and SME Support, which included supporting SMEs in developing indicators on the environmental impact of tourism<sup>10</sup>. As a result, 10 co-funded projects started their implementation on 1 January 2023.

While real time information on business transactions, visitor locations and social media posts can provide useful information for destination management, also surveys and aggregated data on service characteristics and usage are important sources for information. When developed with a harmonised methodology, such data could be aggregated on local, regional, national or even European levels to generate policy indicators and high quality, highly reliable statistics for analytics and evidence-based decision making. The Transition Pathway for Tourism recognises a need to improve coverage of tourism statistics from basic statistics on trips and overnight stays to data on the social, environmental and economic impacts of tourism. A combination of both privately and publicly generated data through specific collection mechanisms and as a side-effect of business transactions offers the most comprehensive perspective over

<sup>6</sup> [EUR-Lex - 52020PC0767 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Data Spaces Support Centre](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Coordination and Support Actions for a preparatory study for a data space in tourism](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Smart-Tourism-Destinations-Final-Study-Main-Text-v4.1-under-public.pdf \(smarttourismdestinations.eu\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Funding & tenders \(europa.eu\)](#)

tourism developments and trends, and can provide key information for evidence-based policies.

Data generation, collection and use on destination level, therefore, should optimally be designed so that it can both serve needs at the destination level and be aggregated to complement regional and national statistics. This is in line with Topics 3, 5 and 15 of the Transition Pathway for Tourism as mentioned above. Such developments would optimally also link with the efforts of the European Statistical System actors (Eurostat, national and regional statistical offices) who are discussing the need to expand tourism statistics and indicators especially to better cover the economic, social and environmental aspects for tourism.

It is also important to note that digitalisation is not only about data generation, access and management. It includes also the application of existing technologies to improve business processes and communications with clients, and the development or take-up of new applications to innovate offers, improve the experience, attract and retain travellers, create loyalties, and integrate the territory in the strategy. What is generally the case in tourism, is that the take-up of these elements, from basic business processes and communications to data management or innovative destination marketing strategies or business models, is a challenge for SMEs and destination managers alike.

## **2. Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected impact**

### 2.1. Objectives

The general objective of this call for proposals is to contribute to **setting-up and operation of a (self-sustainable) competence centre (knowledge hub)** that will support and expand the take-up of data-driven destination management to support tourism destinations across the EU.

The objectives of the competence centre (and, therefore, the specific objectives of the call) are:

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

### 2.2. Themes and priorities (scope)

The competence centre needs to establish a well-structured and actively maintained knowledge hub in support of destinations as regards market trends, data sources, regulatory developments at national and EU level regarding data policy and uses, with active information sharing links with the EU-level support mechanisms for the Transition Pathway for Tourism.

The present call for proposals aims to support the creation of a self-sustainable EU competence centre which has a clear added value for the twin transition towards a



more sustainable and more digital tourism ecosystem at EU level. The transferable knowledge developed with specific destination stakeholders must be made available for all EU destinations and strong, long-term strategies shall be developed in order to maintain the project outcomes updated and available also after the funding period.

The call for proposals aims to create a lasting impact for destinations supported during the funding period, by developing a sustainability plan to ensure that the destinations continue building their capacity to implement data-driven destination management also after the funding period.

### 2.3. Activities that can be funded (scope)

The selected beneficiary **must set up a competence centre (knowledge hub) with a business and intelligence support scheme for destination management organisations (DMOs) across the EU**, and optionally for tourism SMEs, **with a view to support their transition towards data-driven management practices**. The competence centre needs to support both data management and data sharing practices across destinations and regions, as well as within a destination ecosystem. The applicants must describe in their proposals how they will set up the competence centre and its support scheme.

When involving destinations, all relevant actors in a local ecosystem must be involved by the project: as an example, where the DMO is only focused on marketing needs, and tourism strategy and management is assigned to a local or regional authorities, all these parties need to be targeted by the project activities. The applicants must describe in their proposals how they will involve all the relevant actors.

The destinations targeted by the support scheme selected should ideally demonstrate or aim for innovation in tourism.

The project must organise the activities specified below for several destinations from different regions and Member States. The project must aim at scaling up the dissemination of project results to a high number of destinations at EU-level during the duration of the project.

All of the activities listed below must take into account the contribution of official statistical offices of more than one region or country to the tourism ecosystem, so as to set up synergies between data sharing initiatives and the work already ongoing on tourism statistics among European Statistical System actors. Ideally, this should result in the involvement of the official statistical offices at regional and/or national level.

The aggregated data collected on the sustainability of tourism from the supported destinations must allow comparison of destinations in different regions and provide elements which could be used to complement regional official statistics. For this purpose, the data sets must be updated on a regular basis (at least twice a year).

The competence centre's (knowledge hub's) support scheme must offer the following activities to destinations, although the offer must be tailored based on the destinations' needs:

- a) Overviewing the main data needs and uses by destinations, and the key players in the single market, thereby centralising knowledge and access to big and traditional data for the use of DMOs. This overview must be kept updated and easy to consult for DMOs;
- b) Facilitating the creation of public-private data sharing agreements to support destination management in different types of destinations (urban, rural, coastal,

mountain, islands, etc.);

- c) Facilitating cross-border/transnational cooperation by mapping relevant data sets and how they are generated, accessed and managed, as well as the challenges different types of destinations (such as urban, rural, coastal, mountain, islands, small/big) may have to use this data to transition to more sustainable, competitive and innovative practices;
- d) Identifying key data for destination and tourism businesses' management, with particular attention to competitiveness and sustainability goals, in order to provide DMOs (and EU tourism industry) with easy-to-use tools for strategic decisions and for monitoring improvements in sustainability and resilience of destinations. This activity must include developing impact measurement and monitoring mechanisms for economic, social and environmental sustainability of tourism with common method, which allows for comparability and aggregation of information, including for the use by statistical bodies at regional or national level. As much as possible, this should be developed building on tools and initiatives already existing, and it must be reinforced by a common comparability method;
- e) Creating and implementing common approach (considering semantics, technical interoperability, governance) to describe, generate and share data on tourism service offer, aligning with the efforts on preparing the EU tourism data space (please refer to the Tourism Transition Pathways) and collaborating with other existing EU initiatives. This common approach must be developed with, and tested with, several destinations from different regions and Member States;
- f) Providing expertise, training and capacity-building activities on the opportunities of data-based approaches to tourism marketing and management, tools to analyse data trends, data analytics, business intelligence, use of different types of data sources, establishing data sharing agreements, or on other aspects of digitalisation, as appropriate. This action may include the dissemination of the principles laid out in the Code of Conduct for data sharing in tourism. The target audience of these activities must be Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), public sector bodies tasked with tourism management, such as regional and local administrations, other relevant collaborating stakeholders in destinations and optionally tourism SMEs. This may be done in particular through the organisation of (the list is indicative and not exhaustive):
  - Collaborative workshops, webinars, physical and online training courses;
  - Tailored coaching for destinations based on destinations' needs;
  - Peer-to-peer learning by matching needs and solutions;
  - Boot camps and hackathons;
  - Providing expertise, consultancy and technical support services for destinations in analysing their needs and preparing an action plan to support them taking optimal benefits from data-based digital solutions.

Capacity building must include raising awareness in the ecosystems involved regarding the need for and benefits of a transition to more sustainable, innovative and digital tourism practices, with reference to the relevant initiatives of the European Commission.

The capacity building activity needs to be accompanied by a monitoring and reporting mechanism for the competence centre to analyse most common

support needs for different types of destinations, most productive common solutions, and the impact of the initiatives.

g) Making information and data as regards tourism services (tourism offer) and their characteristics across the destinations available online, on an open standards-based platform. The platform:

- must serve as a reference space for DMOs and EU tourism companies on tourism offers;
- must not serve as a marketplace;
- must be interoperable, as interoperability can promote new joint marketing, exchange and collaboration opportunities.

As much as possible, this should be developed building on tools and initiatives already existing.

h) Exchanging and disseminating developed knowledge, good practice and project results (e.g. through marketing or a dedicated communication campaign; dissemination/networking events; publishing user-friendly materials for guidance and best practice).

All activities must be implemented in compliance with the relevant legal requirements to protect personal data under the GDPR<sup>11</sup> and applicable national legislation.

The actions proposed are expected to support destinations and also to facilitate cross-border/transnational cooperation for a steady knowledge transfer and innovative practices implemented through cooperation between destinations.

For implementing the activities in support of managing data mentioned above, the costs necessary for purchasing the following services and equipment, in particular the ones to be used by and for destinations, are considered eligible:

- Travel and accommodation of participants targeted by the action to participate in activities organised by the consortium;
- Data acquisition;
- Software, cloud processing, storage acquisition;
- data tools, data services, visualisation tools, surveys;
- Training and knowledge dissemination on managing data for destinations' local ecosystems actors.

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

Applicants must also include, in the budget proposal of the project, the participation of maximum two representatives of the project's consortium staff members at the

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<sup>11</sup> General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679.

kick-off meeting in Brussels, organised by EISMEA, at the beginning of the implementation period.

#### 2.4. Activities that cannot be funded:

- Development/improvement of the physical infrastructure (unless specifically mentioned in section 2.3)
- Platform for tourism offer must not serve as a marketplace.

#### 2.5. Expected impacts

- Enhance resilience and competitiveness of tourism destinations through better uptake of sustainability principles, innovation and digitalisation, based on the opportunities provided by sharing data and information across EU tourism ecosystems.
- DMOs upskilled in data acquisition, use, management, and in business strategies based on data, through use and re-use of available data (including big data), information and indicators, in eventual cooperation with the future European data space for tourism.
- Better understanding of data management and practices built at local and regional level, including better understanding and valorisation of official statistical data and data collection.
- Effective mechanisms for comparable and harmonised data collection and generation built, with potential for aggregating it on regional, national or ultimately EU-level for following the impacts of tourism.
- Enhanced transnational cooperation of public and private stakeholders in tourism, in line with the ongoing actions and initiatives at the EU level.
- New business models created for destination managers supporting environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability and enhanced cooperation along the tourism value chain.
- Improved transnational and cross-border cooperation, knowledge transfer and peer learning in destinations.
- Continuous support of destinations with services provided by the competence centre ensured after the funding period.

#### 2.6 Deliverables (compulsory)

The proposal must provide for the following deliverables:

- A detailed organisational and functional structure of the competence centre;
- A dataset aggregating information from the supported destinations on the sustainability of tourism in a manner that allows comparison of destinations in different regions and provides elements which could be used to complement regional official statistics. The data sets must be updated on a regular basis (at least twice a year);
- A progress report in month 13 (covering months 1 to 12), not linked to a payment which includes:
  - capacity building and support activities undertaken;

- summary of data generation, access, use and management measures taken up by destinations as a result of the work of the competence centre;
- communication and dissemination activities undertaken with impact indicators on their reach to destinations across countries and types of destinations;
- An online resource, to be kept updated continuously during the funding period by the beneficiary, in a form that can be browsed and is easily accessible, which summarises key lessons learnt, including but not limited to:
  - an analysis of the most common support needs and key support solutions to meet them in destinations;
  - illustrative concise case studies describing productive take-up of new means for data generation, data sharing, data management and data use for destination management.
- A plan presenting a sustainable business model to maintain the competence centre and guarantee the continuity of its services after the funding period.

The outcomes of the competence centre must be available in English. Applicants may, however, offer services in additional language(s).

### 3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 3 000 000**.

The Agency will award one proposal.

We reserve the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the call priorities, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.


### 4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	23 February 2023
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>26 April 2023 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	May-June 2023
Information on evaluation results:	August/September 2023
GA signature:	November/December 2023

### 5. Admissibility and documents

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

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

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

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

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*)
- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*to be uploaded*):
  - detailed budget table (*template available in the Submission System*)
  - CVs (short outlines) of the core project team listed in section 2.3 of the Part B of the technical proposal
  - sustainable tourism expert profile within the consortium team (*model template available on the EISMEA website – see section 7. 'Operational Capacity' for more details*)
  - data expert profile within the consortium team (*model template available on the EISMEA website – see section 7. 'Operational Capacity' for more details*)
  - project manager/coordinator profile within the consortium team (*model template available on the EISMEA website – see section 7. 'Operational Capacity' for more details*)
  - organisation with experience in collecting and compiling statistical information about a territory, region or country's economy included in the consortium (*model template available on the EISMEA website – see section 7. 'Operational Capacity' for more details*)
  - destination management organisation included in the consortium (*model template available on the EISMEA website – see section 7. 'Operational Capacity' for more details*).

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

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

Your application must be **readable, accessible and printable**.

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

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



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

## 6. Eligibility

### *Eligible participants (eligible countries)*

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

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.
  - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))

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

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


### *Specific cases*

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

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

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons<sup>12</sup>.

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

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'<sup>13</sup>.  Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (*e.g. entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)*<sup>14</sup> and entities

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<sup>12</sup> See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>13</sup> For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>14</sup> Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)<sup>15</sup>). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

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

### Consortium composition

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

- minimum four (4) and maximum seven (7) applicants (beneficiaries, not affiliated entities)
- from minimum three (3) and maximum five (5) different eligible countries
- minimum one (1) business support organisation (BSO)<sup>16</sup> and
- minimum one (1) destination management organisation (DMO)<sup>17</sup>.

Applicants are **encouraged** to involve **two regional and/or national statistical offices** as members in their consortia.

### Eligible activities

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

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

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc.*).

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

### Geographic location (target countries)

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

### Duration

Projects should normally range between 30 and 36 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

### Project budget

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<sup>15</sup> Commission guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

<sup>16</sup> Within the scope of this Call for Proposals, a **BSO** relates to a business incubator/accelerator, start-up, lab, innovation hub, university or educational institution, research centre and any other relevant organisation with a proven capacity and experience in running business support activities focused on SMEs.

<sup>17</sup> Within the scope of this Call, a **DMO** is defined as a public or private stakeholder/ authority that manages a local, regional or national tourism strategy in one of the countries forming part of the consortium. DMO responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, taking responsibility for the local tourism offer, sustainable tourism planning/development, and the impact tourism has on the territory. The DMO typically also undertakes additional activities such as business analysis, marketing, strategic and policy implementation, inter-institutional and international relationships.



Project budgets (maximum grant amount) are expected be around EUR 3 000 000 per project, but this does not preclude the submission/selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

## 7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

### Financial capacity

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

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

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

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

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

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

- further information;
- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*);
- pre-financing paid in instalments;
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*);

or

- propose no prefinancing;
- request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.



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

### Operational capacity

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

This capacity will be assessed together with the 'Quality' award criterion, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including

operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

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

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

- 1) *profiles of **the staff*** responsible for managing and implementing the project (qualifications and experience):
  - a) **CVs (short outlines) of the core project team** listed in section 2.3 of the Part B of the technical proposal and
  - b) **an expert with at least three (3) years of experience in sustainable tourism management at destination level** (to be elaborated also in templates provided on the EISMEA website – see section 5. 'Admissibility and documents') and
  - c) **two data experts with at least three (3) years of experience each in data analytics and data management in a tourism-related field** (to be elaborated also in templates provided on the EISMEA website – see section 5. 'Admissibility and documents') and
  - d) **a project manager/coordinator with at least three (3) years of experience in transnational project management** (to be elaborated also in the templates provided on the EISMEA website – see section 5. 'Admissibility and documents');
- 2) *description of **the consortium participants*** (to be elaborated also in the templates provided on the EISMEA website – see section 5. 'Admissibility and documents') which must reflect that the consortium includes:
  - a) **at least two (2) organisations**, each from **a different region or country** covered by the consortium, having each **at least three (3) years of experience in collecting, compiling and analysing detailed statistical information** about a territory, region or country's economy;
  - b) **a destination management organisation (DMO) having at least two (2) years of experience in sustainability.**

The applicants have to clearly indicate that operational capacity requirements are appropriately met. In this regard, it is strongly recommended that applicants download and compile the six additional templates that are provided by EISMEA on the dedicated space [of the Agency's website](#). These templates concern the three expert profiles 1b), 1c) and 1d) mentioned above and the two types of consortium partners 2a) and 2b) mentioned above. It is recommended that applicants scan all five documents (1b), 1c), 1d), 2a), 2b)) and convert them into a single pdf, in order to be able to upload it under the "Other Annexes" section of the submission tool.

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

### Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate<sup>18</sup>:

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<sup>18</sup> See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct<sup>19</sup> (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that<sup>20</sup>:

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

## 8. Evaluation and award procedure

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

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

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<sup>19</sup> Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

<sup>20</sup> See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

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

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

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

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



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

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

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a **complaint** (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter).

## 9. Award criteria

The **award criteria** for this call are as follows:

- **Relevance:** clarity and consistency of project, objectives and planning; extent to which they match the themes and priorities and objectives of the call; contribution to the EU strategic and legislative context; European/trans-national dimension; impact/interest for a number of countries (EU or eligible non-EU countries); possibility to use the results in other countries; potential to develop mutual trust/cross-border cooperation; participation in relevant certification schemes, particularly the EU Ecolabel and EMAS (**30 points**)
- **Quality:**
  - **Project design and implementation:** technical quality; logical links between the identified problems, needs and solutions proposed (logical frame concept); methodology for implementing the project (concept and methodology, management, procedures, timetable, risks and risk management, monitoring and evaluation); feasibility of the project within the proposed time frame; cost effectiveness (sufficient/appropriate budget for proper implementation; best value for money) (**30 points**)

- **Project team and cooperation arrangements:** quality of the consortium and project teams; appropriate procedures and problem-solving mechanisms for cooperating within the project teams and consortium (**30 points**)
- **Impact:** ambition and expected long-term impact of results on SMEs, in particular on their business management processes and practices; appropriate dissemination strategy for ensuring sustainability and long-term impact; sustainability of results after EU funding ends (**10 points**).

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

Maximum points: 100 points.

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

Overall threshold: 70 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available call budget. Other proposals will be rejected.

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

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

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

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) can be found on the Funding and Tender Portal.

### Starting date and project duration

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

Project duration: between 30 and 36 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

### Milestones and deliverables

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

A list of compulsory deliverables is provided in Section 2.6 - Deliverables (compulsory).

#### Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

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

Project budget (maximum grant amount): *see section 6 above*. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

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

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

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

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

#### Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

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

*Budget categories for this call:*

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

*Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:*

- personnel costs:
  - SME owner/natural person unit cost<sup>21</sup>: Yes
- travel and subsistence unit cost<sup>22</sup>: Yes

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<sup>21</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7715).

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

### Reporting and payment arrangements


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

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

There will be one or more **interim payments** (with detailed cost reporting).

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

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

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

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

### Prefinancing guarantees

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<sup>22</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 12 January 2021 authorising the use of unit costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs under an action or work programme under the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (C(2021)35).



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

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

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

Prefinancing guarantees are formally NOT linked to individual consortium members, which means that you are free to organise how to provide the guarantee amount (*by one or several beneficiaries, for the overall amount or several guarantees for partial amounts, by the beneficiary concerned or by another beneficiary, etc*). It is however important that the requested amount is covered and that the guarantee(s) are sent to us in time to make the prefinancing (scanned copy via email AND original by post).

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

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

### Certificates

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

### Liability regime for recoveries

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

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
  - unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*
- or
- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts*.

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

### Provisions concerning the project implementation

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

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

Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding: *see Model Grant Agreement*



(art 17 and Annex 5):

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

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

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

#### Other specificities

n/a

#### Non-compliance and breach of contract

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



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

### **11. How to submit an application**

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

Submission is a **2-step process**:

#### **a) create a user account and register your organisation**

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

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

#### **b) submit the proposal**

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

Submit your proposal in 3 parts, as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 12. Help

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

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

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

### Contact

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

Non-IT related questions should be sent by **Wednesday 19 April 2023 – 17:00:00 CET (Brussels time)** to the following email address: [EISMEA-SMP-COSME-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EISMEA-SMP-COSME-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu).

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

## 13. Important



### IMPORTANT

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

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

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

- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc.*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget (except under EU Synergies actions). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances declared to two different EU actions.
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants cannot submit more than one proposal under this call. Multiple proposals will be rejected.

Organisations may not participate in several proposals.

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

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

This includes:

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

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

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