



Single Market Programme (SMP COSME)

Call for proposals

Greening social economy SMEs and entrepreneurs in the proximity and social economy ecosystem through transnational co-operation

(SMP-COSME-2022-SEE)

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of proximity and social economy ecosystem under the SME pillar of the **Single Market Programme (SMP COSME)**.

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act (SMP Regulation [2021/690](#)¹).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2022 SMP Work Programme² and will be managed by the **European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA)** ('Agency').

The call covers the following **topic**:

- **SMP-COSME-2022-SEE-01 – Greening social economy SMEs and entrepreneurs in the proximity and social economy ecosystem through transnational co-operation**

Applicants may submit more than one proposal for different projects under the same call (and be awarded a funding for them). Organisations may participate in several proposals. BUT: if there are several proposals for very similar projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw one of them (or it will be rejected).

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

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

- the [Call Document](#) outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
 - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/690 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing a programme for the internal market, competitiveness of enterprises, including small and medium-sized enterprises, the area of plants, animals, food and feed, and European statistics (Single Market Programme) (OJ L 153, 3.5.2021, p. 1).

² Commission Implementing Decision C(2022) 5587 final of 10.08.2022 amending the Commission Implementing Decision C(2022) 724 as regards the implementation of actions under the Single Market Programme.

- 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:
- 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

Proximity and Social Economy Ecosystem context

In line with the [European Commission's priorities for 2019-24](#), the actions proposed under the SME pillar of the Single Market Programme (SMP) for 2022 aim at fostering entrepreneurship and strengthening the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the EU. These actions will also support SMEs in the post-COVID-19 recovery and facilitate the green and digital twin transition across the different industrial ecosystems. Another cornerstone of the SME pillar of the SMP lies in the tools to foster entrepreneurship, address the lack of skills and promote new collaborative business models.

99.9% of the companies in the Proximity & Social Economy (P&SE) ecosystem are SMEs, with a significant part being micro enterprises and starts-ups. This ecosystem employs 22,9 million people and accounts for 6.54% of EU value added (EUR 791 billion)³. Actors of the proximity and social economy are pooled under this ecosystem given that they often share common characteristics (i.e. local anchorage and short value chains) although the features of these entities vary to a certain extent. In particular, this call will target social economy SMEs and entrepreneurs operating in this ecosystem, and will benefit proximity initiatives such as Local Green Deals but also support the development of sustainable practices (e.g. 15-minutes city, eco-friendly last mile delivery and short food supply chains) at local level⁴. Social economy organisations and entities in Europe are around 2,8 million being cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations (including charities), foundations and social enterprises. These organisations provide 13 million paid jobs in Europe, corresponding to 6,3% of the EU workforce⁵. Many entities encompassed in this ecosystem already participate in delivering on the sustainable transition in a fair,

³ Commission Staff Working document accompanying Annual Single Market Report 2021, [swd-annual-single-market-report-2021_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁴ Commission Staff Working document accompanying the Social Economy Action Plan (2021), [SWD 2021 373 F1 OTHER STAFF WORKING PAPER EN V7 P1 1647610 rev \(2\).pdf](#)

⁵ Communication of the European Commission, Social Economy Action Plan, published in December 2021, [Commission presents Action Plan to boost the social economy and create jobs - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

local, inclusive and democratic way⁶. Still, further support to social economy actors should be provided in order to enable them to deliver on the ecosystem transition. Actions may consist in enabling framework conditions, fostering cooperation with public authorities and mainstream businesses in addition to addressing gaps in knowledge and skills.

As depicted in the [Flash Eurobarometer 498](#) on SMEs, green markets and resource efficiency of March 2022, 89% SMEs are taking measures to be more resource-efficient although significant work remains to be done, notably in the P&SE ecosystem. On the performance of the P&SE ecosystem, it appears that 13% of its SMEs are not taking measures to be more resource-efficient. This represents a higher share than any other ecosystem (e.g. 4% for Textile, 7% for Electronics, 8% for Agri-food and Construction and 10% for Energy-renewables) except cultural and creative industries which also have 13% of its SMEs not taking measures to be more resource efficient. To the question “what actions is your company undertaking to be more resource efficient?”, 19% Proximity and social economy SMEs have answered that they ‘design products that are easier to maintain, repair or reuse’, scoring the lowest rate across all the ecosystems surveyed. Besides, ‘minimising waste’ (61%), ‘saving energy’ (56%) and ‘saving materials’ (52%) appeared to be the three most important sets of actions, as for many other ecosystems. Still, in most cases, SMEs in the P&SE ecosystem are among the least performing SMEs in these categories. When it comes to the difficulties encountered in trying to set up resource efficiency actions for this ecosystem, the ‘complexity of administrative or legal procedures’ comes as the major barrier for the P&SE ecosystem (34%) among others, followed by the ‘cost of environment actions’ (31% of the answers for this ecosystem compared to 27% on ecosystems’ average), the ‘lack of specific environmental expertise’ (27% compared to 23% on average) and the ‘difficulty to adapt environmental legislation to its company’ (25% compared to 21%). Finally, with regard to the tools that would be most helpful to become more resource-efficient, ‘grants or subsidies’ are ranked first in almost all ecosystems. Proximity and social economy SMEs consider that ‘consultancy on how to improve resource efficiency’ (26% compared to 25%), ‘demonstration of new technologies or processes to improve resource efficiency’ (24% compared to 22%) and ‘better cooperation between companies across sectors so that new processes to re-use waste and by-products can be developed’ (20% compared to 26%) would also be needed to green their processes and activities. These figures demonstrate the importance to set up capacity-building and knowledge-sharing support actions, bringing together various relevant stakeholders to deliver on the Green Deal objectives, especially for social economy SMEs and entrepreneurs.

[Policy context](#)

In September 2015, the 17 [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were adopted by world leaders at United Nations level in view of addressing the global challenges we face such as inequality, poverty, climate change and environmental degradation, among others. In its [conference report](#) on Decent work and the social and solidarity economy published in April 2022, the International Labour Organization (ILO) dives into the contributions of social and solidarity economy (SSE) entities to decent work and sustainable development. When it comes to a just transition to environmental sustainability, the report points out that the SSE can contribute to the achievement of the following SDGs of the United Nations 2030 Agenda: Goal 7 (affordable and clean energy), Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth), Goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities), Goal 12 (responsible consumption and production), Goal 13 (climate action), Goal 14 (life below water) and Goal 15 (life on land). The report stresses that SSE in sectors ranging from

⁶ Commission Staff Working document accompanying Annual Single Market Report 2021, [swd-annual-single-market-report-2021_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

agriculture and housing to energy are managing to green their operations and to lower their environmental footprint. In the same vein, it appears that a share of SSE organisations deliver on the green transition by producing and selling products and services in sectors such as renewable energy. The growing role of SSE entities in managing electrical and electronic waste (e-waste) and contributing to fair and solidary food networks is also highlighted. Nevertheless, the conference document identifies key remaining challenges lying ahead on the path towards sustainability (e.g. over-reliance on external sources of funding, little access to information and technology, low levels of technical and managerial skills, insufficient support for research and development, etc.). Finally, with regard to the required policy instruments that should be implemented, the report sheds light on the need to support the contribution of SSE units to a just transition to environmental sustainability, including in the circular economy.

At European level, the [EU Green Deal](#) was unveiled in December 2019 as the new growth strategy to transform the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy. This strategy aims to make Europe the first climate neutral continent with the objective to reach zero net emissions of greenhouse gas by 2050. As depicted in the Green Deal, cross-border and regional cooperation are of paramount importance to meet the climate neutrality goal by mid-century. On another note, the green -and digital- transition can result in an increase of social inequalities. Therefore, the EU Green Deal, besides its sustainable policies and targets, puts a particular emphasis on the social aspects of the transition and calls to leave no one and no place on the journey towards climate neutrality. Sustainability refers to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of social economy development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee long-term, inclusive and environment-friendly growth.

As foreseen by the EU Green Deal, a large set of policy initiatives have been put forward. In July 2021, the European Commission released the [Fit for 55 Package](#) encompassing legislative initiatives on climate, energy, land use and transport aiming at reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 (compared to 1990 levels). In the framework of the [EU Taxonomy for sustainable activities](#), the first delegated act covering the two first objectives (i.e. climate change adaptation and mitigation) of the EU Taxonomy for sustainable activities was published. Still in December 2021, the [Hydrogen and Decarbonized Gas Package](#) was unveiled. This set of legislative proposals, which was presented as the second batch of the Fit for 55 Package, aims to revise EU rules in order to decarbonise gas markets, promote hydrogen and reduce methane emissions. More recently, in February 2022, the [proposal for a Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive](#) was adopted so as to foster sustainable and responsible corporate behaviour throughout global value chains and thus protect human rights while advancing the green transition. In March 2022, the European Commission presented its [Circular Economy Package](#) to make sustainable products the norm in the EU by revising the Ecodesign Directive, the Construction Products Regulation and by adopting a strategy for sustainable and circular textiles. In the same package, the European Commission also put forward a proposal to revise EU protection rules to empower consumers in the green transition.

In May 2021, the European Commission updated its [Industrial Strategy](#) to support the transformation to a more sustainable, digital, resilient and globally competitive economy, notably in the post-COVID-19 recovery context. To reach that objective, the European Commission is building on an ecosystem-based approach. The new updated strategy calls for the co-creation of transitional pathway with the different stakeholders involved to better understand the specificities, needs and required actions in each ecosystem to deliver on the green and digital transition. The ongoing elaboration of a transitional pathway will shape this call for proposals and its objectives.

In December 2021, the European Commission adopted the [Social Economy Action Plan](#) (SEAP) which aims to develop the appropriate conditions (e.g. legal framework, private funding and public procurement) to exploit the full potential of social economy, enhancing social innovation and ensuring that social economy entities are equipped with the appropriate tools and skills to deliver on the twin transition. The SEAP also refers to the [New European Bauhaus](#) which, in a creative and transdisciplinary approach, connects the Green Deal initiatives with the daily lives and living spaces of EU citizens.

A [Commission staff working document](#) outlining possible scenarios for a transition pathway towards a more resilient, green and digital P&SE industrial ecosystem was released together with the SEAP. Between 8 December 2021 and 1 March 2022, a [consultation process](#) was held to gather the feedback of P&SE ecosystem stakeholders (such as industry, associations, social economy partners, public authorities, and other organisations). Among the 79 stakeholders' contributions to the consultation, many respondents welcomed the strong emphasis on partnerships and cooperation in the SEAP and its staff working document, notably when it comes to foster the nexus between both social and mainstream enterprises and also between local administrations and social economy organisations in sustainability areas. Furthermore, it appears that stakeholders are fully aware that the social economy is best placed to address the current environmental crisis especially in light of its key role in fulfilling community needs, experimenting with new activities (e.g. sustainable and inclusive food, circular economy, green mobility and renewable energy), as well as for its capacity to share environmental values in local territories and create participatory and solidarity models for renovation and regeneration. Respondents consider the scarce recognition of their role as key players in the transition and their limited participation in decision-making processes a challenge. This, along with the need to develop socially responsible and green public procurement, the limited financial capacity of social economy organisations to embark on the green transition, the need for upskilling and reskilling of entrepreneurs and employees to create and access green jobs and avoid job losses. Finally, stakeholders raise attention on the following energy-related challenges referring to the need to develop low energy consumption patterns, strengthen the energy production capacity of local communities and remove current obstacles to the development of social economy initiatives in this highly regulated field.

On 14 December 2021, the Commission presented [Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality](#) which provides guidance to Member States on social and employment aspects in the context of the green transition. It stresses the importance of social economy enterprises in circular value retention activities (including repair, re-use, remanufacturing and servitisation business models). The Council Recommendation encourages Member States to stimulate job creation and promote entrepreneurship, including social enterprises, particularly in regions facing transition challenges. It also calls on Member States to foster training and advisory services and to set up incentives such as social innovation actions and local initiatives to support circular economy practices, donation and sharing schemes, including through social economy enterprises.

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

SMP-COSME-2022-SEE-01 – Greening social economy SMEs and entrepreneurs in the proximity and social economy ecosystem through transnational co-operation

Objectives

The general objective of this call for proposals is to green the processes and activities

of SMEs in the social economy by boosting the development of sustainable practices through capacity building, knowledge transfer and transnational cooperation. In doing so, this call for proposals aims at empowering social economy SMEs to deliver on the objectives set by the EU Green Deal by fostering their capacities and skills, improving their sustainable management and greening their operations.

The call for proposal will support transnational partnerships to boost the capacity of social economy SMEs and entrepreneurs in the proximity and social economy ecosystem to green their operations to innovate their products, services and processes and therefore enable them to scale up their contribution to the green transition in the EU.

Green growth can offer significant benefits but many SMEs active in this ecosystem still face barriers regarding the sustainable transition.

This call for proposals also intends to strengthen the capacity of social economy intermediaries⁷ to support their members in the green transition. Empowering intermediaries should allow continuity of support services and expertise offered to members and stakeholders.

Themes and priorities (scope)

The call for proposals aims at:

- supporting transnational and cross-sectorial cooperation, and exchange of good practices to enable sustainable growth of social economy SMEs and entrepreneurs regarding the green transition;
- boosting the capacities and skills of staff and management within social economy SMEs and entrepreneurs to green their operations and develop sustainable products and services;
- encouraging the uptake of sustainable alternatives and innovative solutions through capacity building, incubation and acceleration, advisory services and coaching;
- fostering cooperation between social economy entities on the one hand, and mainstream businesses, academia and public authorities on the other.

Activities must fall under at least one of the following **themes**:

- Improving social economy SMEs environmental footprint considering value chains of products and services but also internal processes and management;
- Boosting the sustainable contribution of social economy entities by allowing the uptake of circular economy practices (e.g. recycling and upcycling), sustainable transport solutions, and enable the development of renewable energy alternatives (e.g. solar panels), energy efficiency technologies (e.g. heating, renovation and insulation) and resource efficiency solutions (e.g. waste management);
- Enabling the development of local green markets (e.g. in retail, agro-food packaging, catering, mobility, construction, cleaning, landscaping, maintenance, manufacturing, etc.);

⁷ These organisations can be established as business support organisation, incubator & accelerator, sectoral federation or association representing social economy entities, providing support services to social economy entities or federate social entities at local, regional or national level.

- Testing, implementing and scaling-up innovative green solutions by social economy SMEs and entrepreneurs;
- Capacity building and expertise sharing on measuring and communicating about environmental impact of social economy SMEs;
- Setting up investment or financial vehicles to finance the green transition of social economy, for example philanthropy, local impact investment funds, crowd funding and match funding schemes, public private investment schemes, etc.;
- Fostering social economy SMEs' capacity and skills to improve their use of new digital technologies for green purposes resulting in new business models;
- Evaluating skills, infrastructure and investment needs required to enable social economy entities to meet climate targets in the long term.

Additional themes are also possible.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

The proposals submitted under the call for proposals shall **focus** to:

1) Provide direct financial support for capacity building and training through:

- facilitating knowledge transfer and exchange of good practices between social economy SMEs and entrepreneurs lagging behind in terms of sustainability performance and more advanced businesses and organisations;
- setting up targeted trainings and peer to peer learning programs to equip social economy SMEs and start-ups with the tools to better reduce their environmental footprint;
- supporting SMEs in the social economy to set up or benefit from financial support schemes (national, EU or private funding opportunities) enabling their green transition. Such financial support might for example target process development, innovation, infrastructure, utility usage, etc.;
- empowering management and employees of SMEs in the social economy to introduce or implement new green practices and techniques as well as promote green innovation pathways. This can, for example, have an effect on the product or service (eco-design), the internal processes (process optimizations), usage of infrastructure, utilities, waste processing, etc.

2) Provide advisory services and technical support activities related to financing, incubation, acceleration and scaling-up of sustainability processes and activities to:

- improve sustainable management of social economy SMEs and entrepreneurs via business partnerships and cooperation with business support centres, academia and incubators;
- foster innovative and collaborative solutions for sustainable practices through enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation for the development of greener products, services, skills and resilient business models in the social economy;
- foster stakeholders' cooperation and pooling of resources to enable joint investment, joint capacity building, joint research and development for sustainability projects in the social economy;
- support financing of ad hoc advisory and consultancy services aiming to reduce

social economy SMEs' environmental footprint.

Each consortium must deliver the following **mandatory activities**:

- Activity 1) Organisation of transnational capacity building activities (e.g. targeted online and on-site trainings, peer-learning sessions and awareness raising activities) bringing together different partners and stakeholders;
- Activity 2) Organisation of coaching, mentoring (e.g. job shadowing, social intrapreneurship programs) and business support activities (e.g. incubation and scaling-up support) targeting social economy SMEs and entrepreneurs;
- Activity 3) Delivering capacity building through advisory services to support social economy SMEs and entrepreneurs in identifying and implementing sustainable changes (e.g. mapping funding opportunities, support to obtain certification on labels and develop local green markets, advice on how to gather data and communicate about sustainable performance);
- Activity 4) Providing financial support to the SMEs as specified in the below section 'Support to third parties'.

The non-exhaustive list of **possible additional types of activities** is as follows:

- Mapping of relevant good practices, case studies, reports and analysis, main players, service providers of sustainable solutions (e.g. resource efficiency consultancy, business support centres) which are relevant for the green transition of social economy SMEs;
- Mapping of barriers, concrete specific business needs and sustainability ad-hoc support required by social economy SMEs and entrepreneurs to green their processes, products and services;
- Organisation of activities which aim to kick start co-design, co-production and co-innovation initiatives to speed up and scale up sustainability practices of social economy SMEs;
- Development of innovative products and services, smart solutions for knowledge and expertise sharing and community involvement;
- Production of training materials addressing the specific needs of local and regional authorities, social economy SMEs, mainstream businesses and business support organizations;
- Production of guidelines and recommendations aiming to support companies, regardless of their business model and sector of activity, to replicate sustainable practices;
- Production of communication materials about the objectives, the developments and the results of the projects;
- Project implementation support, coordination and promotion of mutual learning effects across members of consortia;
- Identification and planning of concrete next steps and actions that social economy SMEs should take to pursue the objectives of the call in the longer term (e.g. financing of infrastructure and upskilling of the workforce);
- Reporting on the results of implemented capacity building and expertise sharing activities as well as on the uptake of innovative solutions by social economy

SMEs to green their operations, services and products;

- Other activities proposed by project partners in line with the objectives of the call.

Non-eligible activities:

- Development/improvement of the physical infrastructure.

Support to third parties

At least 50% of the grant must be directed to SMEs to finance services in support of their greater resilience and green and digital transformation, e.g. lump sums for support services, or free access and support to use testing facilities directly to SMEs.

IMPORTANT: The support to third parties cannot be provided through services offered by the consortium directly.

The support to third parties can be channelled through (a combination of) tools such as:

- Lump sums for training in support activities in the scope of the eligible activities listed above (such as customised trainings, workshops, peer-learning, coaching and mentoring sessions etc.).
- Lump sums for advisory and consultancy services in the scope of the eligible activities listed above (for example in mapping specific resource efficiency needs of individual SMEs; coaching and mentoring on how to manage operations in a more environmental-friendly manner; lump sums for obtaining certification on labels, tailored support to develop a local green market, etc.).
- Lump sums for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs necessary to participate in support activities in the scope of the eligible activities listed above (such as training courses, job shadowing, peer-learning and coaching sessions, workshops, study visits, matchmaking, knowledge sharing events etc.). Such activities should foster transnational and cross-border cooperation. For travelling, greener modes of transport should always be favoured, when possible. Online alternatives of activities are also recommended, when possible.

Proposals must clearly detail:

- the combination of the above tools for the proposed support to third parties,
- the objectives of the support,
- the conditions for participation,
- the results to be obtained and
- the reasons why financial support to third parties is needed and how it will be managed.

In case of a direct financial support to third parties, Consortia must award it on the basis of an open call fulfilling the conditions described in section 6 below.

Moreover, the proposal must include at least the following elements:

- a fixed and exhaustive list of the different types of activities for which a third party may receive financial support,

- the definition of the persons or categories of persons which may receive financial support,
- the criteria for awarding financial support,
- the criteria for calculating the exact amount of the financial support (i.e. of lump sums),
- the maximum amount to be granted to each third party (may not exceed EUR 60 000 for each third party unless it is necessary to achieve the objectives of the action) and the criteria for determining it.

Further conditions regarding the above-listed elements or other elements may be laid down in the calls which beneficiaries must publish in order to award the financial support. The beneficiary of the EU grant must ensure that the recipients of the financial support allow the Agency, the Commission, the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) and the Court of Auditors to exercise their powers of control on documents, information, even stored on electronic media, or on the final recipient's premises.

Expected impact

The call for proposals targets the following outcome:

- Improved capacity of social economy SMEs and entrepreneurs to perform on the green transition;
- Enhanced transnational cooperation of public authorities and other stakeholders on the identification and implementation of sustainability practices for the proximity and social economy ecosystem;
- Fostered cross-sectorial cooperation and knowledge transfer between social economy SMEs and start-ups, mainstream businesses, consultancies, business support centres and incubators with regard to the uptake of green skills and the development of more sustainable products and services;
- Evidence-based integration of sustainable innovative processes by social economy SMEs and start-ups boosting their competitiveness and creating potential new market opportunities;

Further investment of social economy SMEs in sustainable alternatives, capacity building and knowledge transfer.

The impact of the four mandatory activities listed above must be respectively assessed by each proposal against the following **mandatory indicators**:

Activity 1):

- Number of transnational capacity building activities organized, with mandatory minimum to achieve: 4 activities per each year of the project's execution;
- Reach out and diversity of participation (e.g. number of participants in peer-learning and knowledge exchange sessions; number of people trained; number of participants in awareness raising activities; number of countries participating in above activities);

Activity 2):

- Number of coaching, mentoring and business support activities organized, with mandatory minimum to achieve: 30;

- Reach out and diversity (e.g. number of participants in the above activities; number of countries participating in above activities);
- Number of social economy SMEs and entrepreneurs who have been supported by the above activities;

Activity 3):

- Number of sessions/hours of advisory services provided;
- Number of SMEs and entrepreneurs who benefited from advisory services, with mandatory minimum to achieve: 40;

Activity 4):

- Number of SMEs supported financially with respective activities, with mandatory minimum to achieve: 60.

3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 6 000 000**. This budget might be increased by a maximum 20%.

It is expected to fund between 6 and 8 proposals under this call for proposals.

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: | 9 November 2022 |
| <u>Deadline for submission:</u> | <u>14 February 2023 – 17:00:00 CET</u> |
| Evaluation: | February – May 2023 |
| Information on evaluation results: | June 2023 |
| GA signature and start of the actions: | September 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/calculator (*template available in the Submission System: file 'Tpl_Detailed Budget Table (SMP COSME **GFS 90**)'*);
 - list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) (*template available in Part B*);
 - Annex 5 to Part B - Eligibility checklist (available from EISMEA's page [here](#)).

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). 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))
 - non-EU countries:
 - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the Single Market Programme or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature ([list of participating countries](#));

- Ukraine, as stipulated in the Eligibility Criteria section of the revised SMP Work Programme 2022, Annex 2⁸.

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


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

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

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

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons⁹.

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'¹⁰.  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).

Countries currently negotiating association agreements — Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations (*see above*) may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature (with retroactive effect, if provided in the agreement).

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)*¹¹ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)¹²). 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).

⁸ Commission Implementing Decision C(2022) 5587 final of 10.08.2022 amending the Commission Implementing Decision C(2022) 724 as regards the implementation of actions under the Single Market Programme.

⁹ See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹⁰ For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹¹ 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](#).

¹² 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).

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

Consortium composition

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) which complies with the following conditions:

- **at least six independent entities** from at least **three different eligible countries**;
- **at least one social economy intermediary**¹³ per participating country involved in the consortium;
- **a minimum of one and a maximum of two support organisations active at EU level**¹⁴ such as sectorial member federations and associations or networks representing social economy entities.

The eligibility requirement of at least one social economy intermediary per eligible country involved (second bullet point above) does not apply to EU level support organisations. This means that the country(-ies) of registration of participating EU level support organisations do not count for the purpose of fulfilling the eligibility requirement in the second bullet point.

In addition, the following types of entities are encouraged to participate in the consortia:

- public authorities or organisations acting on behalf of a public authority, responsible for or active in the fields of social economy, economic affairs, industry, business support, incubation, EU funding opportunities, sustainable finance, impact investing or related fields;
- non-profit organisations, non-governmental organisations and private organisations established at European, national, regional and local level as social economy associations, federations, financial institutions, impact investors, business incubators & accelerators, business support centres, innovation hubs, chambers of commerce, consultancy providing sustainability and financing advisory services;
- private and profit-making entities including social economy SMEs, mainstream SMEs and larger undertakings, and financial institutions;
- training and educational institutions, including universities, research and technology centres.

Eligible activities

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

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

¹³ These organisations can be established as business support organisation, incubator & accelerator, sectorial federation or association representing social economy entities, providing support services to social economy entities or federate social entities at local, regional or national level.

¹⁴ As defined in the Communication of the European Commission, Social Economy Action Plan, published in December 2021, [Commission presents Action Plan to boost the social economy and create jobs - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

Financial support to third parties is allowed for grants and prizes under the following conditions:

- the calls must be open, published widely and conform to EU standards concerning transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest and confidentiality;
- the calls must remain open for at least two months. If call deadlines are changed, this must immediately be published on the call page on the Funding & Tenders Portal and all registered applicants must be informed of the change;
- the outcome of the call must be published without delay in the place(s) of the call publication, including a description of the selected projects, award dates, project durations, and final recipient legal names and countries;
- the calls must have a clear EU dimension.

Financial support to third parties will be accepted in projects as defined in section 2.

The proposal must clearly specify why financial support to third parties is needed, how it will be managed and provide a list of the different types of activities for which a third party may receive financial support. The proposal must also clearly describe the results to be obtained as defined in section 2.

Geographic location (target countries)

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

Duration

Projects must range between 24 and 36 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

Project budget

Project budgets (maximum grant amount) are expected to range between EUR 750 000 and EUR 1 000 000.

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*)
- prefinancing 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:

- profiles (qualifications and experience) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants
- list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years).

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 participate¹⁵:

- 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)

¹⁵ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

- guilty of grave professional misconduct¹⁶ (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 that¹⁷:

- 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.

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.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

- 2) The *ex aequo* proposals within the same theme 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.
- 4) After that, the remainder of the available call budget will be used to fund projects across the different themes in order to ensure a balanced spread of the geographical and thematic coverage and while respecting to the maximum possible extent the order of merit based on the evaluation of the award criteria.

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

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

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

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

9. Award criteria

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

- **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/transnational dimension; potential to develop mutual trust/cross-border cooperation (**30 points**).
- **Quality:**
 - **Project design and implementation:** technical quality; logical links between the identified problems, needs and solutions proposed (logical frame concept); appropriate methodology for implementing the project and effectiveness of the work plan (concept and methodology, management, procedures, timetable, effort per work package, 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; ambition of planned indicators' target values); clarity,

completeness and rationale of the proposed support to third parties (**30 points**).

- **Project team and cooperation arrangements:** quality and expertise of the consortium and project teams; their adequate composition for delivering on the project’s objectives; extent to which the role and contribution of each partner is appropriate and in line with its experience and past activities; appropriate procedures and problem-solving mechanisms for cooperating within the project teams and consortium (**30 points**).
- **Impact:** credibility, ambition and expected long-term impact of results on target groups/general public; appropriate dissemination strategy, including communication activities, for ensuring sustainability and long-term impact; sustainability of results after EU funding ends; possibility to use the results in other countries (**10 points**).

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

Maximum points: 100 points.

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

Overall threshold: 70 points.

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

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

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

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

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

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 24 and 36 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment). Estimated starting time of the actions is September 2023.

Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be managed through the Portal Grant Management System and will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

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 (**100%** for the costs for providing financial support to third parties and **90%** for all other costs categories).

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
- D. Other cost categories
 - D.1 Financial support to third parties
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost¹⁸: Yes
- travel and subsistence unit cost¹⁹: Yes
- equipment costs: depreciation
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: allowed for grants and prizes²⁰; maximum amount per third party EUR 60.000, unless a higher amount is required because the objective of the action would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult to achieve and this is duly justified in the Application Form
 - 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 receive a **prefinancing** to start working on the project.

The prefinancing will be paid as follows:

- for projects of 24 months: float of **70%** of the maximum grant amount;
- for projects of more than 24 months: float of **50%** of the maximum grant amount.

¹⁸ 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).

¹⁹ 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).

²⁰ As specified in section 2.


The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/10 days before starting date/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.

For projects of 24 months there will be no **interim payments**.

For projects lasting more than 24 months, there will be one interim payment (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

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 Portal 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: No

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 7 February 2023 to the following email address: EISMEA-SMP-COSME-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu.

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

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

This includes:

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

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

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