



Brussels, 6.7.2017
C(2017) 4563 final

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 6.7.2017

on amending the Commission Implementing Decision C(2017)1042 concerning the adoption of the work programme 2017 and the financing for the implementation of Programme for the competitiveness of enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation No 1287/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, establishing a Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises¹ (hereinafter "the COSME Regulation"), and in particular Article 13(1) thereof,

Having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union² (hereinafter "the Financial Regulation"), and in particular Article 84(2) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) It is necessary to amend the Implementing Decision C(2017)1042 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2017 and the financing for the implementation of Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises, due to the adaptations of the budgetary allocations and changes in the measures listed in the Annex.
- (2) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small medium sized enterprises Committee.
- (3) Implementing Decision C(2017)1042 should therefore be amended accordingly.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sole Article

Implementing Decision C(2017)1042 is amended as follows:

1. Article 2 is replaced by the following:

¹ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013.

² OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1.

"Article 2

Union contribution

The maximum contribution for the implementation of the programme for the year 2017 is set at EUR 365 060 045 and shall be financed from the following lines of the general budget of the European Union for 2017:

- (a) budget line 02 01 04 01: EUR 4 051 207
- (b) budget line 02 01 06 01: EUR 9 032 587
- (c) budget line 02 02 01: EUR 127 632 386
- (d) budget line 02 02 02: EUR 224 343 865

The appropriations provided for in the first paragraph may also cover interest due for late payment.”

2. The Annex to Decision C(2017)1042 is replaced by the text set out in the Annex to this Decision.

Done at Brussels, 6.7.2017

For the Commission
Elżbieta BIEŃKOWSKA
Member of the Commission



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 6.7.2017
C(2017) 4563 final

ANNEX 1

ANNEX

to the

Commission Implementing Decision

on amending the Commission Implementing Decision C(2017) 1042 concerning the adoption of the work programme 2017 and the financing for the implementation of Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

COSME has an overall indicative budget of EUR 2.3 billion for the seven-year period 2014-2020. The programme is executed through an annual work programme and through support measures. The work programme for 2017 has a total budget of €343 million of which some 60% is allocated to financial instruments and some 20% to activities promoting enterprises' access to markets – the two main priorities of the programme.

The work programme is structured according to the four action areas and linked to the implementation of the Commission's policy priorities, in particular on promoting jobs, growth and investment, upgrading the single market and digital single market and implementing better regulation.

Helping SMEs and start-ups to grow is one of the priorities of the Single Market Strategy². In 2017, several COSME actions will be geared towards the implementation of this priority. The financial instruments will support SMEs and start-ups to access both equity and debt funding. The Enterprise Europe Network will continue to facilitate SMEs' access to markets both within the EU and beyond. The Your Europe Business Portal will be developed towards an online gateway for SMEs and entrepreneurs to facilitate the cross-border operations of companies, in particular start-ups.

Public procurement and intellectual property are among the key areas for action of the Single Market Strategy. As part of the COSME work programme, the Commission aims, among other things, at facilitating SMEs' access to public tenders through the training of large public buyers on SME-friendly policies, providing IP pre-diagnostic services to innovative SMEs and improving the SME's access to patent protection.

A number of COSME 2017 actions are dedicated to promoting the modernisation of industry: the use of new technologies by SMEs and the access to data-driven economy. These include the creation of digital B2B platforms, the uptake of big data and digital technologies by enterprises and the promotion of Smart Specialisation strategies, e.g. through clusters. Moreover, the actions targeted to key sectors of the European economy, e.g. tourism,

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

² Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Upgrading the Single Market: more opportunities for people and business - COM(2015) 550 final: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52015DC0550&from=EN>

construction, automotive industry or defence aim at boosting the growth and competitiveness of businesses in these sectors.

To promote entrepreneurship, we continue to enhance the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs, a mobility scheme which, in the period 2009-2013 has led to more than one third of its participants starting-up their own company.

Implementing the Commission's Better Regulation agenda has a crucial importance in improving the framework conditions for enterprises and removing administrative burdens to the starting and scaling-up of companies' activities. All 2017 COSME projects have been designed according to the "Think Small First" principle with a strong focus on SMEs. In addition, the EU REFIT platform to promote better regulation will continue to be financed by COSME.

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

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

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

A. ACCESS TO FINANCE

The first specific objective of COSME, is *“to improve access to finance for SMEs in the form of equity and debt”* as described in Article 8 of the COSME Regulation. Specific provisions for the financial instruments are provided for in Article 16 – 19, with the Equity Facility for Growth covered by Article 18 and the Loan Guarantee Facility by Article 19.

The COSME Regulation specifies that at least 60% of the total budget (EUR 1.4 billion) has to be allocated to the financial instruments for 2014-2020.

In 2017, there will be up to three actions to be financed under this specific objective with a budget of around EUR 224 million.

GRO/SME/17/A/01 - FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS – LOAN GUARANTEE FACILITY INCLUDING THE SME INITIATIVE

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

Provide enhanced access to finance for SMEs in their start-up, growth and transfer phases through a debt financial instrument.
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DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

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

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Counter-guarantees and other risk sharing arrangements for guarantee schemes including, where appropriate, co-guarantees;• Direct guarantees and other risk sharing arrangements for any other financial intermediaries. |
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The LGF is the successor of the SME Guarantee Facility established under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme - CIP (2007 - 2013). Based on the experience gained under CIP and in line with requirements formulated for financial instruments under the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom N° 966/2012 of October 2012) the terms and conditions for the COSME financial instruments have been adjusted.
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The implementation of the LGF is entrusted to the European Investment Fund (EIF). A continuous open call for expression of interest has been published by the EIF to which financial intermediaries may apply at any time until 30 September 2020. The call sets out the terms and conditions for the different implementing mechanism under the LGF (capped guarantees, guarantees for securitisation transactions). These may be complemented by calls for those Member States which have opted use the COSME resources for the SME Initiative as set out below.
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The characteristics of the LGF in the form of capped (counter-)guarantees are:
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guarantees for debt financing (including via subordinated and participating loans, leasing or bank guarantees) which shall reduce the particular difficulties that viable SMEs face in accessing finance either due to their perceived high risk or their lack of sufficient available collateral;• Up to an amount of € 150,000 all types of SMEs (regardless of sector or size) will be eligible for financing under the LGF. Above the threshold financial intermediaries will have to verify that the SME is not RDI driven and therefore not eligible for financing under the Horizon 2020's SME & small midcaps debt financing window (InnovFin SME Guarantee Facility). As regards the level of the guarantee, the entrusted entity will provide guarantees to financial intermediaries which will cover a portion of the |
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expected losses of a portfolio of newly generated, higher-risk SME transactions.

- The portfolios shall be composed of transactions which the financial intermediary would not have supported in the absence of the guarantee. The range of financial products which can be supported through the guarantees is intended to be broad so as not to discriminate amongst the SME population and to allow financial intermediaries to tailor products according to the specific needs of the market in which they operate.
- Individual guarantee agreements to be signed by the entrusted entity with a financial intermediary will have a maximum duration of 10 years, whereby it shall be permissible that individual financing transactions have maturities exceeding 10 years. Individual financing transactions must have a minimum duration of 12 months.

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

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

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

Relationship with Horizon 2020:

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

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

LGF contribution to the EU SME Initiative

The EU SME Initiative is conceived as an anti-crisis measure with budget commitments over 3 years (2014-2016); building on the EU financial instruments that support lending to SMEs (COSME LGF and/or InnovFin SME Guarantee Facility under Horizon 2020).

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

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

Under both uncapped guarantees and securitisation, ESIF will guarantee the most junior tranche of the portfolio (i.e. the highest risk) and a combination of ESIF, EU (i.e. COSME and/or Horizon 2020) and EIF resources will cover the mezzanine tranche. The senior tranche will be covered by EIB and, if possible, national promotional banks. In the case of securitisation, the senior tranche should achieve high credit rating and could be sold to institutional investors.

Participation by Member States is entirely voluntary, with initially only Spain and Malta participating and both countries opting for the combination of resources with Horizon 2020. Further to the invitation by the Commission, especially following the announcement of the Juncker Plan in November 2014³ to support investments into the real economy, a number of additional Member States expressed interest to participate in the SME Initiative such as Bulgaria, Romania, Italy, Finland and potentially Greece. Bulgaria, Romania and Finland opted for a combination of resources with Horizon 2020, under the uncapped guarantee option. Italy opted for a combination of resources (from the 2016 budget) with COSME under the securitisation option of the SME Initiative. A third amendment of the COSME Delegation Agreement covering the securitisation option has been signed in 2016.

Relationship with the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI)⁴

As the resources which can be made available under the LGF are not sufficient to satisfy market demand (i.e. total of applications received from Financial Intermediaries by the EIF) for the financing of SMEs, a second amendment of the COSME Delegation Agreement was signed on 22 July 2015, allowing for the combination of LGF resources with additional risk-bearing capacity under EFSI so as to avoid disruptions in signing transactions with financial intermediaries.

Such combination allows addressing sub-optimal investment situations in the Member States at a much faster pace than would have been possible under COSME LGF only. In the current set-up, the frontloading of the LGF budget necessitates that budget which may become available in later years of the programming period will be used to replace the EFSI risk-bearing capacity by the COSME LGF. This frontloading mechanism is only applicable for capped guarantee transactions signed with financial intermediaries in Member States.

As the front-loading was expected to lead to budget shortages for the LGF in later years of the programme, the Commission proposed to convert the EFSI front-loading into a permanent

³ **Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Central Bank, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank - An Investment Plan for Europe - COM/2014/903 final**

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2015/1017 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2015 on the European Fund for Strategic Investments, the European Investment Advisory Hub and the European Investment Project Portal and amending Regulations (EU) No 1291/2013 and (EU) No 1316/2013 — the European Fund for Strategic Investments

top-up of the LGF with risk-bearing capacity provided under EFSI for an amount of EUR 550 million⁵.

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

EXPECTED RESULTS

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

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

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Indirect Management	Loan Guarantee Facility including SME Initiative	112 429 120
Total		112 429 120

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

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Delegation Agreement signed with the entrusted entity	Q3 2014
Call for expression of interest launched by the entrusted entity	Q3 2014
First due diligence conducted for potential financial intermediaries	Q4 2014
First agreements signed with Financial Intermediaries	Q4 2014
First agreements signed benefitting from EFSI support	Q3 2015

⁵ see Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Europe investing again – Tackling stock of the Investment Plan for Europe and next steps – COM (2016)359 final.

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
<p>Indicative total duration (months): The Delegation Agreement shall be valid until the last of the transactions under the programme is fully completed (latest by 2034).</p> <p>The call for expression of interest shall be open for application by the financial intermediaries throughout the lifetime of the programme with a latest date for application being 30 September 2020.</p>	

INDICATORS

Indicators for 2017 budget:

Volume of financing made available and number of firms benefiting from financing: Value of financing mobilised ranging from € 2.2 billion to € 3.4 billion; number of firms receiving financing which benefits from COSME guarantee ranging from 35 000 to 52 000.

The above values have been computed based on the leverage targets of COSME which calls for a leverage of 1:20 - 1:30 for the debt instrument. They refer to new SME loan portfolios built during the whole availability period of individual deals with financial intermediaries authorised in 2017.

Due to the fact that additional COSME LGF transactions will be signed under the EFSI guarantee in 2017 exceeding the available budget for 2017, the value of financing and the number of firms that will benefit from this financing is expected to double the number mentioned above.

GRO/SME/17/A/02 - FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS – EQUITY FACILITY FOR GROWTH

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

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

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

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

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

Through the EFG risk capital funds can be supported which invest into SMEs at the growth stage, predominantly on a cross-border basis, or which help portfolio companies to grow beyond their national markets with a view to supporting the development of a self-sustainable pan-European risk capital market.

The characteristics of the EFG are:

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

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

Additional implementation mechanism under the EFG in the form of a contribution to a *Pan-European VC Funds-of-Funds Initiative*:

The COSME legal base allows for direct implementation of the EFG and for implementation

via funds-of-funds or investment vehicles investing cross borders⁶.

A study *Assessing the Potential for EU Investment in Venture Capital Funds-of-Funds*⁷ made a strong case for supporting pan-European VC funds-of-funds (FoF) at EU level to help address Europe's equity gap, the fragmentation of the VC market, and the poor performance of European VC funds in raising finance from major institutional and other private investors. It echoes the prominence given to FoF as part of the VC package in the Capital Markets Union Action Plan⁸.

Using a pan-European VC FoF to invest across a wide range of risk-capital funds and geographies may significantly lower the risk to investors, as their exposure is diversified. Furthermore, the specialist expertise of a FoF's managers may well enable them to make better fund investment decisions than private- or public-sector investors could alone.

In addition, specialist FoF managers with a good track-record tend to have an established client-base of institutional investors willing to invest in a FoF managed by a manager of repute, thus improving the volume and velocity of the investment pipeline.

Also, as a VC or other fund seeking investments will have minimum commitment requirements that individual investors are often unable or unwilling to meet, a FoF's aggregating role could ease access to specific funds and markets and enable a better overall match between underlying funds and investors than would otherwise be the case.

Initially, the Commission proposed to set up the FoFs initiative with resources from the EFSI SME window (EUR 100 million) and the InnovFin early-stage facility under Horizon 2020 (EUR 200 million) only, due to the fact that budgetary resources for the COSME financial instruments were insufficient to meet existing demand.

However, due to the anticipated top-up of the LGF through the EFSI guarantee (under the SME window of EFSI) the resources have been significantly reinforced, thereby allowing making a significant contribution of up to EUR 100 million from the COSME EFG in 2017 as a separate implementation option under the existing EFG.

In addition to the existing continuous call for expression of interest published for the direct investments under the EFG, a separate call for expression of interest for this Pan-European FoF initiative which will have a fixed deadline⁹.

Should the COSME EFG allocation not be (fully) used for the Pan-European FoF project (the respective budget allocations from EFSI, InnovFin early-stage and COSME EFG depend on the proposals received), any unused resources will be available to the EIF to make direct investments into individual funds fulfilling the EFG criteria of the continuous call for expression of interest.

Relationship with Horizon 2020:

⁶ Regulation (EU) No 1287/2013, Article 18

⁷ See <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/news/assessing-potential-eu-investment-venture-capital-and-other-risk-capital-fund-funds>

⁸ *Action Plan on Building a Capital Markets Union*, COM(2015) 468, 30.09.2015

⁹ http://www.eif.org/what_we_do/equity/paneuropean_venture_capital_fund_of_funds/index.htm

The EFG is part of the single EU equity financial instrument for EU enterprises' growth and research and innovation (R&I), together with the Horizon 2020 early-stage equity facility. The InnovFin SME Venture Capital under Horizon 2020 will focus on risk capital funds investing in seed, start-up and early-stage SMEs and small midcaps that are RDI-driven.

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

Relationship with the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI)

The implementation of the EFG may be subject to review, reorientation or adaptation due to EFSI.

EXPECTED RESULTS

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

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

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Indirect Management	Equity Facility for Growth	110 000 000
Total		110 000 000

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

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Delegation Agreement signed with the entrusted entity	Q3 2014
Call for expression of interest for EFG only launched by the entrusted entity	Q3 2014
First due diligence conducted for potential financial intermediaries	Q4 2014
Updated call for expression of interest covering Horizon 2020 early –stage facility and the EFG	Q3 2015

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
First agreements signed with Financial Intermediaries	Q4 2015
<p>Indicative total duration (months): The Delegation Agreement shall be valid until the last of the transactions under the programme is fully completed (latest by 2034).</p> <p>The call for expression of interest shall be open for application by the financial intermediaries throughout the lifetime of the programme with a latest date for application being 30 September 2020.</p>	

INDICATORS

Indicators for 2017 budget:

Overall risk capital invested and number of firms being supported: Overall value of risk capital investments ranging from € 0.4 billion to € 0.6 billion; number of firms receiving risk capital investments ranging from 60 to 90.

The above values have been computed based on the leverage targets of COSME which calls for a leverage of 1:4 - 1:6 for the equity instrument. They refer to investments made during the life-time of risk capital funds in which COSME EFG investments were authorised in 2017.

GRO/SME/17/A/03 - FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS – ACCOMPANYING ACTIONS

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

1. Survey on SMEs' access to finance

- to address a substantial lack of available information on the financial situation of SMEs especially with respect to timely information;
- to increase availability and quality of data on SMEs access to finance for policy-making purposes, particularly concerning the start-up and growth of SMEs;
- to limit the statistical burden imposed on enterprises by the data collection requirements imposed by the Commission and the ECB and by conducting only one comprehensive survey;
- to allow both institutions to fulfil their individual data collection task in a very cost-efficient manner by sharing the overall costs and through economies of scale by pooling the purchasing power and the resources.

2. Studies

- to support policy making initiatives;
- to monitor the recent developments of SMEs' access to finance in Europe.

3. Workshops

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

4. Information and communication

- to improve dissemination of information to beneficiaries;
- to promote the use of guarantees, venture capital and alternative sources of finances for SMEs;
- to inform SMEs about access to EU sources of financing on a single webportal, to be accessed through Your Europe Business.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

1. Survey on SMEs' access to finance

Timely information on the financial situation of SMEs is necessary for evidence based policymaking. Taking into account our obligation to limit the burden that data collection places on SMEs, the Commission and the European Central Bank (ECB) designed a joint survey on the financial situation of SMEs. The Commission waves (the survey that is co-financed by ECB and Commission) will be conducted once a year. Survey provides comparable results across EU Member States and other participating countries.

Previous Commission waves of the survey were conducted in 2009, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

2. Studies

The studies will be carried out on SME financing in order to support policy making. The Commission foresees *inter alia* to carry out a study to explore the opportunities created by FinTech to enhance SME access to finance, notably with a view to improve supply of and access to alternative forms of finance (crowdfunding) in the EU.

3. Workshops

Workshops with SMEs, banks and other financial institutions will be organised to monitor the market situation and to facilitate SMEs' access to finance. The workshops will be organised on an ad-hoc basis depending on interest/needs expressed by stakeholders, SME financing trends and political priorities. The latter include follow-up of actions initiated under the 2015 Action Plan on Building a Capital Markets Union.

4. Information and communication

Difficulties in accessing finance are one of the main obstacles obstructing the growth of SMEs. There are multiple structural and cyclical causes for such obstacles. Information asymmetries between the suppliers and demanders of funds play a major role. The Commission will promote the use of EU financial instruments through communication activities in support of SMEs' access to EU financial instruments and other sources of EU finance through a variety of tools (websites, events, publications, audio-visual and social media).

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

EXPECTED RESULTS

The expected results are:

- Improved understanding of SME access to finance issues and developments;
- Limited statistical burden on the SMEs and efficient use of resources for the statistical purposes;
- Input for the evidence-based policy making and identification of the needs to adjust policies on SME access to finance;
- Easier access by SMEs to relevant information about EU sources of finance;
- Positive feedback from participants on quality, relevance and added value of activities.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET
Specific contract under a framework contract	Survey on SMEs' access to finance	650.000
Specific contract under a framework contract	Study on FinTech and alternative finance for SMEs	200.000
	Study on access to finance	200.000
Reimbursement experts	Workshops	100.000
Specific contracts under framework contracts	Promotional activities	100.000

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET
Specific contract under a framework contract	EU Single Web Portal on EU Finance	200.000
Total		1 450 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Conferences/meetings/workshops/studies/single web portal/promotions	Q1 – Q4 2017
Indicative total duration: 12 months	

INDICATORS

1. Survey on SMEs' access to finance

- Timely carry-out of the survey
- Level of dissemination of results in media
- Geographical and thematic coverage of the survey

2. Studies

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

3. Workshops

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

4. Information and communication

- Level of dissemination of results in media
- Positive feedback from participants on quality, relevance and added value of events and promotional material
- Number of visits to the single web portal

B. ACCESS TO MARKETS

The second specific objective of COSME is “to improve access to markets, particularly inside the Union but also at global level” described in Article 9 of the COSME Regulation. Specific provisions for the Enterprise Europe Network are provided in Article 10.

The COSME Regulation specifies that an indicative 21.5% of the total budget has to be devoted to easing access to markets.

In 2017, there will be up to 9 actions financed under this specific objective with a budget of more than EUR 72 million.

GRO/SME/17/B/01 - ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

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

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

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The Enterprise Europe Network provides business support services – in particular for SMEs – by offering information, advisory services, feedback and partnering services, innovation, technology and knowledge transfer services. The Network provides services encouraging the

participation of SMEs in the COSME and Horizon 2020 programme as well as internationalisation services beyond the Single Market and informs SMEs on funding opportunities under the European Structural and Investment Funds. The Network helps SMEs with regards to access to finance and EU funding and helps them to become more resource and environmentally efficient including through eco-innovation (e.g. Green Action Plan, verification of environmental technologies (ETV)).

Network organisations were selected by calls for proposals and signed grant agreements to cover the first operational period 2015-2016. The budget requested in the COSME work programmes 2016 and 2017 will be mainly used to cover the second operational period 2017-2018. Applicant organisations have to be established in EU Member States or in countries participating in the COSME programme under Article 6 of the COSME Regulation; they are legal entities, fully or partly public or private bodies; corporate bodies must be properly constituted and registered under the law.

The **Network animation** tasks include:

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

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

During the third year of the Network in the COSME programme, the aim is to organise the **Annual Conference 2017** for the Network for about 800 participants in the country holding the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union. The action includes all practical aspects for the conference (consisting of national meetings, opening session, parallel workshops, closing session, exhibition areas, catering etc).

JUSTIFICATION: An ad-hoc grant will be granted to cover part of the tasks without an open call for proposals under Article 190(1)(c) RAP, to government (or its representative), of the country that will hold the EU Council Presidency (Malta, in 1st half of 2017 and Estonia in 2nd half 2017).

EXPECTED RESULTS

The expected results are:

- Increased number of SMEs linked with other entities across Europe for cross-border business cooperation, technology and knowledge transfer and technology and innovation partnerships.
- Higher rate of European SMEs exporting within the Single Market.
- Higher rate of European SMEs exporting outside Europe.
- Better understanding of European SMEs of EU legislation and of opportunities offered by EU programmes and EU access to finance.
- Better knowledge in EU institutions of SMEs opinions, difficulties and expectations.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Specific grant agreement under framework partnership agreement	Enterprise Europe Network	57 469 143
Specific contracts under framework contract	Network Animation 2017	2 790 000
Grant - ad hoc grant Art. 190 RAP	Annual conference	150 000
Specific contracts under framework contract	IT support	160 000
Total		60 569 143

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Signature of the contracts for Network Animation	Q1- Q4 2017
Signature Grant agreements for EEN members	Q1 2017
Grant - ad hoc grant Art. 190 RAP – Annual Conference	Q4-2017
Indicative total duration: 12 months (2017) for Network Animation contracts. Duration of 24 months for Network grants (budget of 2016 together with budget of 2017 covers the operational period 2017-2018)	

INDICATORS

For the Network:

- Number of achievements (including business/technology/research Partnership Agreements and Advisory Service Outcomes);
- Number of SMEs reached via (digital) information services;
- Number of SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions;
- Number of SMEs receiving support services (information, advice and partnering);
- Impact on clients businesses: increased turnover, jobs created/maintained, new products or services developed, new markets accessed;
- Client satisfaction on the received services.

For the animation contract:

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

For the annual conference:

- Satisfaction of participants
- Number of participants

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

60% for the Network grants

90% for the annual conference grant

EXTRA INFORMATION

It is estimated that the budget of the Enterprise Europe Network contributes 26% to the climate action objectives.

GRO/SME/17/B/02 - YOUR EUROPE BUSINESS PORTAL

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

–Develop the Your Europe Business portal, in support of the Digital Single Market and the Single Market Strategies, so as to become an essential part of the online gateway for SMEs and entrepreneurs who want to better know their rights and obligations when starting/managing a business in a different EU country;

–Provide practical information on the EU-wide rights/obligations, in particular in priority areas, as outlined in the above mentioned strategies;

–Reinforce cooperation with the Members States, to provide seamless access to information on practical implementation of the EU rules through national legislation;

– Enhance links with national business portals (such as Points of Single Contact portals) and use sustainable ways of content provision for national information (e.g. content syndication);

– Use synergies with relevant assistance services, such as the Enterprise Europe Network, the EU.Go network, SOLVIT, Your Europe Advice, EURES: optimise signposting and inter-linking;

- Add access to the most relevant e-procedures for businesses

- Improve findability of the portal through search engine optimisation and online outreach, using partnerships with stakeholders and Member States.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

Your Europe Business Portal aims at being the reference public information portal for enterprises, in particular SMEs, interested in cross-border activities within the European Union. Your Europe Business provides a multilingual practical guide that facilitates cross-border transactions.

Your Europe Business Portal is part of the Your Europe Portal that includes a Business and a Citizens section (financed outside the COSME programme). The portal offers all the information businesses and citizens need to exercise their single market rights in Europe. Its unique selling point is that it informs not only about the EU rules, but also how these apply in practice in each Member State. In addition, the EU-level information is multilingual (in 23 official languages of the EU (all except Gaelic) and in Norwegian. Country-specific information is available in the national language(s) and English. Thus Your Europe offers businesses, public administrations and stakeholders a one-stop-shop and easy access to information on doing business in Europe, it also signposts to more specialised information and help services, when relevant, and provides access to appropriate e-procedures.

This measure is the continuation of the actions under the objective of creation of an environment favourable to SME co-operation, particularly in the field of cross-border co-operation. It also supports measures announced in the Digital Single Market and the Single Market Strategies, in particular the work towards a Single Digital Gateway for businesses.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Through Your Europe Business companies will be provided with practical information on doing business in the Single Market. Your Europe Business is an online gateway to information, e-procedures and specialised services for businesses, as listed above. In particular, Your Europe Business complements the services provided by the Points of Single Contact and the local business support services provided by the Enterprise Europe Network, offering businesses a seamless link from information to customised personal assistance. The goal is to increase the number of visits, as well as to constantly increase the visitors' loyalty.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Specific contracts under a framework contract	Your Europe Business Portal	450 000
Total		450 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Specific contract under a framework contract	Q2-Q3 2017
Indicative total duration: 12 months	

INDICATORS

- Number of visits to the portal (increase by 15% per year);
- Feed-back on user satisfaction based on a survey (target satisfaction rate above 85%).

GRO/SME/17/B/03 - EU-JAPAN CENTRE FOR INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

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

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

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

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

In terms of priority activities, the EU-Japan Centre primarily intends to significantly consolidate its business support relevance, particularly for SMEs, by an enhanced use of Enterprise Europe Network, in synergy with the training and industrial innovation/R&D activities, by expanding its cluster related activities and particularly by maintaining two recent initiatives on business information support and logistical support. On information support: the comprehensive web info portal "EU-Japan Business Bridge" (<http://www.eu-japan.eu/publications/eu-japan-bridge-essential-guide-eu-business>) will be further developed and targeted at SMEs in both EU and Japan. On concrete logistical support, "Step in Japan" will continue to offer free "soft-landing" type of support (hotdesk, meetings/seminar space, info, interpretation support) for EU SMEs, within the Centre's premises. The Tax and Public Procurement Helpdesk for European SMEs is a new service which intends to support the market access of European companies (particularly SMEs) to Japan. It takes the form of first-line information and advice on tax and public procurement (PP) and related issues, plus related training, materials and online resources.

Furthermore, in order to consolidate its policy analysis/think tank activities and output, a competitive fellowship scheme ("Minerva Fellowship") set up in 2014 will be continued. The fellowship will be targeted towards younger EU and Japanese academics, trade/ economic analysts and civil servants, with an active interest in Japan and EU-Japan cooperation from

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

multiple perspectives (trade/market access, economy, industrial policy, business, R&D, etc.).The fellows undertake policy analysis on priority topics and support the regular policy agenda of the Centre.

The EU-Japan Centre regularly informs the EU Trade Counsellors in Tokyo, cooperates with European Chambers of commerce, the European Business Council and will actively support the public procurement component of the new EU Gateway to Japan.

EXPECTED RESULTS

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

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Action grant directly awarded on the basis of Article 190 (1)(d) RAP and Article 4 of the Council Decision 92/278/EEC	EU-Japan Centre For Industrial Cooperation	2 800 000
Total		2 800 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Invitation to submit a proposal	Q1 2017
Signature of the grant agreement	Q2 2017
Indicative total duration: 12 months (1 st April to 31 st March)	

INDICATORS

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

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

90%

GRO/SME/17/B/04 - INTERNATIONALISATION OF LIGHT INDUSTRIES SMES

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The main objective of the action is to raise export performance of SMEs in light industries through an increased use of new opportunities offered by recently signed EU Free Trade Agreements (FTAs).

Once concluded and implemented, these agreements need to be widely known and understood by the economic operators especially SMEs. As a matter of example, we can underline the fact that the EU textiles companies needed 3 years to start benefiting from the FTA with Korea, whereas Korean companies were ready to benefit from the agreement from the first year of its application.

The European light industries are composed of more than 200.000 companies generating a turn-over of €180billion and employ more than 1.8 million workers. By and large, these companies are SMEs without adequate knowledge to develop their export potential while, by their competitive position, they are willing to export. If the major part of their sales is done in the EU, the recent evolution shows a significant increase in our extra-EU exports that today represent more than 30% of EU trade.

Due to the complexity and the segmented character of the sector's value chain, appropriate information about recent Free Trade Agreements reaches the entrepreneurs with difficulty. In order to fully benefit from the FTAs, the companies need timely and accurate information on, amongst others:

- a) Rules of Origin of these new agreements for certificates supplier declarations, forms, insurances;
- b) customs procedures and specific regimes;
- c) Regulatory requirements and conformity assessments (testing, certificates etc.);

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

- Dissemination of information on export markets for textile/clothing products with special focus on EU FTAs to SMEs to enable them to use and benefit from the international markets potential and preferential agreements.

- Dedicated tailor-made trainings and information services performed in the companies on light industries-specific customs procedures & regulatory requirements.

- Provision of tailor made coaching sessions to companies' through service such as assistance for evaluation of export potential of companies, identifying managerial financial and technical solutions, including export marketing plans to sell to the focused countries abroad.

- Provide business audits and guidance services for companies willing to launch themselves in the focused markets. Special emphasis has to be given to neo-to-export business. The action could be complemented downstream by the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN). The main focus of the action is linked to capacity building in SMEs in order to create the conditions of developing exports. Afterwards, EEN could help companies to find customers abroad (main activity of EEN on internationalisation).

- Coordination with national Trade Promotion Organisations could help in order to gather input from studies performed at Member States' level.

The action will focus on the most recently concluded FTAs; South Korea and Canada, as well as Japan and US. Possible extension to other promising markets, such as China, Latin America could be envisaged in a next step.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Increase of export capacity of companies reflected on the share of exports to third countries on their production
- The nature of the action by definition is tailor made to SMEs of the light industries sector. These companies in particular need to have some "tailor made services" in order to export. They need information, know-how, and business services to launch themselves in this activity.
- The main deliverable of the activity would be the number of companies (especially neo-to-export business) that decide to perform exports.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for tenders or specific contract under a framework contract	Internationalisation of Light Industries' SMEs	800 000
Total		800 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q1 2017
Award	Q2 2017
Signature of the contract/grant agreement	Q3 2017
Indicative total duration of the contract/agreement: 20 months	

INDICATORS

- a) Number of companies participating in this action
- b) Number of companies who have started exporting or increased exports, after this action
- c) Increase in % (or in EUR) in the volume of exports to focus countries

GRO/SME/17/B/05 - IP PRE-DIAGNOSTIC AND IMPROVING ACCESS TO PATENT PROTECTION FOR INNOVATIVE EU SMES

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The general objective is to better access markets in the EU through a better protection of intellectual assets of SMEs via the use of intellectual property rights. It would secure better return on investment for innovative and creative SMEs. This measure is part of the implementation of intellectual property support actions for SMEs outlined in the Single Market Strategy.

The action seeks to improve the management of intellectual property by SMEs. SMEs do not have the skills and financial means to address the issue of management of IP. Yet this is important to achieve return on the protected assets. This will be the role of the IP pre-diagnostic services.

The action also seeks to facilitate access of EU innovative SMEs to the patents. Providing information on the business use of patents and providing financial support for European Patent registration costs, external legal advice costs, as well as patent litigation insurance costs will contribute to promote access to other markets within the EU as well as promoting growth amongst European SMEs. As from the entry into force of the Unitary Patent system the financial support will be provided for the Unitary Patent only.

SMEs' usage of the IP system is minimal. 99% of SMEs do not own any patent, 91% do not own any registered trade mark, and only 0.7% own a registered design. Nine out of 10 SMEs do not own any of the above industrial property rights. The picture is further worsened when considering EU wide IP rights titles owned by SMEs.

Although no cause-effect can be firmly established the truth is that SMEs that use IP generate 32% revenue more than their peers not using IP. SMEs need to be made aware of the benefits of using IP rights. Such a role will be fulfilled by IP pre-diagnostic services.

One of the main factors contributing to a sub-optimal use of the IP system by SMEs is the relatively high costs of the system, which include not only the application/registration fees but also the costs of external legal advice and potential litigation. The advice and specific competence of patent attorney in drafting patent applications is a necessary step to ensure the protection sought will match the needs of the SME. A patent that is not defended, in case it is infringed, loses most of its value. Without adequate legal and technical expertise, and without the financial means to face the initial risks of litigation, a small business cannot afford to litigate. Supporting the litigation costs through co-financing a patent insurance covering the costs associated with the settlement of legal disputes relating to European Patents will again facilitate the access to European patents. This will allow for a better buy in of the European Patent system by SMEs, and at the same time facilitate the emergence of an EU wide market for IP litigation insurance, with the potential to also cover other types of IP right (such as trademarks and designs).

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

This action will include:

(a) The creation of a coordination office

A Coordination office will provide information on the European patent (and on the Unitary Patent), on the availability of this funding scheme and will channel the financial support to successful candidates among innovative SMEs. This office will coordinate and monitor the implementation of the measure. In particular, it should support the proper selection of SMEs, in accordance with Commission guidance, support the assessment of the quality of the services provided and should ensure the good overall management of the scheme. The

coordination office will track the impact of the support given on the participating SME. This will allow assessing the usefulness of this pilot exercise.

(b) – IP Pre-diagnostics

IP Pre-diagnostics consist of IP experts providing a comprehensive advice on IP rights to a selected number of SMEs. The advice is based on an analysis of the product and services portfolio of the SME, the industry and markets it operates in or intends to. This allows SMEs to better understand how to use the IP system to their benefit, building IP portfolio according to their specific needs and potential. In France, and a number of other MS, the system is offered free of charge to a certain number of SMEs having no national or European patents. Cooperation with the European Enterprise Network, EPO, EUIPO and/or IP national offices might be useful. This measure is part of the implementation of intellectual property support actions for SMEs outlined in the Single Market Strategy.

Criteria for eligible SMEs would be set up with the aim of selecting truly innovative SMEs and innovative start-ups:

- recognition of innovative capacity and quality by the seal of excellence of the SME instrument,
- a similar recognition of innovative capacity by, or successful involvement in EU, or a EU Member State (at national or regional level) funded research or innovation project may also be considered in order to enlarge the number of eligible SMEs.

The role of a coordination office will be to organise the scheme: link the eligible and interested SMEs to the experts that would provide them with the IP pre-diagnostic service and cover the costs of the experts. Afterwards the coordination office will need to seek and collect the feedback on the satisfaction of the SME and on the impact the service had on the SMEs.

(c) - Facilitate access to the European patent

(b) Co- financing, the acquisition of European patents by innovative SMEs

This measure will support innovative SMEs in applying for European patents covering more than two EU Member States by giving financial support to cover part of the following costs: a) the European patent fees; b) the external costs of legal advice related to the grant of the European patent; c) the costs of European patent litigation costs insurance premium. The role of the coordination office will be to reach out to potentially eligible SMEs, inform them about the funding scheme, select the SMEs applying for the scheme and provide them with the financial support in accordance with Article 137 of the Financial Regulation and article 210 of the rules of application. The coordination office will also monitor the impact of the use of the European Patent by SMEs that have received this financial support.

The SMEs that could receive partial reimbursement of European Patent costs (fees, external legal advice costs and patent litigation insurance premium) should fulfil the following indicative criteria:

- Apply for a European Patent covering more than two Member States or a Unitary Patent,
- Recognition of innovative capacity and quality by the seal of excellence of the SME instrument,
- A similar recognition of innovative capacity by, or successful involvement in EU, or a EU Member State (at national or regional level) funded research or innovation project may also be considered in order to enlarge the number of eligible SMEs.

This measure is targeted at SMEs that receive the seal of excellence, as they do not receive funding for patent protection costs. The beneficiaries of the SME instrument can finance patent and other intellectual property protection and advice from the SME instrument funds.

EXPECTED RESULTS

(a) – The creation of a coordination office

The coordination office should be setup and should ensure the smooth running of the support measure: contacting the target SMEs, liaising with other organisations that can co-operate on this (e.g. IP offices, innovation support agencies), explaining the opportunities related to the support measures, disbursing the funds and collecting the feedback.

(b) – IP Pre-diagnostics

We expect 600 SMEs to receive the IP pre-diagnostic services. We expect that it will foster a better use of IP by SMEs leading to better return on innovation and creativity investment. It will contribute to the more adequate and frequent use of European IP rights by SMEs (trade mark and design rights). The SMEs could enjoy better profits for their businesses (a recent study indicated that on average SMEs using IP created 32% higher revenue per employee).

Additionally, the implementing entity will draft a report on the lessons learned from the implementation of the measure: who are best suited experts, how to best address SME, what are the conditions to have the best impact on the SME through IP pre-diagnostics.

(c) - Facilitate access to the European patent

To increase the number of SMEs protecting their intellectual assets with European patents and therefore support their capacity to generate revenue and obtain return on investments on their inventions and creations.

- 400 SMEs that apply a European Patent with the financial support of this scheme
- 50% of the SME that applied for a European Patent provide feedback on the economic benefits related to it
- cover several EU Member States.

The scheme, if successful, could be extended to other EU IPR titles after the evaluation of this measure.

Should the budget be revised the targets would be adjusted proportionately.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for tenders	IP pre-diagnostic and improving access to European patents for European innovators including the Coordination office	Up to a maximum of EUR 4 300 000
Total		4 300 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
IP PRE-DIAGNOSTICS AND FACILITATE ACCESS TO THE EUROPEAN PATENT	
Publication of the call	Q3 2017
Award	Q4 2017
Signature of the contract	Q4 2017
Indicative total duration of the contract: up to 36 months.	

INDICATORS

(a) – Coordination office

Timely provision of the support and/or funding to SMEs

Provision of feedback on the impact of the measures on user SMEs

(b) – IP Pre-diagnostics

Quantity of IP pre-diagnostics implemented (indicative number 600)

Satisfaction of SMEs with the service (feedback from at least 90% of participating SMEs)

SMEs that provided feedback on the impact of the IP pre-diagnostic (at least 33%)

SMEs confirming the IP pre-diagnostic had a positive impact on their business

(c) - Facilitate access to the European patent

Number of SMEs that apply for a European Patent with the financial support of this scheme

Number of SME that applied a European Patent providing feedback on the economic benefits related to it

Number of EU Member States covered

Long term indicators:

Number of participating European SMEs that obtain a European patent

Number of SMEs that use the European patents to protect newly introduced products and/or services, that license out such patents, to obtain more favourable financing terms or obtain other economic benefits.

Economic benefits due to the use of the European patent – quantified.

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING IN FACILITATING ACCES TO THE EUROPEAN PATENT

The co-financing rate for the facilitation of access to the European patent will be of maximum 85% for SMEs that receive the support for of the European patent fee, for external costs of legal advice related to the grant of the European patent, and for the costs of European patent litigation costs insurance premium.

GRO/SME/17/B/06 - TRAINING FOR SME-FRIENDLY POLICIES IN CENTRAL PURCHASING BODIES

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

To contribute to the professionalization of staff working for large public buyers (called central purchasing bodies, cpbs) covering in particular SMEs' access to public procurement (pp) markets and increase their knowledge of public procurement.

The proposal contributes to the COSME objectives:

- A training programme that seeks to enhance the professionalization of CPB personnel will provide detail on how to access and aggregate markets for public procurement;
- A professionalization programme will also help personnel to manage markets, and in particular to assist with the inclusion of SMEs in public procurement competitions.
- The centralisation of public procurement functions may impact on the broader market, at a local, regional and European level. Training of personnel to understand and manage is imperative.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

CPBs are among the largest buyers at national level since they launch and manage large calls used by all relevant public authorities to procure certain goods or services. By aggregating demand, CPBs may reduce SMEs access to PP markets and therefore it is essential that CPBs buying practices allow for SMEs access to public procurement markets.

The action aims at ensuring participation in a specialised university programme on public procurement to have personnel better trained on Public Procurement within CPBs.

Funding will be given to one or two universities in the EU, possibly located in a city well connected with priority¹¹ countries.

Funding to the university will cover tuition fees for the training programme, travelling cost, and accommodation. The university (ies)¹² beneficiary of the grant will take care of managing travelling and accommodation of participants. The university (ies) will organise a conference at the end of the course, where the cohort would meet with best practitioners in public procurement in the EU.

- The content of the action should include public procurement law and practical tendering processes, as well as strategic procurement and supply chain management, to ensure CPBs can benefit from private sector procurement efficiencies while maintaining compliance within public procurement legislation and guidelines. Strategic Procurement also allows for policy areas, such as assisting SMEs with access to public procurement markets, as well as Green and Social procurement to be addressed
- Target participants of the programme would be, in particular, staff from newly established CPBs .

EXPECTED RESULTS

¹¹ Countries that have systemic problems in public procurement.

¹² Since this is a pilot, it is expected that one university only will be the beneficiary of the funding. Eventually this number may be increased to two universities.

The expected results of the university/academy programme will include:

- Approximately 30 staff from across Member States to have completed the programme and increased their knowledge and understanding of procurement
- The establishment of a pan-European network of highly skilled public procurement officials that have taken part in the programme
- The development of knowledge-sharing initiatives in their own Member State in order to further professionalise CPB personnel
- The potential for the university (ies) involved in the process may wish to expand the course outside of this funded programme, providing further education in public procurement to officials.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for Proposals	Training for SME-friendly policies in Central Purchasing Bodies	350 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Indicative total duration of the grant agreement: 12 months	

INDICATORS

- Number participants in the training courses, per MS, per year
- Number of Priority Countries included in the training course
- Number of knowledge sharing initiatives developed at CPB level by beneficiaries
- Satisfaction Level of the participants, survey

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

90% of eligible costs.

GRO/SME/17/B/07 - CREATING LINKS FOR THE FACILITATION OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT OF INNOVATION

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

- To help innovative SMEs and start-ups grow and develop by allowing them to address public demands through the use of public procurement.
- To create adequate links between government, research institutions and the private sector by adding the buying potential of large buyers or other aggregators of public procurement to the mix. This should open up opportunities to participating SMEs and start-ups to develop new products, services and to grow or scale up their operations.
- To contribute to the creation of an innovation-friendly business environment and the overall competitiveness of the European economy.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

This action proposes to bring together potential public buyers, suppliers of innovation (with a special focus on SMEs and start-ups), and potential investors and researchers, with a view to determine projects suitable for public procurement of innovation.

The purpose will be to:

- Determine the emerging needs of the public sector (i.e. large buyers) in strategically selected technologies
- Provide network with stakeholders, such as scientists and other suppliers of knowledge (e.g. start-ups) in strategic fields
- Provide for the engagement of funding partners: public funds (such as EU funding opportunities), private funds and large enterprises willing to provide funding at various stages of commercialization of innovation
- Allow for the brokering funding opportunities, technological and business aspects between all stakeholders

Pilot projects will be identified in order to help them developing a proof of concept.

Programme funding would include the following activities:

- A Facilitator for networking activities and stakeholders management;
- Logistics, including travelling costs of participants
- the proof of concepts of selected projects
- Stakeholders' costs relating to the participation in the process (the cost of procurement of the relevant goods or services is excluded from this funding).

The facilitator would engage with large buyers and/or aggregators of public procurement to identify a small number of needs (problems). Subsequently, the facilitator would engage the "sources of innovation" (i.e. start-ups, innovative SMEs) through its network and asked them to provide solutions for the identified need. A small number of those solutions would receive funding to develop their competitive ideas to a proof of concept that the enterprises could pitch to the buyers for potential procurement at a later stage.

The action would involve parties coming potentially from any EU MS. This new approach will be tested for further wider application at EU level.

There is also a clear focus on the promotion of SMEs and start-up companies, who could become involved through pilot projects to provide innovation through this programme.

EXPECTED RESULTS

As a result of the programme, the Facilitator is expected to broker a small number of public procurements of innovative products or services and demonstrate the effectiveness of this model of cooperation. Because of the complexity of these processes it is expected that such

procurements could occur in the mid-term (at the earliest).
The pilot projects will be well-documented in order to allow for analysis of experience and future optimisation of the process and better inclusion of SMEs and start-ups. The results would also be useful for further development of the business model of operation for such Facilitators. The Facilitator will not be procuring the actual goods or services.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for proposals	Capturing the growth potential of innovative SMEs in public procurement	600 000
Indicative Funding Breakdown: €250,000 – Funding for networking events, including costs related to attendance for stakeholders (estimated at 15 events) €300,000 –Funding for pilot projects proof of concept (may include a two-phase approach to short-list potential pilot projects) €50,000 – Funding for the Facilitator role, to include reporting, project management, etc.		

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q1 2017
Award	Q3 2017
Signature of the grant agreement	Q4 2017
Indicative total duration of the contract/grant agreement: up to 24 months	

INDICATORS

Key Performance Indicators – Year 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established relationship with the main stakeholders Determined public needs that could strategically be solved by procurement of innovation Key Performance Indicators – Year 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of SME's, start-ups and other sources of innovation identified for inclusion in the programme Number of Public Sector Buyers included in the programme

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

90%

GRO/SME/17/B/08 – IMPROVE THE USER-FRIENDLINESS OF POINTS OF SINGLE CONTACT

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The objective of this action is to improve the user-friendliness of the PSCs, based on the results of the user testing carried out under COSME 2016. This should take account of the needs of both national and cross-border users (mostly SMEs).

The global aim is to turn the PSCs into well-functioning and easy-to-use e-government business portals that are built around the needs of the users (both national users as well as those from other EU Member States) and that are equally accessible to national users and those from other Member States.

Background information

The Points of Single Contact (PSCs), created under Directive 2006/123/EC on services in the internal market, were created to support and simplify SMEs' access to the internal market. This is done by requiring the Points of Single Contact (which have been set up in each Member State in the form of online portals) to provide information on regulatory requirements that the companies need to comply with and allowing the companies to complete administrative procedures online.

The PSCs, however, do not yet live up to their full potential. Greater account should be taken of the actual needs of businesses. This has been confirmed by business organisations, inter alia BusinessEurope and Eurochambres, and by the recent study undertaken to evaluate the performance of the PSCs: [The Performance of the Points of Single Contact: An Assessment against the PSC Charter](#). The PSCs will be one of the most important elements of the "Single Digital Gateway", which was announced in the Digital Single Market Strategy as well as in the Single Market Strategy (as a support measure for start-ups).

Well-functioning Points of Single Contact are an important instrument for companies wanting to operate in another EU country as they ease administrative burden linked with obtaining relevant information on regulatory conditions in other Member States. It is important that the PSCs when providing their services (information and possibility to complete procedures online) take into account the needs of users, mostly SMEs. Only comprehensive, well-structured and easy to use PSCs can support SMEs in entering new markets within the EU. Digital transformation requires that public e-services like PSCs constantly adapt to the expectations of their users.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The user testing carried out under COSME 2016 will lead to a report with detailed recommendations per PSC on how to improve each portal in a user-friendly way (both for national and cross-border users). The COSME 2017 action will build on this outcome and will support Member States in implementing these recommendations. This will lead to PSCs which better reflect the needs of users (both national and cross-border, as the user testing will cover both categories of users).

This could include, for example, structuring the information better by applying the business life cycle approach & providing for different pathways for different users (e.g. whether national or cross-border), improving the search functions and links with the websites of different competent authorities, provision of more foreign language content, better written text

through editorial support.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Improvement of the user-friendliness of the Points of Single Contact based on the results of user testing. This will directly benefit SMEs (of a country as well as cross-border-active ones) which need to find out about applicable rules and requirements and carry out administrative procedures.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Specific contract under a framework contract or Call for tenders	Improved user-friendliness of Points of Single Contact	500 000
Total		500 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Specific contract under a framework contract	Signature: Q2 2017, Action to be run Q3-4 2017, Q1 2018

INDICATORS

- Number, nature, or scope of modifications made to the PSC portals as a result of the project, and degree of implementation of recommendations after user testing
- Increase of user traffic to PSC websites, both from national and cross-border EU users

GRO/SME/17/B/09 - OPEN FOR BUSINESS CAMPAIGN 2018

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

When it comes to the Single Market, small business operators often suffer from an information deficit: They do not know enough about their Single Market rights, nor about EU funding opportunities that are available to them nor about free-of-charge EU support networks and e-tools such as the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), SOLVIT, Points of Single Contact (PSC) and the Your Europe Business Portal. That's why chapter 2.2 of the New Single Market strategy says: "The Commission will re-direct COSME funds to information campaigns targeting young innovative SMEs to encourage them to expand cross-border and make use of the possibilities offered by the Single Market."

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

This is why a corporate communication campaign is necessary to inform the EU business community (especially small and medium-sized enterprises - SMEs) how they can benefit from the EU Single Market.

Moreover, boosting the confidence in the Single Market will help stimulate economic growth.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The "Open for business" campaign 2018 will target small business operators in at least 5 target countries per year that will be selected on the basis of different criteria: (i) potential improvement of the economic outlook, (ii) improvable framework conditions for SMEs (iii) low engagement with the European project and rising euro scepticism, (iv) presence of active local partners (e.g. Enterprise Europe Network), (v) local interest in single market.

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

The main communication tools will be: advertising in print media, on the radio, on online and social media.

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

The campaign is part of a multiannual project targeting different Member States yearly. The first pilot campaign ran in 2015 and it was named "Corporate campaign on COSME benefits for SMEs" and it was only focused on the COSME programme. The first wave of the "Open for business" campaign, focused on Single Market opportunities for SMEs, will run from Q2 2016 in Denmark, Portugal, Poland, Ireland and Hungary. The second wave of the "Open for business" campaign will run in 2017 targeting other 5 member states (the final selection of target countries is not available yet).

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

EXPECTED RESULTS

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

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

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

The deliverables of the campaign are the radio spots and any other campaign material such as Adverts, banners, Advertorials, content for social media, infographics. In order to better convey the messages of the campaign, the materials will be customised taking into account feedback of the national partners. They will be available in Q2 2018 and they will be disseminated through the EC local networks (EEN, Representations) in order to effectively reach the target.

Internet addresses are already available (Your Europe Business portal, national Enterprise Europe Network's web-sites).

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Specific contract under a framework contract	Open for business campaign 2018	2 000 000 €

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Signature of the contract	Q4 2017
Indicative total duration of the contract is 12 months	

INDICATORS

Type of advertising	OUTPUT (reach within the target group)	OUTTAKE (recall)	OUTCOME (action by the target group)
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Print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • readers reached 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus group recall • recall (large-scale) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional requests received by EEN¹³ (emails and/or calls) • additional EEN visitors
Radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listeners reached 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional requests received by EEN (emails and/or calls)
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • impressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • likes • favourites • clicks • click-through rate (CTR) • video views (when applicable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • re-tweets • sharings • comments • additional web-site visits • N° of leads
online advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • impressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clicks • click-through rate (CTR) • video views (when applicable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dwell time • N° of leads • increase of web-site visits

¹³ Enterprise Europe Network

C. FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS FOR ENTERPRISES

The third specific objective of COSME is “to improve framework conditions for the competitiveness and sustainability of Union enterprises, particularly SMEs, including in the tourism sector” described in Article 11 of the COSME Regulation.

The COSME Regulation specifies that an indicative 11% of the total budget has to be devoted to improving framework conditions and competitiveness.

In 2017, there will be up to 11 actions to be financed under this specific objective with a budget of around EUR 36 million.

GRO/SME/17/C/01 - SME POLICY (SME Performance Review, START-UPS, OUTREACH)

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

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

- the **SME Performance Review (SPR)**
- the **SME policy implementation**
- **Outreach tools**
- the **follow-up of Start-up initiative and of second chance and transfer of business**

The **SME Performance Review** provides an empirical statistical tool to monitor SME performance and guide policy making. It supports the Commission's monitoring of improvements in the framework conditions for enterprises, including the implementation of the Small Business Act (SBA).

The **SME policy implementation** measure aims to support the implementation of the SBA by ensuring the follow-up and monitoring (including exchange of good practices).

The objective of the **Outreach tools** is to provide communication and information tools to promote the SME policy and inform on SME policy implementation including available support at EU and Member States level.

The actions related to **start-ups**, **second chance** and **transfer of business** aim to disseminate information on and provide support to the initiatives taken in the respective areas to improve the business environment for new entrepreneurs, facilitate transfer of businesses to new owners and help entrepreneurs in difficulty.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

The **SPR** is made up of annual reports and studies.

The 2017 annual report to be issued in autumn will feed into the preparations for the European Semester Country Reports 2018, including an overview of the size, structure and importance of European SMEs, outline the major trends and provide a summary of recent policy developments. The country fact sheets will be instrumental in the monitoring of the SBA implementation. In addition topical studies could be run, including an Eurobarometer on SME and green markets

The **SME policy implementation** measure will cover the SME Envoys network meetings, the SME Week, the Single Market Forum events and the annual SME Assembly (together with the EU presidency) including the European Enterprise Promotion Awards (EEPA). It will furthermore cover meetings of the SBA National Contact Points (Sherpas to the SME Envoys), the SME Week coordinators, the EEPA Single points of contact and other relevant experts meetings (SME Performance review national experts, late payment directive national

experts).

Outreach tools (SME Portal and other tools such as web-based, audio-visual and/or printed leaflets, social media campaigns, SME definition tool) aim at communicating SME policy to SMEs and stakeholders. It will also cover communication activities linked to the SME Envoys network. The outreach tools also include the Single Market Forum (incl. the organisation of the closing event together with the Maltese Presidency)

The **start-ups, transfer of business and second chance actions** will cover the organisation of workshops, conferences, analyses, and the 'Ideas for Europe' initiative including scale-up labs (ie support for European entrepreneurs during the scale-up phase) as well as any other actions needed to support the initiatives taken in this area and to accompany the implementation of the Start-up and Scale-Up Initiative (COM(2016)733). In particular a Conference on Transfer of Business will be organised under the Maltese Presidency.

JUSTIFICATION: An ad-hoc grant will be granted, without an open call for proposals under Article 190(1)(c) RAP, to government (or its representative), of the country that will hold the EU Council Presidency (Malta, 16/17 March).

EXPECTED RESULTS

SME Performance Review:

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

SME policy implementation:

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

Outreach tools:

- Increased awareness of EU programmes and initiatives to support SMEs
- Increased awareness of the good practices in the area of SME policy
- continued information gathering and improvement of the Single Market, in particular for SMEs, with the Single Market Forum
- increased awareness of Europe's most inspiring entrepreneurs as a leading example to potential future entrepreneurs ('Ideas from Europe')

Start-ups, transfer of business and second chance:

- Increased awareness of EU programmes and initiatives and of the good practices in the area in view of the Start-up and Scale-up Initiative.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Specific contracts under framework Contracts	SPR	1 680 000

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Specific contracts under a framework contract; individual contracts, extension of existing contract	SME policy implementation (SME Assembly, SME Week, SMF, Start-Up Initiative)	450 000
Call for tender	SME policy implementation (SME Assembly, SME Week, SMF)	1.100.000
Specific contracts under a framework contract	SME policy implementation (SME Envoys network and expert meetings)	520 000
Specific grant agreement under Framework Partnership Agreement (max co-fin. 95%) & individual Contracts or specific contracts under a framework contract	Outreach tools	1 000 000
Call for tenders (2) and individual contracts; grant agreement (max co-fin. 90%)	Start-ups/scale-ups, transfer of business, second chance	1 050 000
Grant Agreement, art. 190 RAP	Conference on Business Transfers	120 000
Total		5 920 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
SME Performance Review: specific contracts	Q2 2017
Meeting SME Envoys, Sherpa, EEPA and SME Week coordinators, other experts	Q1-Q4 2017
2017 SME Assembly, SMF	Q1-Q4-2017
Outreach tools	Q1-Q4 2017
Start-ups, transfer of business and second chance	Q3-Q4 2017
Indicative total duration of the contract/grant agreements: 12/14 months	

INDICATORS

SME Performance Review:

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

SME Policy implementation:

1. Number of meetings organised
2. Number of participants
3. Timely dissemination of the results
4. Progress achieved in the implementation of the measures in the 10 key areas of the SME policy

Outreach tools

1. Timely production of tools (web-based, audio-visual and/or printed leaflets, social media campaigns)
2. Effective dissemination of tools and use in major events
3. Impact on target public (number of impacts, number of visits for websites, number of videos viewed online)
4. particular for SMF: number of workshops, positive feedback by participants
5. particular for Ideas from Europe: (social) media impact; success of support for scaling-up

Start-ups, transfer of business, second chance

1. Number of participants to the meetings
2. Timely dissemination of the results

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

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

Max 90% for the Conference on Transfer of Business under the Maltese Presidency

NA for the other actions

GRO/SME/17/C/02 - EU REFIT STAKEHOLDER PLATFORM FOR BETTER REGULATION

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

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

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

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

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

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

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

A study will be implemented by the OECD through a grant agreement to be signed within the existing Framework Agreement due to its expertise in this area.

EXPECTED RESULTS

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

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

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

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET
Experts reimbursements (Non remunerated	Meetings	150 000

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET
experts) and costs for meetings or events		
Specific grant agreement under framework agreement	Studies	200 000
Specific contract under a framework contract	IT Development	510 000
Specific contract under a framework contract	Better Regulation Portal Communication	250 000
Total		1 110 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Conferences/meetings/events/workshops/studies/material	Q1 – Q4 2017
Indicative total duration	12 months

INDICATORS

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

GRO/SME/17/C/03 - ACCELERATING THE UPTAKE OF BIG DATA AND SUPPORTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF B2B DIGITAL PLATFORMS IN EUROPE

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The objective of this action is **to accelerate the uptake of the data-driven economy and stimulate strategic investments and support services**, to allow European enterprises, notably SMEs, reap the full benefits of the digital world.

Digital B2B platforms and data-driven business models have grown dramatically in size and scale over the past decade and are affecting every industry. With a total market value of EUR 4 trillion, platforms have become an important economic force with over 1.3 million direct employees, while millions of others are indirectly employed in the related ecosystems.

Traditional firms across many sectors are moving to establish their own platforms, powering innovation and giving rise to new business models, products and services.

Despite the growing value of the data-driven economy, European investment in digital technologies over the last 10 years has been a third of what companies invested in the US. The use of B2B digital platforms in Europe is large and growing, but only a tiny share of them is “made in Europe”.

Industry leaders are aware of the disruptive power of platforms and data-driven models.

It is expected that, by the end of 2016, there will be more than 100 new digital industry platforms from non-tech companies. European industry should not miss this huge window of opportunity.

Currently, Europe witnesses the emergence of many incompatible platforms and significant regulatory barriers to be resolved such as the sharing of health-related data across countries.

Europe needs to boost significant industry investments for infrastructures and support services that are necessary to restore the trust of European enterprises, notably SMEs, in the data-driven economy. Europe also needs to re-think a future-proof regulatory environment, pool demand and promote an innovation culture.

This action is in-line with the recent Communication on “Digitising European Industry”, which recognises the merit of data platforms and highlights the need for world-class data infrastructure in Europe to support businesses, notably SMEs' trust in data-driven business models.

The action is a follow-up of the recommendations of the Strategic Policy Forum on Digital Transformation of European industry that stressed the unprecedented opportunities from big data and industrial platforms and calls for urgent action.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

This action will help shape, in close collaboration with industry and enterprises, including SMEs, Member States and regions, a set of actions, focusing on encouraging European industry and SMEs to explore the opportunity for the development of European sector-specific B2B platforms and accelerate the uptake of data-driven business models.

Taking stock of on-going work notably within the PPP on big data value, mainly oriented towards R&D objectives, this action will focus on marketable infrastructures and projects that are necessary to restore trust in the data-driven economy. It shall:

- monitor the creation and evolution of B2B industrial digital platforms in Europe and globally, identify challenges and regulatory barriers holding back sector-specific platforms from scaling up in Europe. In the healthcare sector, this could comprise promoting a framework for responsible data sharing and connected health platforms to enhance trust;
- develop common guidelines on safe data usage to encourage businesses make safe and secure use of data. Businesses, especially SMEs, must be provided with the certainty that they can safely and securely generate value from data, without breaching data protection laws;
- promote and catalyse the creation of pan-European sector-specific data sets, for example for specific diseases, to ease drug production, improve diagnostics, enhance drug effectiveness and reduce R&D and healthcare costs
- explore the feasibility of, and stimulate strategic investments by industry in high-impact projects, in collaboration with other relevant Commission services and industry dialogues. Examples could be such as EU-wide infrastructures for neutral and independent testing and validation of new cyber-security solutions, platforms for personalised health monitoring, cross-border gathering and sharing of health-related data, infrastructure for self-driving cars, smart construction, etc. This will be done networking committed public authorities and industry to achieve geographic scope for a common framework for implementation, offering hands-on advice, research capacity to develop concrete investment projects and scale them up at EU level (to be supported by the European financial instruments and programmes such as EFSI, European Structural and Investment Funds ESIF , Horizon2020, financial instruments, etc.)

Other actions include:

- explore the implementation of a unique, traceable and manageable EU system for managing digital identities for European firms, citizens, objects and data (e-ID concept);
- explore the feasibility of the creation of thematic European datasets, i.e. subject-specific repositories, pulling together large quantities and varieties of data, in an interoperable way, to increase safe and secure data usage for European businesses and citizens.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The action will put pressure and raise the sense of urgency for pan-European investments in the data-driven economy and B2B digital platforms, by all actors of the economy, governments, business, academia and citizens.

It will allow tackling some key barriers for digital transformation and secure access to industrial data and will lead to a more innovative, dynamic business environment, stimulating growth and employment.

SMEs in particular, will become more confident to safely and securely use and generate value

from data, and thus take more innovative initiatives and improve their competitiveness and growth.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for tenders	B2B platforms and the data-driven economy	2 400 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q2 2017
Award	Q4 2017
Signature of the contract	Q4 2017
Indicative duration of the contract: 24 months	

INDICATORS

- Overall quality of the action, research, feasibility studies and relevant reports
- Quality of guidelines on safe data usage;
- Number of countries and European companies, notably SMEs, using the guidelines on safe data usage;
- Number of countries and European companies, notably SMEs, collaborating and adopting a common EU management system of digital identities;
- Number of SMEs gaining access to uniform data and profiting from the establishment of subject-specific Data Lakes;
- Number of companies and SMEs using data quality standards.

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The modernisation of Europe's industry is a key pillar of the Commission's objective to boost industrial competitiveness, growth and jobs. The uptake of digital technologies and Key Enabling Technologies (KETs) by traditional industrial and service sectors is crucial for the future competitiveness of the EU. Advanced technologies and new business models enable smaller and more innovative companies to enter the market with highly specialised and smart products and services. Especially SMEs can grow two to three times faster when they embrace advanced technologies.

There is thus a clear and urgent need to further develop and integrate the current EU tools used to monitor and analyse in a systematic way emerging digital and KETs trends through the collection, publication and dissemination of reliable, regularly updated and comprehensive data.

By aligning the monitoring and analytical activities and methodologies of the Digital Transformation Monitor and the KETs Observatory business stakeholders, European and national/regional policy makers will receive clearer and more coherent information on advanced technologies, which are often hybrid digital/KETs solutions, to support their business and policy development. In this way, the tools will regularly nurture the entrepreneurial discovery process of the Smart Specialisation Strategies of European regions and countries by providing relevant data on how regional authorities can facilitate the uptake of promising technologies by their local SMEs.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

This action will align the monitoring and analytical activities of the Digital Transformation Monitor and the KETs Observatory and seek to redefine and/or merge current indicators and methodologies to ensure better coherence and comparability. It will also present, publish and disseminate the findings and reports of the two tools in a clear and coordinated fashion through a joint communication strategy.

While alignment of, and coherent communication on the findings of the two tools are key tasks, there is also a need to further develop and expand, in parallel, the analysis and scope of each tool. Thus the action will include the following three activities:

Digital Transformation Monitor

Further develop and expand suitable mechanisms to observe and analyse the current diffusion and adoption dynamics of novel digital technologies, especially in the fields of mobile, cloud, social media, data analytics, digitisation, design, prototyping, testing and proof of concept, and collaborative technologies based on the experience of the Digital Entrepreneurship Monitor. Quantitative indicators used in the monitoring and scoreboard methodologies will be complemented by surveys at firm level on a regular basis. This will enable:

- capturing the most recent technology uptake and digital transformation performance at firm, industry, and country levels;
- measuring the output dimension at firm level, collecting results that can be aggregated at national and sectoral levels;
- benchmarking among EU Member States and between EU and non-EU countries;
- combining perceptions of different stakeholder groups (policy makers, investors, firms and sectoral associations, etc.);

- proposing country-specific recommendations based on policy analysis.

KETs Observatory:

Further develop and streamline the services of the Observatory so it remains a recognised source of reliable data and information on the performance of Member States and others regions of the world on the technology development and industrial deployment of KETs. This will include:

- updating and expanding the underlying database with a special focus on the production & employment impact of KETs in Europe and worldwide, with a stronger assessment of performance in the digital manufacturing areas;
- updating the database according to the latest technological trends to fully capture Europe's capacity to develop KETs-based knowledge and products;
- producing analytical and evidence-based thematic reports and country profiles on EU28 countries and regions, based on their positioning in certain value chains, as well as mapping of KETs technology centres;
- providing insights on, and recommendations for the positioning of Europe in the global race for innovation;
- proposing policy recommendations based on analysis of the data collected;
- organising thematic expert workshops and value chain analyses in strategic KETs-related areas. The specific areas will be defined according to arising policy and/or business needs, as for example, on potential "important projects of common European interest (IPCEI) and in areas where European regions could team up and invest together in the context of smart specialisation.

Joint communication strategy

While each tool will continue to produce its own analyses and findings, these will be aligned in terms of timing, presentation, publication and dissemination means through a joint strategy that will highlight the importance of advanced technologies for Europe's industry and economic development and the role of technological transformation for SME growth and jobs, supported by the findings of the two tools.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The alignment of the Digital Transformation Monitor and the KETs Observatory should result in clearer and mutually coherent analyses and reporting on advanced technologies irrespective of their individual characteristics, thereby offering more comprehensive and consistent data and information. Specifically for each tool, this would include:

Digital Transformation Monitor

- updated and revised monitoring methodology and its components: statistics, surveys, technology and industry monitoring, policy monitoring, working groups. Online <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/dem/monitor> .
- extension of pilot scoreboard methodology developed for the Digital Transformation Monitor. It will draw on the statistics and survey results of the monitoring mechanism to present a policy-relevant snapshot of the comparative progress of different European countries and sectors in taking up digital technologies. Online and print.

This will allow evaluating and assessing the impact of strategic digital technologies on digital transformation across a number of sectors in Europe and enable not only policy makers at European, national and regional levels, but also enterprises, especially SMEs, acquire a better understanding of new and emerging technologies, to adapt their strategies and increase their

adoption of these technologies in order to reap the full benefits of digital transformation.

KETs Observatory

- updated and expanded database that better reflects the reality of the rapid development and industrial deployment of KETs in Europe and beyond, in particular with regard to the increasing intertwining of KETs and digital technologies. Online <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/kets-tools/kets-deployment>.
- active use of the findings by public authorities (EU, national, regional) to identify promising KETs-based products and areas for policy support and investment such as, for example, to facilitate the elaboration of potential IPCEIs in strategic KETs-related areas or to provide SMEs with global market intelligence on promising KETs fields.

Joint communication strategy

- increased awareness and recognition - through ease of access and joint communication, of the Digital Transformation Monitor and the KETs Observatory by a broad community of business stakeholders (including SMEs), policy makers and public authorities at regional, national and EU level as reliable, practical and quality tools for monitoring technological transformation in Europe and beyond.
- active use of the two tools by regional authorities and industry (including SMEs) to nurture the elaboration and implementation of their Smart Specialisation Strategies with a view to identifying high-quality investment projects at (cross-)regional level.
- increased awareness of the importance of advanced technologies for EU industry and the economy and of the role of technological transformation for SME growth and jobs.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for tenders	Monitoring Digital Transformation and KETs	2 200 000
TOTAL		2 200 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the calls	Q2 2017
Award	Q4 2017
Signature of the contracts	Q4 2017
Indicative total duration of the contracts: 30 months	

INDICATORS

- Overall quality of aligned methodologies, analyses and reports of the two tools
- Improvement in ease of comparability and mutual coherence of findings
- Increase in awareness and recognition of the two tools
- Increase in awareness of importance/role of advanced technologies and technological transformation

Digital Transformation Monitor

- Overall quality of the Digital Transformation Monitor, the Scoreboard and relevant reports
- Number of countries and policy initiatives covered
- Number of case studies and business paradigms developed
- Number and geographic coverage of relevant policy initiatives deployed
- Degree of digital transformation in selected sectors and by type/size of enterprise

KETs Observatory

- Overall quality of thematic reports and EU28 country profiles
- Number of indicators linked to expanded database
- Overall quality of assessment of KETs deployment performance
- Number of thematic expert workshops.

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

n/a

GRO/SME/17/C/05 - EUROPEAN CLUSTER EXCELLENCE PROGRAMME

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

- to strengthen cluster excellence management to address the innovation, growth and globalization challenges that SMEs are facing, helping cluster organizations to develop strategic plans for a better cooperation at European and international level,
- to improve and consolidate the cluster excellence initiative launched in 2009- 2012, setting up a representative transparent accountable and effective governance including a European Cluster Excellence Supervisory Board, fixing clear and transparent European principles for a new Cluster Excellence benchmarking, assessment and labelling policy, and developing further a strong Cluster Excellence expertise at European and international level.

The Commission launched in 2009 the European Cluster Excellence Initiative (ECEI) to create more world-class clusters across the EU by strengthening cluster excellence. Cluster organisations are enhancing collaboration, networking and learning on innovation, channelling specialised and customised business support services to SMEs. High quality cluster management is a key element of successful world-class clusters to foster SMEs competitiveness and for assisting companies to access global markets successfully.

Moreover cluster excellence management in the EU requires cluster managers' skills following industrial trends and major business opportunity that comes along with industrial change. The European cluster benchmarking system currently managed by the European Secretariat for Cluster Analysis (ESCA) is delivering good results in terms of attracting clusters from numerous European countries towards more professional cluster management, but there is a need to adjust the current momentum to EU and emerging business priorities such as digitisation of industry, Energy Union, circular economy, European Fund for Strategic Investment, key enabling technologies, global value-chains dynamics.

ECEI's main aim was to create a benchmarking methodology for cluster organizations to improve their internal management process and the way they offer services. Secondly, the ECEI sought to develop training materials to help cluster managers improve their own managerial capability. By March 2016, 811 cluster organizations from 40 countries have applied the EU benchmarking methodology and acquired the Bronze label of cluster excellence, 47 cluster organizations from 10 countries got the Silver label and 69 cluster organizations from 14 countries the Gold label. Since 2011, 58.000 SMEs have been involved as members of the labelled clusters organisations, actively contributing to clusters activities in 15 technology areas, notably in creative industries, media and design (10865), information and communication (8303), energy and environment (5425), production and engineering (5381), transportation and mobility (4556).

At this point of development, the Commission considers it necessary to reinforce the European cluster benchmarking and labelling system building on the results achieved so far in terms of expertise and recognition by the stakeholders. There is clearly a need for a new incentive from the European Commission to consolidate the European Cluster labelling system, to reinforce the European added- value, involving more clusters in support of EU priorities to achieve EU 2020 policy goals in particular industry modernisation, smart specialisation strategies, entrepreneurship, SME internationalisation. There is also a need to further increase the "Europeanisation" of the current benchmarking and labelling system with the support of the ECEI Consortium and the European Secretariat for Cluster Analysis

(ESCA), improving in particular its global governance setting-up a European Policy Supervision Board, reviewing European criteria and indicators for benchmarking, assessment and labelling procedures, as well as reinforcing expertise across the EU, notably in less-developed regions.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

Action 1: to further develop cluster cooperation projects

We propose to support Cluster Excellence labelling projects, on the basis of the new labelling principles and methodology as developed in action 2, to further strengthen cluster management across the EU notably in less developed regions to provide more professional business services to European SMEs addressing in particular new industrial trends to scale up and spread out emerging business opportunities across the EU,.

Action 2: to simplify and harmonise cluster assessment criteria and procedures

This action will be developed through meetings and reporting activities, to be organised by the European Cluster Excellence Consortium (ECEI Consortium) to implement the cluster labelling process, notably:

- to review, simplify and harmonise where necessary the criteria, indicators, and assessment procedures for benchmarking and labelling cluster organizations,
- to further develop and to set up where necessary assessment criteria, indicators, methodologies to benchmark and label European strategic cluster partnerships
- to develop training activities on the basis of calls for Expression of Interest for new assessors on the benchmarking methodology to stimulate cluster excellence across the EU, as well as for new cluster experts on the labelling processes, encouraging twining approaches between junior/senior assessors/experts both in developed and less-developed regions, in order to expand the number of assessors and experts involved in the European cluster benchmarking/assessment and labelling system, and to involve more regions in the process,
- to consolidate data and reporting on European cluster labelling to further analyse the impact of the Cluster Excellence policy on SMEs, in close cooperation with the European Cluster Observatory (ECO),
- to promote the new Cluster Excellence Labelling system across the EU and at international level, in close cooperation with the European Cluster Collaboration platform (ECCP),

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

Project partners agreed to establish the European Secretariat for Cluster Analysis (ESCA), which is exercised by the legal entity VDI/VDE Innovation + Technik GmbH. VDI/VDE Innovation has therefore the necessary competence and power to implement the action.

EXPECTED RESULTS

On the basis of good results achieved since 2009 in quantitative terms, with about 930 cluster organizations having received the cluster excellence label, this measure intends to:

- further expand the number of Cluster organisations labelled across the EU and notably in less developed regions,

- consolidate the qualitative dimension of this policy to better use cluster organisations to support SMEs to innovate to face new economic challenges as digitisation, circular economy, as well as their internationalisation,

More cluster organisations labelled, notably in less developed regions, means more SMEs active in cluster organisations activities, in particular in transnational activities able to implement EU policies and priorities for the period 2017-2020, in particular smart specialisation strategies, and industrial modernisation as well- structured clusters represents generally a critical mass of companies in the related sector or field of activity able to integrate the innovation eco-system with a strategic vision.

A new website will be dedicated to this new initiative in close cooperation with the European Cluster Observatory (ECO) and the European Cluster Collaboration platform (ECCP).

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Action 1: call for proposals (to support 6 to 8 new projects)	European Excellence Programme	900 000
Action 2*: Ad hoc grant with ESCA		300 000
Total		1 200 000

*Exception case for action 2: Article 128 of the Financial Regulation and article 190c (f) of RAP¹⁴

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the calls	
<i>Action1</i>	Q1 2018
<i>Action2</i>	Q1 2017
Award	
<i>Action1</i>	Q1 2018
<i>Action 2</i>	Q1 2017
Signature of the contracts/grant agreements	
<i>Action1</i>	Q2 2018
<i>Action2</i>	Q2 2017
Indicative duration of the contracts/grant agreements: 18 months(action 1)/12 month(action 2)	

¹⁴ (f) For actions with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation or its administrative power, on condition that the actions concerned do not fall within the scope of a call for proposals.

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Call to be published end of 2016 or early 2017, to start the implementation by mid-2017	

INDICATORS

Number of new cluster organisations labelled, in particular in less developed regions,
Additional number of SMEs involved in cluster organisations labelled,
Additional number of assessors/experts involved in the benchmarking and European labelling cluster system,
Number of training activities performed

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

Call for proposals: 75%
Ad hoc grant:90%

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The overall objective of this action is to boost industrial competitiveness and investment in the EU via cross-regional cooperation and networking by launching three interconnected specific actions: (i) supporting the development of cross-regional investment projects under the Smart Specialisation Platform for Industrial Modernisation and Investment, (ii) supporting the development of European Strategic Cluster Partnerships to support cluster cooperation in thematic areas and increase the involvement of industry in the Platform, and (iii) supporting manufacturing firms to adopt advanced manufacturing technologies and therefore increase their competitiveness and innovation capability.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

ACTION 1: Technical and financial assistance facility for industrial modernisation and investment

This action is one of the complementary support actions to the Smart Specialisation Platform for Industrial Modernisation and Investment (SSP-Industry) that is aimed to establish a continuous pipeline for investment projects in the EU in the coming few years. The establishment of this Platform was referred as a specific action in the recently adopted Communication "Digitising European industry. Reaping the full benefits of a Digital Single Market".

The action

The action will provide technical and financial advice to cross-regional networks of businesses and public/private partnerships resulting from SSP-Industry that is aimed to develop investment projects as well as thematic and cross-regional investment platforms in industry-related themes. Evidence shows that without any kind of follow-up support, many well-intentioned cross-regional or transnational cooperation ideas do not mature into viable projects due to lack of sufficient financial preparation and limited knowledge of EU funding instruments. This action will address and focus on the investment readiness gap of industrial projects that are proposed under SSP-Industry. Based on a concept note setting out the intended investment projects, cross-regional business networks and public/private partnerships shaped under SP3-Industry, will be able to seek customised assistance from the support facility to be established through this action, to overcome obstacles on the path to investment readiness, so-called bankable proposals.

The services

Such technical and financial assistance services would include customised feasibility studies, impact assessment and cost-benefit analyses, financial viability modelling including identification of investment sources, legal advice such as on intellectual property and regulatory issues, as well as other support required for the development and funding of an investment project. Furthermore, the action will help implementing innovative governance approaches by giving assistance to identify and remove regulatory obstacles to innovation and investment in close cooperation with the Commission and national/regional/local authorities. Such efforts may also result to a number of Innovation Deals.

Moreover, in the framework of SSP-Industry, the action will organise a series of regional specific events to present to industrial stakeholders all existing EU funding opportunities for

their investment projects, in particular through the Investment Plan, and inform them about the technical and financial advisory services that are available to them through this action.

The process

The technical assistance facility would be provided by a consortium of competent and experienced organisations in providing such services directly to businesses in a European or transnational context. The assistance services will not duplicate any of the services provided by the European Investment Advisory Hub, set up by the European Investment Bank. These services will try to involve local financial experts and associate in this work as much as possible National Promotional Banks. The selection of viable joint business and public/private projects and the provision of technical assistance would be gradual and staggered over the contract period to ensure that this support is available when the business partnerships need it.

The added-value

In addition to the technical and financial assistance facility, the service contract will also include a management and monitoring mechanism to track the impact of the action in terms of successful investment cases, the number and nature of the companies involved their sector and area of economic activity, as well as the potential economic impact of the support provided. The European added value of the action lies in the fact that it is intended to support the practical implementation of the Thematic Smart Specialisation Platform for Industrial Modernisation and Investment, notably its ambition to provide a continuous cross-regional pipeline of investment projects in different industrial fields.

ACTION 2: European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for smart specialisation investments

The objective of the measure is to pilot the implementation of European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for smart specialisation investments in the context of the Smart Specialisation Platform for Industrial Modernisation and Investment. The measure will help to boost the collaboration of enterprises, notably SMEs, across regional and sectoral silos towards generating joint actions and investment projects in common priority areas linked to industrial modernisation and help to improve their business environment.

The action

The measure will bring together cluster organisations, other business networks, technology centres and science parks in European Strategic Cluster Partnerships. The partnerships are expected to be formed around common industrial thematic areas, which also correspond to the smart specialisation priorities of their regions. The focus of the measure is placed on *industrial modernisation*, such as through Key Enabling Technologies, ICT, service innovation and resource efficiency. The possible industrial thematic areas of the Partnerships therefore include advanced manufacturing, digital transformation/industry 4.0, digital platforms, big data analytics, space data services, advanced material and disruptive business models and service concepts including in creative industries, textiles and tourism.

At least eight European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for smart specialisation investments will be implemented through this measures that are each expected to:

1. Develop and implement a joint cluster partnership strategy with a common “European” vision for a specific smart specialisation priority (including a joint branding and marketing);

2. Undertake advanced preparatory actions (such as tailored SME surveys, value chain analysis, mapping and matching of innovation challenges/needs with R&D results and innovation solutions across cluster firms in the partnerships, the identification of capacity building and scale-up potential, and the drafting of an implementation roadmap of joint activities);
3. Implement joint activities intended to mobilise the inter-regional collaboration and investments of industry actors, notably SMEs (such as matchmaking events, joint demonstration events, joint growth accelerator and investor pitching events);
4. Implement joint activities and provide related business and growth support services for the preparation of joint collaboration and investments projects, notably SMEs (such as support for the preparation of bankable proposals, joint provision of coaching, mentoring, investment-readiness, entrepreneurship and business support including business scale-up and growth acceleration, innovation management, technology assessment and IPR & licensing support);
5. Identify, prepare and test joint activities to strengthen cluster cooperation across the partnership towards improving the cluster-specific framework conditions (such as cooperation in the area of vocational training, education and skills; knowledge sharing, technology transfer, joint innovation challenges, pan-regional provision of venture capital and exploring the shared use of innovation infrastructures and demand from cluster firms for support services from technology infrastructures and centres to facilitate SME access to technology centres, including KETs infrastructure);
6. Gather concrete feed-back from SMEs on their specific barriers to innovation, skills, cooperation and investment (to feed into the discussion in the context of the Thematic Smart Specialisation Platform on industrial modernisation and investment, Innovation Deals, the Investment Plan and skills); and
7. Undertake concrete activities to build linkages with other relevant European, national or regional initiatives and key networks (such as joint activities, events, communications e.g. with the Enterprise Europe Network, Knowledge and Innovation Communities, Horizon2020 actions, Interreg Europe).

The measure builds upon the successful experience of establishing European Strategic Cluster Partnerships (ESCPs) as part of the Cluster Internationalisation Programme for SMEs under COSME. The focus lies here, however, not on supporting SME internationalisation with strategic partners in third countries *beyond Europe* but on supporting the inter-regional cluster cooperation for the benefit of SMEs, their scale-up and joint investment projects *within Europe*.

Moreover, it builds upon two pilot projects to reinforce collaboration among clusters and technology centres entitled “Towards EU Regional Economic Convergence”, for which a call for proposals was launched in 2015 with funding from the European Parliament. The scope is extended though in the current measure by moving from supporting only the *preparation phase* to supporting in particular the *implementation phase* of European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for smart specialisation investments.

The successful partnerships will also receive advisory support and analysis from the European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change set up under COSME 2016. They will also benefit from complementary support measures, such as matchmaking events, technical assistance etc., of existing and new measures in relation to the modernisation of industry under COSME.

ACTION 3: Access for SMEs to advanced manufacturing support

To ensure a sustainable future for the EU manufacturing sector, manufacturing companies need to be transformed into adaptive, flexible and high-tech companies able to deliver high value-added products and services. However, SMEs' ability to respond to these new challenges is often constrained by their difficulties to absorb advanced technologies and available expertise in this domain.

As part of the Commission's strategy to accelerate the integration of digital and advanced technologies across European industry, this action aims to help manufacturing companies, in particular SMEs, to absorb advanced manufacturing technologies and transform their organisations towards next-generation factories with more competitive, modern and sustainable production.

The action

The measure consists of the establishment and operation of a virtual European advanced manufacturing support centre to

- 1) provide at cross-sectoral level SMEs with practical information, advice and support on how to transform their company towards a smart factory¹⁵ with more competitive and sustainable production,
- 2) support learning networks of next-generation ('factories of the future') companies to become the inspiring examples for all other European manufacturing companies.

The services

The centre will execute the following tasks:

- development of a coherent methodology on how to provide innovation support services to manufacturing SMEs in the most efficient and complete way (e.g. development of a company scan where and how are the opportunities to transform the company; elaboration of a transformation plan to integrate advanced manufacturing equipment or resource efficiency concepts, financing schemes & tools, guiding companies to high tech applications labs or competence centres etc.);
- in cooperation with national/regional support organisations, execute a small-scale pilot for accompanying and assisting manufacturing SMEs with a view to adapt the methodology where necessary. (The scaling up of this small-scale pilot for direct support to SMEs will be foreseen as part of a future Horizon 2020 action);
- disseminate and promote the methodology towards SME innovation support organisations on how to assist companies to transform their organisation with a view to further deploy the methodology in new specific (national or regional) initiatives;
- on the basis of an assessment of existing methodologies and in cooperation with initiatives in different Member States, identify manufacturing companies across Europe that transformed their organisation towards a next-generation factory;
- set up and support European learning networks of next-generation manufacturing companies to further strengthen Europe's leading position with regard to advanced manufacturing as well as to become inspiring examples for other European companies (e.g. dissemination of breakthrough results of the next-generation factories, workshops and inspiration events to showcase good practices, award competition, etc.).

¹⁵ The terms 'smart factory', 'smart manufacturing' and 'factory of the future' all describe a vision of what industrial production will look like in the future.

The process

The support centre would be established by an international consortium of organisations with experience and expertise in providing such services directly to businesses. The centre will cooperate with relevant national and regional business and innovation support organisations and other intermediaries including the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN).

The added-value

In addition to the operation of the advanced manufacturing support centre, the service contract will also include a management and monitoring mechanism to track the impact of the action on individual companies. Today, only few public initiatives offer advisory services to manufacturing SMEs to transform their organisation towards a next-generation company with modern and sustainable production. Results of these initiatives show a positive impact on the companies' investments as well as on job creation. On the basis of a coherent EU methodology, new advisory services for manufacturing SMEs can be launched at national and/or regional level. The creation at EU level of learning networks of next-generation companies, which will become inspiring examples for other European manufacturing companies, will help to strengthen Europe's position as a leading and technology-driven manufacturing region.

EXPECTED RESULTS**ACTION 1**

This action and more widely the Thematic Smart Specialisation Platform for Industrial Modernisation and Investment will support the implementation of the Commission's policies related to the modernisation of Europe's industry, and also stimulate the creation of viable cross-regional investment projects. It will enable SMEs to become part of ambitious cross-regional or European business and public/private projects they might otherwise not have been able to engage in due to lack of technical and financial advisory support during the preparatory phase.

ACTION 2

This measure responds to the increasing interest in fostering collaborative projects across regions and Member States to boost the impact from smart specialisation strategies (e.g. Vanguard Initiative) while allowing partnering activities to gain European scale not limited to specific regions but to strategic priority areas related to industrial modernisation. The aim is to strengthen bottom-up industry partnering and EU added-value in the implementation of cluster policies and smart specialisation strategies that guide €121 billion of innovation-related investments from the European Structural and Investment Funds.

Together with the Thematic Smart Specialisation Platform on industrial modernisation and investment, to be set up by Commission services, it forms an integrated approach to clusters, smart specialisation and industrial modernisation to accelerate growth and investments by bringing together both regional authorities committed to work together in promoting industrial modernisation as well as cluster organisations, other business networks, technology centres and science parks.

This measure is designed to support industry participation therein and to facilitate the generation of a pipeline of joint collaboration and innovation projects and contribute to strategic use of European funding, notably the European Structural and Investment Fund and the European Fund for Strategic Investments, and other private and public investments. The

partnerships will be expected to move quickly from strategy-setting and preparatory activities to implementation activities after ca. six months.

SMEs will benefit timely and directly from the measure through concrete business support services and collaboration support from the partnerships. They will also benefit indirectly from the additional efforts to improve their business environment and access to innovation actors, value chains and smart specialisation investments.

ACTION 3

The action will help to launch new innovation advisory services for manufacturing SMEs at national and/or regional level based on a coherent EU methodology. It will result in an increased number of manufacturing SMEs using innovative clean and advanced manufacturing technologies and modern and competitive production methods. The action will also help to strengthen Europe's position as a technology-driven manufacturing region through the creation of learning networks of next-generation companies that will become inspiring examples for other European manufacturing companies.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
ACTION 1		
Call for tenders	Technical and financial assistance facility for industrial modernisation and investment	1 500 000
ACTION 2		
Call for proposals	European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for smart specialisation investment	2 800 000
ACTION 3		
Call for tenders	Access for SMEs to advanced manufacturing support	2 400 000
Total		6 700 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
ACTION 1	
Publication of the call	Q1 2017
Award	Q3 2017
Signature of the contract/grant agreement	Q4 2017
Indicative duration of the contract: 36 months	

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
ACTION 2	
Publication of the call	Q1 2017
Award	Q4 2017
Signature of the contract/grant agreement	Q4 2017
Indicative duration of the contract: 24 months	
ACTION 3	
Publication of the call	Q1 2017
Award	Q3 2017
Signature of the contract/grant agreement	Q4 2017
Indicative duration of the contract: 36 months	

INDICATORS

ACTION 1

- Number of project concepts received
- Number of business and public/private partnerships receiving technical and financial assistance
- Number of SMEs involved
- Number of resulting successful investment cases

ACTION 2

- Impact of the joint activities of the partnership, to be measured in the number of resulting collaboration and innovation projects and total amount of investments generated, including those mobilised in the context of the implementation of cluster policies and smart specialisation strategies.
- Number of SMEs having directly and indirectly benefitted from the supported actions, as measured through the reporting of the projects as well as through an ex-post survey within two years after the end of the supported actions.
- Number of cluster organisations, other business networks, technology centres and science parks from different COSME participating countries having benefitted from the support actions.
- Number of partnership agreements resulting from the call and supported actions.
- Quality and impact of joint activities to strengthen cluster cooperation, cluster-specific framework conditions of enterprises and synergies, to be measured by the number and quality of concrete deliverables that identified, prepared and tested joint activities and gathered concrete industry feed-back as well as through concrete deliverables and reference in relation to other related initiatives and key networks.

ACTION 3

- Number of manufacturing SMEs participating in the programme to transform their company towards more competitive, modern and sustainable production
- Number of new specific (national or regional) initiatives to help manufacturing

- companies to transform their organisation towards next-generation factories
- Number of companies participating in the learning networks of factories of the future companies
 - Number of events and number of companies participating in inspiration and good practices events

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

ACTION 1: n/a

ACTION 2: 75%

ACTION 3: n/a

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

New Skills Agenda for Europe¹⁷ adopted on 10 June 2016 by the Commission, fosters skills development with a focus on employability, mobility, competitiveness and growth. It sets out specific EU actions, in cooperation with the Member States and promotes the involvement of relevant education, training and labour market players. DG GROW is cooperating with DG EMPL on a **"Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills"** which proposes a systemic approach to handle skills development at the sectoral level. This new approach will be initially piloted in 2017 in the **automotive, defence, space data, textile-clothing-leather-footwear and tourism sectors**¹⁸. The **construction, steel and paper industries** sectors would be part of the second wave of implementation in 2018. Activities will include:

- Securing **high political support** and mobilising stakeholders at EU and national level around sectoral skills agenda;
- **evidence on skills shortages, gaps and mismatches**¹⁹ including: fostering a shared and long term vision with stakeholders and Member States; forecasting supply and demand of new skills; identifying new skills and qualifications needs, certifications and training requirements; designing new curricula; benchmarking policies; identifying successful industry driven upskilling schemes and promoting best practices.
- Establishing for each sector a **European partnership** for cooperation between industrial stakeholders, national training institutions and public authorities to develop core jobs profiles; relevant training solutions, support of sectoral qualifications/certifications; and support sectoral agreements for mutual recognition of qualifications/certifications.

The activities supported by COSME are mainly focusing on the two first sets of activities. The establishment of European partnerships and roll-out at national level will be addressed in conjunction with a complementary action supported by ERASMUS+ (DG EMPL).

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

1. Automotive industry: The main goal is to: (i) upgrade skills (digital, mechemtronics, transversal/soft skills) by designing new curricula and enhancing uptake of existing tools and upscaling best practices; (ii) attract and retain young graduates (in particular STEM profiles and women), and support the inter-generational transfer of the existing knowledge. The actions will include awareness-raising campaigns on existing tools and best practices for skill development and reduction of actual skill gaps, for inter-generational transfer of knowledge, as well as on the attractiveness of automotive careers. The awareness raising actions can include recruitment initiatives, first-hand experience, support materials, presentations and webinars promoting new profiles in the sector (high skilled and "clean" jobs) and EU-wide competition "Car of the future" for the students in collaboration with academia.

Previous measures: European Automotive Skills Council (EASC) as part of the actions in the

¹⁶ Under "business environment for enterprises, including the competitiveness of enterprises and sectors"

¹⁷ COM (2016) 381 of 10 June 2016. See: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2039_en.htm

¹⁸ It will be also piloted in the field of maritime technologies (DG MARE). Construction, steel, health, green technologies and renewable energies will be assessed in a second wave of implementation starting in 2017.

¹⁹ In liaison with the EU Skills Panorama (CEDEFOP): <http://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en>

CARS 2020 Action Plan. EASC ran a survey to map the skills mismatch and identify the future training needs for the automotive industry. ESCO²⁰ classification was developed for the Manufacturing of Transport Equipment skills. A new high-level group for the competitiveness of the automotive industry GEAR 2030 has been established and will address skills issues in close cooperation with the Blueprint.

European added value: The automotive sector is facing many challenges: need to deploy new technologies (electrification, automation, advanced manufacturing) and address changing customer preferences (shift from vehicle ownership to mobility as a service). This will impact the whole value chain. The adaptation of the workforce in terms of relevant skills should prevent further delocalization of the EU automotive value chain. The intra-EU mobility of graduates and skilled workers also needs to be ensured to tackle the regional skills mismatches.

Textile, clothing, leather and footwear (TCLF): This action will include developing with the industry a long-term skills strategy and an update of the evidence on skills shortages, gaps and mismatches as undertaken under the TCLF European Skills Council and EU, national and regional projects. Focus will be on measures to facilitate upgrading of tech/engineering/digital skills, developing of marketing/retailing skills and enhancing of traditional artisan and craftsmanship skills. It would be complemented with transversal skills, e.g. entrepreneurial and business skills. Cooperation between key industry stakeholders, public authorities, research and education centres (including VETs) will be promoted. Special attention will be dedicated to concrete actions aiming at attracting young people to work in the sector. These would include awareness campaigns, innovative education and training tools using new technologies (games, mobile applications, social media, webinars, etc.). Experiences from non-EU countries and other sectors would also serve as an inspiration for a long-term sectoral skills strategy.

The TCLF Skills Council was the first European sector skills council (2011) and delivered a database²¹ of best practices of national and regional textile and clothing observatories in EU and candidate countries, the publication of four reports on skills needs etc. Stakeholders were involved in the ESCO sectoral reference group (TEXAN) developing a common language to compare skills, competences, occupation and qualifications. An Erasmus+ project on footwear (Skills Alliance for comforts and healthy footwear manufacturing) was launched in 2015. The leather industry has been involved in the “Leather is my job!” project to awaken the appetite of young people for a career in this industry.

European added value: The action will improve the image of the sector in Europe by promoting new employment opportunities for young people covering a wide spectrum of skills, from engineers and digital experts to specialists with craftsmanship of traditional artisan skills. It will support the inter-generational transfer of existing expertise, e.g. by ensuring that young people are trained to be equipped with the traditional (artisanal and craftsmanship) skills of their older colleagues.

3. Tourism: The main goal will be to facilitate the upgrade of skills, enhance visibility and upscale the use of existing tools and initiatives and improve the image of tourism careers. The action will include awareness-raising campaigns on: i) existing initiatives and tools for skills development in tourism; ii) the image of tourism careers, through the provision of support

²⁰ European Skills, Competences, Occupations and Qualifications: <https://ec.europa.eu/esco/portal/home>

²¹ <http://europeanskillscouncil.t-c-l.eu>

material, interviews and webinars presenting positive aspects of tourism careers (i.e. international, trendy, dynamic). The actions will target, on the one side, tourism businesses (including SMEs) and start-ups, and on the other side, students and jobseekers.

Previous measures include: (a) Dedicated hospitality section in EURES, the EU Job Mobility Portal; (b) Dedicated Tourism section in Drop'Pin; (c) Study to map the skills and training needs for the improved accessibility of tourism services; (d) Study to map and check the performance of the supply side of education and training for the tourism sector; (e) development of ESCO classification specifically dedicated to skills profiles needed in the tourism sector; (f) a [series of webinars](#) designed to provide guidance on digital issues and entrepreneurship to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

European added value: The sector is facing the same challenges across the continent, namely the increasing demand for customised travel experiences and the progressive digitalization of the services. The workforce must adapt to new technologies and changes in customer expectations and acquire the relevant skills and knowledge about EU instruments. Cross-border mobility also needs to be encouraged as it is the best way to acquire the key skills.

4. Defence sector: The objective is to address skills shortages and mismatches to ensure the European defence industry remains in a position to deliver competitive and high-tech solutions in a global setting. This will be done through a shared European vision and a strategy for tackling defence-related skills at European level for the next 5-10 years. It will provide an overview of the situation, identify current and future needs and provide concrete and viable solutions. The work will build upon existing data (e.g. taxonomy and mapping of supply and demand), while checking their validity and possibly up-date and up-grade them, to ensure the provision of all data necessary for identifying skills gaps and mismatches. The action will establish a policy dialogue at European level, involving all key stakeholders for the defence sector. The strategy will be validated by the Commission and stakeholders to secure strong political support.

Previous measures: The study on skills and competences in defence (2015, EDA) delivered a sector's skills taxonomy, identification of specialist skills, overview of European-wide courses and academic programmes promoting skills for defence, a list of present and future capability projects from publicly available information and showcased five best practices. Data have been made available for the EU Skills Panorama and ESCO.

European added value: The challenges faced by the Defence sector are similar across Europe. The European Council of December 2013 stressed in its conclusions the need to further develop the necessary skills, essential for the future of the European defence industry. Tackling skills at EU level through stakeholders joining forces will contribute to the strengthening of the European Defence technological and industrial base.

Applicants to be eligible must be legal entities established in EU Member States only.

5. Space data: A common understanding of the reference professional profiles for Geomatics (Geo-ICT, Geospatial and hybrid data) is needed to boost the market for space applications towards a cross-sectoral dimension. There is a strategic need to address and communicate about skills needs for space data uptake with a focus on key geo information based value chains business, curricula development and gaps-filling actions, in a mid and long-term scenario. The actions under this call will support the short-term Copernicus user uptake

strategy schedule. Through the creation of didactic webinars and other communication tools, it will be possible to complement the Copernicus Training & Info Sessions and accompany the Copernicus Academy Network at creating awareness, defining skills needs and addressing them. It could also provide specific tools to boost the mix of skills to support spin-offs in the earth observation data and positioning/ navigation signal based applications, maps and services (e.g. entrepreneurial, digital and geo spatial skills to support Copernicus start-up programme) and/or to complement the Copernicus Data Access and Information Services action aiming at tackling the Big Data challenge of space data abundance.

Previous measures: [GI-N2K](#) (EU Lifelong learning programme) project working on a Geographic Information (GI) Science reference body of knowledge for Europe and [giCASES](#) a Knowledge Sector Skills Alliance, creating a University-Enterprise alliance for a spatially enabled society. It addresses the GI sector gap between the knowledge currently being offered by European Universities and the knowledge and skills requested by enterprises and public authorities. DORIS Net and GRAAL projects funded under the 7th Framework Programme resulting in a GMES4Regions portal, a gateway to GMES (now Copernicus).

European added value: President Juncker²² highlighted the need to set the conditions for the development of markets for space applications and services including the exploitation of space data, data from scientific missions and commercial applications of space data²³. The action will foster a strategy to promote the use of space data²⁴. The need for education and skilling of the young generation for the uptake of space data and their use for the benefit of the society was highlighted at the EU Competitiveness Council (26/27 May 2016) and the European Space Solutions Week 2016 at The Hague²⁵.

6. Construction: the main goal is to contribute to a development and implementation of a long-term skills strategy for the construction sector, building evidence on the skills situation and addressing skills shortages, gaps and mismatches. The focus will be on current and future needs for the construction sector, up-skilling and new curricula development. Efforts will also be dedicated to actions aiming at attracting and retaining a qualified workforce. To this end, cooperation will be promoted, in particular between industry stakeholders and education providers (including VETs). The supported activities will contribute to reducing of global energy consumption and should focus on energy-efficiency, digitalisation and circular economy in the built environment, as it is stipulated in the 2017 Energy Union Package²⁶.

Previous measures are part of the implementation of the “Construction 2020 Strategy and Action Plan”²⁷, including analyses of the European Construction Sector Observatory²⁸ and the campaign within the European Alliance for Apprenticeship (construction sector pledges). Activities in the BUILD UP Skills initiative²⁹ are focusing on the up-skilling of construction sector workers on energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies.

²² http://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/cwt/files/commissioner_mission_letters/bienkowska_en.pdf

²³ The EU will invest about 12 billion euros on space flagship programmes (Galileo and Copernicus) and Horizon 2020 space research during 2014-2020.

²⁴ Space application is growing at a 12% rate per annum with significant job creation potential requiring an increase in the supply of skills. Interdisciplinary and cross-sectors skills also become increasingly important.

²⁵ <http://www.european-space-solutions.eu/>

²⁶ COM (2016) 860 final "Clean Energy For All Europeans", Annex 1 "Accelerating clean energy in buildings"

²⁷ COM (2012) 433 final “Strategy for the sustainable competitiveness of the construction sector and its enterprises”

²⁸ See: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/construction/observatory_en

²⁹ <http://www.buildupskills.eu>

European added value: employers throughout the EU report skills shortages and/or mismatches in construction professions and problems to find suitable candidates. The sector suffers from a poor image, thus attracting and retaining a qualified workforce is a challenge. Construction has a prominent place in a range of EU policies (and in the everyday lives of EU citizens) and is indispensable in the transition to a low-carbon and resource-efficient economy. This transition requires a workforce equipped with appropriate skills.

7. Steel industry: the European steel industry has consolidated and internationalised over recent decades. It has experienced significant processes of restructuring. As patterns of work organisation keep changing, demands for more highly qualified, specialised and multi-skilled workers have increased. The industry faces recruitment difficulties and risks haemorrhaging expertise from its existing workforce. The focus of the actions will be: (i) developing with the industry a long-term skills strategy and implementing it in collaboration with academia; (ii) designing new curricula, enhancing uptake of existing tools and upscaling best practices; (iii) improving the attractiveness of the sector as well as attract and retain new graduates; (iv) supporting the inter-generational transfer of the existing knowledge. They will include, *inter alia*, an awareness-raising campaign on existing tools and best practices for skill development and reduction of skill gaps as well as on the attractiveness of careers linked to the steel sector.

Previous measures: the steel industry was involved in a 2-year project "Greening Technical Vocational Education and Training" in partnership with the European Steel Technology Platform. It offers learning outcomes in the field of green skills and sustainable awareness within VET. It developed a training module for mechanical, industrial and electrical technicians in the EU steel industry. Since 2006, through the Sectorial Social Dialogue Committee, social partners (IndustriAll and EUROFER), foster common understanding about the key challenges and perspectives for companies and workers in the European steel sector.

European added value: the measure is in line with the policy of the Commission for the sector. In 2013, the Steel Action Plan recognised that maintaining a steel industry capable of competing on a level playing field with global competitors should be a key objective of European industrial policy. In March 2016 the Commission recognised "the need to invest in human resources is at the heart of the forthcoming New Skills Agenda, which will benefit a broad range of economic sectors, including the steel industry"³⁰.

8. Paper industries: pulp and paper industries are highly capital and technology intensive, requiring highly-skilled personnel. The sector needs to adapt towards a circular (resource- and energy-efficient), bio-based economy. However, the workforce is ageing, needs upskilling and young people perceive it erroneously as low-tech, polluting and environmentally incompatible. The objectives include: (i) developing a long-term skills strategy and implementation plan; (ii) anticipating skills needs (iii) designing new curricula and enhancing uptake of good practices including life-long learning; (iv) supporting the inter-generational transfer of knowledge through mentorships; (v) raising awareness to improve the attractiveness of the sector.

Previous measures: the Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI) and IndustriAll have recently released a study³¹ on "Future skills for the paper industry" with the following recommendations: promote polyvalence; provide upskilling through life-long learning;

³⁰ COM(2016) 155 final, 16 March 2016, "Steel: Preserving sustainable jobs and growth in Europe"

³¹ See: <http://www.cepi.org/node/20917> (November 2016)

facilitate mobility; anticipate skills needs; create conditions for high-quality mentorships; raise the attractiveness of the sector; provide a one-stop shop for an EU skills strategy.

European added value: The proposed action is in line with the strategy of the Commission for the sector. In 2013, the accompanying document to the EU Forest Strategy Communication³² already recognised the importance of skills mismatches in the sector.

EXPECTED RESULTS

1. Automotive industry: The development and supply of new skills in the automotive sector shall allow to deploy new technologies and to address new market requirements, thus keeping jobs in Europe. A coordinated skills strategy will also improve the use of skills related EU instruments and policies, upscale best practices for skills development, and increase attractiveness of careers in the automotive sector. The action will fill gaps and remedy mismatches on the automotive labour market and ensure the transfer of existing knowledge. Hence, enhancing job creation and giving automotive companies the opportunity to further expand their operations and improve their productivity.

2. Textile, clothing, leather and footwear: The action would provide long-term solutions to address sectoral skills needs and challenges. Industry, public authorities, education and training centres and other relevant stakeholders will shape a long-term pan-European strategy and ensure strong political backing for actions at EU level and their roll-out at national and regional levels. Successful implementation (e.g. awareness and marketing campaigns) will contribute to improving the image of the sector and increase the number of people looking to study and work in the sector. It will also establish a coordinated system of cooperation and sharing information on innovative education and training methods to provide new skills.

3. Tourism: The main objective of setting up policies for the development of the right skills in the tourism sector is to overcome the skills gaps, the lack of knowledge about EU instruments for skills development, the fragmentation of the sector and unattractiveness of tourism careers. In particular the action will heavily involve tourism businesses and have an impact on filling gaps and fixing mismatches between supply and demand in the tourism labour market, thus enhancing job creation and opportunities.

4. Defence Sector: The main results include the promotion of a partnership among defence industry players, other stakeholders and national experts to carry out skills policy dialogue and shape a pan-European vision with a strong political backing for the implementation of policy actions at EU level and their roll-out at a later stage at national level. It will also provide a clear and complete picture of the situation in the defence sector regarding skills, the challenges and solutions to these challenges. Finally, it will validate a fully-fledged strategy containing a set of proposed actions to be implemented at European/ national/regional level.

5. Space data: The main results includes both enhancing the development of the needed skills and contributing to the growth of jobs in the space data (geo information) sector; preventing discontinuity in the sector or lack of potential exploitation; matching University curricula and the industry's professional needs; enhancing SMEs role and translating the benefit of the EU space programmes and interdependent policies helping the rise of interest for geospatial skills; reinforcing educational and training tools and the link with digital skills for Big Data and

³² COM(2013) 659 final, 20 September 2013 "A new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector"

entrepreneurial skills for the spin-offs support.

6. Construction: the action will contribute to the improvement of the skills situation in the sector in a structured and coordinated manner taking into account other activities in this respect. The construction sector is a prime driver of economic growth and local employment in every country but also for the whole European economy. It has the potential to respond to a number of economic and societal challenges, but it needs to be equipped with a stable and knowledgeable workforce.

7. Steel: the development and supply of new skills in the steel sector in Europe shall allow to deploy new technologies aiming, among others, to contribute to the fight against climate change, to improve energy efficiency and to develop high-performance materials (that are currently those less exposed to international competition). It should allow a faster and better uptake of new technologies that are transforming the sector and manufacturing industry in general (Industry 4.0). This should result in an improvement on the competitiveness of the sector, thus keeping jobs in Europe.

8. Paper industries: the development and supply of new skills in the paper-based sector shall allow to deploy new technologies aiming, inter alia, to adapt to the needs of a resource and energy-efficient circular economy, to contribute to the fight against climate change and to develop high-performance bio-based materials etc. It should allow a faster and better uptake of new technologies that are transforming the sector and manufacturing industry in general (Industry 4.0) This should result in an improvement on the general competitiveness of the sector, thus keeping jobs in Europe.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
8 Call for tenders	Skills Blueprint for each sector	800 000 euros for each call
Total		6 400 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q3 2017
Award	Q4 2017
Signature of the contract/grant agreement	Q4 2017
Indicative duration of each contract: 18 months	

INDICATORS

1. Number of participating countries and stakeholders;
2. Relevance of the recommendations and of good practices identified;
3. Satisfaction survey regarding the relevance of the results and the quality of the deliverables;

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Number of follow-up measures taken by the Commission, public authorities and stakeholders;5. Improvement of the talent pool and reduction of skills shortages. |
|--|

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

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

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

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

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

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

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

The action will continue the operations of a Nanomaterials Observatory to be set up through a Delegation Agreement with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) by a corresponding action in the 2016 COSME Work Programme. The financial framework follows the financing need identified in an impact assessment on transparency measures for nanomaterials (800000 € in the first year, thereafter 600000€ annually).

EXPECTED RESULTS

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

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Delegation agreement to ECHA	Nanomaterial Observatory	600.000
Total		600 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Signature of the delegation agreement	Q1 2017
Indicative duration of the delegation agreement: 12 months	

INDICATORS

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

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

N.A. (Delegation to ECHA)

GRO/SME/17/C/09 – ENHANCING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE EUROPEAN TOURISM SECTOR

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

In line with the priorities of the Commission, the general objective of the tourism policy priority actions is to strengthen the competitiveness of the EU tourism sector and increase its contribution to economic growth and jobs in the EU. The actions under COSME will particularly aim, on the one side at improving the business environment for tourism enterprises, through enhanced socio-economic and market intelligence and exchange of best practices, and on the other side, at diversifying and increasing the visibility of Europe's transnational tourism offer. A particular focus will be given to exploiting synergies between tourism and cultural and creative industries.

The actions will be implemented in close cooperation with the industry and the Member States' authorities at all level, in line with the subsidiarity and proportionality principles.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

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

1) Creating conditions for a favourable and competitive environment for tourism businesses, in particular through enhanced socio-economic and market intelligence and exchange of best practices

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

(a) Provision of additional content for the “Virtual Tourism Observatory” portal to enrich its usefulness as user-friendly tool, in particular for public authorities and SMEs, providing the most updated statistical information, analysis and mapping of policy and legislation relevant for the EU tourism sector. New socio-economic content will also be produced through ad-hoc targeted studies.

(b) Organisation of a number of events to debate with Member States, Regions, the industry, trade unions, academies and other stakeholders the main challenges and key priorities for the competitiveness of the sector. This will include the organisation of the European Tourism Forum (Presidency event) and the European Tourism Day, but also of other workshops and targeted events on different topics. Topics to be debated will be selected taking into account the main priorities and concerns expressed by the Member States and the industry. They will cover the areas where a better socio-economic knowledge of the sector is needed to improve policy and business decisions making processes, as for example in the areas of quality, sustainability, accessibility, skills, information and innovation, digital tourism (including sharing economy related aspects).

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

Under this objective, several actions will be carried out:

(a) Through a call for proposals, we will allow the co-funding of projects which support the promotion and development of transnational thematic tourism products. The aim is to support partnerships (including destinations and SMEs) developing transnational tourism products linked to cultural and creative industries.

(b) We will continue the EDEN project, which contributes, amongst others, to create new tourism offer in less known destinations. This will indirectly contribute to fighting the

concentration of tourism flows in the most traditional destinations, and to promoting sustainable destination growth models. The action under the current Work Programme will consist in awareness-raising and promotion of already selected European Destinations of Excellence.

(c) In order to attract increased international tourist arrivals from third countries to Europe, cooperation will be strengthened with the European Travel Commission (ETC) through an ad-hoc grant for extensive actions to promote Europe as a tourist destination. The focus will be on transnational thematic products such as cultural tourism, creative industries and high-end products, gastronomy, natural heritage, etc. Gathering together the National Tourism Organisations of 32 European countries, ETC represents the non-profit organisation empowered by the Member States to promote Europe in third countries, in particular long-haul markets. ETC officially complements and adds value to the promotional and marketing efforts of member countries. The ad-hoc grant to ETC under COSME 2016 consisted in promotion actions targeting exclusively the US market. Under the COSME 2017, the actions will focus primarily on the Chinese market and incentivise a wider and more active participation from the industry and regions.

EXPECTED RESULTS

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

- Improved digital and e-management skills and capacity to use the opportunities offered by digital tools to enhance the competitiveness of tourism businesses;
- Consolidated, regular dialogue between and exchange views and of good practices with the public and private stakeholders;
- Improved visibility of European Destinations of Excellence, which will trigger higher numbers of potential tourist arrivals and local spill-over revenues;
- Improved promotion and visibility of unique European and transnational touristic products;
- Increased tourist flows to Europe from strategic third country markets.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Specific contracts under a framework contract	Creating conditions for a favourable and competitive environment for tourism businesses - Improving socio-economic knowledge of the sector through new content provision and management of the “Virtual Tourism Observatory”	500 000
Specific contracts under framework contracts	Creating conditions for a favourable and competitive environment for tourism businesses – Information and awareness raising activities, organisation and	300 000

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
	participation in dedicated events	
Experts' reimbursements	Creating conditions for a favourable and competitive environment for tourism businesses – Information and awareness raising activities, organisation and participation in dedicated events	100 000
Call for proposals	Diversifying and increasing the visibility of Europe's transnational tourism offer – Support the promotion and development of transnational thematic tourism products linked to cultural and creative industries	1 500 000
Ad-hoc Grants	Diversifying and increasing the visibility of Europe's transnational tourism offer – Promotion of existing European Destinations of Excellence	500 000
Ad-hoc grant	Diversifying and increasing the visibility of Europe's transnational tourism offer– Cooperation with ETC	2 500 000
Total		5 400 000

EDEN Ad-hoc Grants

Objective: Support eligible National Administrations in charge of tourism and/or National Tourism Offices for the purpose of promoting selected European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) and enhancing awareness of the EDEN rationale, in countries which have already selected at least one EDEN destination and up to 4 runners-up under the calls for proposals in 2007-2017.

Description: Support to eligible countries' National Tourism Administrations to launch a promotional campaign in order to raise awareness of the EDEN project and increase visibility of the European Destinations of Excellence selected in 2007-2017. Applicants shall propose a communication strategy of a transnational dimension (covering at least 2 different countries, including a home country) to reach the general public both at domestic and international level.

Justification: 190(1) (d) RAP. An ad-hoc grant will be granted, without a call for proposals, to eligible National Administrations in charge of tourism, on account of their administrative power. They are the sole authorities in charge of tourism policy development at public level and the authorities that organised the national EDEN competitions and selection of the EDEN destinations for the period 2007-2017.

If the responsibility for the tourism sector is decentralised, then the proposal may be submitted by the competent regional administration. National Tourist Offices or other public bodies in charge of tourism can submit an application, provided that the competent National Administration gives its consent in writing.

This ad-hoc grant will be subject to an award decision to be based on an evaluation.

European Travel Commission (ETC)

The European Travel Commission (ETC) is the non-profit organisation bringing together the National Tourism Organisations of 33 European countries which officially entrusted and empowered it with the promotion of Europe as a destination in third countries. This gives ETC a high degree of specialisation

in the promotion of European trans-national tourism products in long-haul markets. Moreover, ETC is the organisation able to put together a coherent promotion strategy for Europe, aligning it with and duly complementing the national, sometimes regional, promotion and marketing strategies in the member countries. This justifies the award of a grant without an open call for proposals pursuant Article 190(1) (f) RAP.

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Direct contracts	Q1-Q4 2017
Specific contracts	Q2-Q4 2017
Indicative total duration: 18 months	

INDICATORS

1.	Percentage of SMEs benefitting from the measures
2.	Increased awareness about and visibility of the key opportunities, policy initiatives and other actions developed for the benefit of the sector
3.	Potential number of jobs expected to be created

1. Creating conditions for a favourable and competitive environment for tourism businesses – Virtual Tourism Observatory content provision and management (Specific contracts under framework contract)

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of call	Q2 2017
Signature of the contract	Q4 2017
Indicative total duration: 12 months	

2. Creating conditions for a favourable and competitive environment for tourism businesses – Information and awareness raising activities, organisation and participation in dedicated events (Specific contracts under framework contracts and experts' reimbursement)

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of call	Q1 2017
Signature of the contract	Q3 2017
Indicative total duration: 12 months	

3. Diversifying and increasing the visibility of Europe's transnational tourism offer – Promotion of existing European Destinations of Excellence (Ad-hoc grants)

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Invitation to submit proposal	Q1 2017
Signature of Grant Agreements	Q3 2017
Indicative total duration: 12 months	

MAXIMUM RATE OF EU CO-FINANCING

50%

4. Diversifying and increasing the visibility of Europe's transnational tourism offer – Support the promotion and development of transnational thematic tourism products.

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Invitation to submit proposal	Q2 2017
Signature of Grant Agreements	Q4 2017
Indicative total duration: 18 months	

MAXIMUM RATE OF EU CO-FINANCING

75%

5. Diversifying and increasing the visibility of Europe's transnational tourism offer – Cooperation with the European Travel Commission (Ad-hoc grant)

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Invitation to submit proposal	Q2 2017
Signature of Grant Agreements	Q4 2017
Indicative total duration: 24 months	

MAXIMUM RATE OF EU CO-FINANCING

75%

INDICATORS

<p><i>1. Creating conditions for a favourable and competitive environment for tourism businesses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of events, conferences, workshops, expert meetings organised - Feedback from tourism industry stakeholders / national tourism administrations on quality, relevance and added-value of documents produced (through a survey or collected through meetings/other exchanges) - Number of data/reports/studies (co-)produced and included in the VTO knowledge base - Feedback from stakeholders / national tourism administrations on the degree to which the data and research results directly or indirectly benefited policy makers at European, national and/or regional
--

level and to SMEs (through a survey or collected through meetings/other exchange).

2. Diversifying and increasing the visibility of Europe's transnational tourism offer

- Increased awareness about and visibility of lesser known/emerging destinations and transnational thematic tourism offers (survey of key stakeholders)
- Number of participating partners, including SMEs, in the transnational tourism products

GRO/SME/17/C/10 - EUROPEAN INCUBATION NETWORK(S) FOR CREATIVITY-DRIVEN INNOVATION

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The main aim of the action is **to support creation, business development and scaling-up of companies in cultural and creative industries (CCIs) and other industry sectors through cross-national, incubators-driven** action focusing on innovation and development of new business by integrating creative, art and design skills with technology, science and other relevant expertise.

The action will focus on:

- Creating 1-2 network(s) of incubators with a focus on SMEs and start-ups in CCIs sector;
- Facilitating cross-sectoral collaboration through linking specialised creative, art and design skills with technology, science and other relevant expertise,
- Developing and putting in place support mechanisms to enable growth of innovative companies and development of new business models, products and services.

The action will contribute to achieving the following objectives:

- Creation and growth of creative and innovative enterprises across the EU.
- Development and testing of new business models, development of new products and services.
- Facilitating access to finance for different stages of innovative companies' growth.
- Promoting entrepreneurship, facilitating access to new markets.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

One call for proposals will be launched to select 1-2 trans-national network(s) of business incubators and business support organisations.

The aims of the network(s) will be, in particular, to:

- Facilitate fusion of creative, art and design skills on the one hand, and technology, science and other relevant expertise on the other.
- Identify and test new business models resulting from the interactions between the creative and technology and other fields.
- Develop and test new incubation processes and new forms of business support focusing on cross-sectorial and trans-national dimension and share good practice (including e.g. in the area of access to finance).
- Provide support to a number of the most promising SME and start-up companies for a time needed to scale-up their activities. In addition to more 'traditional' forms of business support offered by incubators, the network will organise other forms of support, such as for instance: exchanges of entrepreneurs, collaborative workshops, mentoring by recognised entrepreneurs or a competition for the most successful business idea. Therefore, cooperation with the Enterprise Europe network would be useful.
- When feasible, help developing proofs of concept and prototypes of new products and services.
- Develop and test more long-term support models that would help innovative companies grow,
- Identify and share good practice in leveraging public funds and private investment.

A significant proportion of the funding will go to SMEs and start-up companies (e.g. through business support).

To increase the impact of the action on regional development, the network(s) will have to demonstrate the existence of a supportive environment e.g. by explaining the links between the proposed projects and the objectives of the regional development programmes, including

as defined in the smart specialisation strategies. The network(s) shall feed into the cross-regional development of joint actions and investment projects in common priority areas in the context of the Thematic Smart Specialisation Platform on industrial modernisation and investment.

The action has an important trans-border/trans-European potential, notably resulting from the replicability of the models/products that will be developed and from linking start-up companies with potential markets in other EU countries. Additionally, it will allow exchange of knowledge and good practice between incubators in different Member States that often have a better knowledge of certain elements but lack knowledge of other aspects. The large scale demonstrator approach is also important in terms of replicability.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Creation and growth of a number of innovative start-up businesses.

Increasing the competitiveness of SMEs by combining creative and technology skills leading to development of new business models, products and services.

Increasing trans-national links and cooperation between incubators, boosting exchange of good practice.

Boosting innovation through knowledge transfer and cross-sectoral collaboration.

Developing new forms of business support relevant for young, creative businesses.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for proposals	European Incubation Network for creativity-driven innovation	2 600 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	2Q 2017
Award	4Q 2017
Signature of the contract/grant agreement	1Q 2018
Indicative duration of the contract/grant agreement: 36 months	

INDICATORS

Number of start-up companies and SMEs supported

Number of start-ups converted to scale-ups

Number of new products/services/solutions developed

Number of new business models developed and tested

Quality and visibility of the support models developed and good practices identified.

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

75%

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

Implementation of the Action Plan Construction 2020, as defined in the Communication on the Sustainable Competitiveness of the construction sector³³ and taking into account the recommendations from the related High Level Forum, in order to:

- Facilitate a more rapid adaptation of the construction sector to the evolution of the markets;
- Promote a more rapid uptake of innovative approaches and research results.

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

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

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

- Capacity building measures: promote exchange of good practice at policy level that could support Member States in the implementation of the strategy and establishing links with platforms, think-tanks and forum at national level to ensure commitment and capacity building of the different actors;
- Road maps for implementing the different parts of the strategy tailored to the state of development in the various Member States and sector organisations;
- Market analysis and collection/dissemination of good practices relating to different elements of the strategy and recommendations from the High level Forum. These activities would deal with specific domains or measure of the Action Plan Construction 2020 related to investment needs (e.g. for building and infrastructure renovation, recycling construction and demolition waste, smart construction, innovation), the anticipation of future sector skills and education/training needs, health and safety aspects, administrative and regulatory barriers to construction services provision, positioning of EU operators with respect to non EU operators;
- Gathering a strong factual basis on market conditions and competitive pressures on various market segments (residential, non-residential, infrastructure including for transport), employment and the level of skills in construction enterprises, the access to finance and delays of payment, investments in R&D, the cost of energy and raw materials, insurance and liability related matters, the access to non-EU markets and competition issues; a state of play of national regulatory measures with respect to sustainability in construction (energy efficiency, renewable energy production and consumption, water consumption, waste, natural resources);
- The assessment of the impact of national policy measures on the construction sector with respect to the 5 objectives of Construction 2020;
- Initiatives related to skills/traineeship on new working practices, resource efficiency, key-enabling technologies, new materials, etc. in connection with EU Skills and Human Capital Agenda;
- An annual report about the results achieved with the implementation of the Action

³³

COM(2012)433 of 31.7.2012

Plan. This report will be presented and discussed with the Construction 2020 High Level Forum.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Operation of an EU Observatory on Construction to keep track of the competitiveness and sustainability aspects related to the construction sector and its enterprises in the EU-28 Member States;
- Increased attractiveness of the construction sector for new talents;
- Increased investment in low energy buildings renovation and infrastructure upgrading;
- Easier access to non-EU construction markets.
- Higher involvement of Member States and stakeholders in the strategy implementation.
- Strengthening the links between EU, national and sectorial agendas for construction, and of transfer of experience and good practice
- Increased knowledge about policy formulation, monitoring and assessment with respect to sustainability and competitiveness in construction.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
New Call for tenders	Implementation of the Action Plan “Construction 2020” – European Construction Observatory	400 000
Contract renewal	Implementation of the Action Plan “Construction 2020” – Technical secretariat	185 000
Total		585 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION: OBSERVATORY	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q2 2017
Award	Q4 2017
Signature of the contract	Q4 2017
Start of the services	2018
Indicative duration of the contract/grant agreement: 12 months (up to 48 months – 3 possible renewals).	
MILESTONE DESCRIPTION: TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Signature of the renewal of contract	Q4 2017
Indicative duration of the contract/grant agreement: 12 months (2 more possible renewals).	

INDICATORS

FOR THE OBSERVATORY

Indicator 1: Number and quality of the deliverables

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

Indicator 2: Utilisation of the website

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

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

Indicator 3: Dissemination and promotion

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

FOR THE SECRETARIAT

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

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

Ad hoc research on specific themes:

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

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

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

GRO/SME/17/C/12- CLUSTER INTERNATIONALISATION PROGRAMME FOR SMEs IN THE DEFENCE & SECURITY SECTOR

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The main objectives of the programme are:

- To intensify cluster and business network collaboration across borders and possibly also across sectoral boundaries;
- To promote the pan-European Strategic Cluster Partnerships to go international and lead international cluster cooperation in areas of strategic interest towards third countries beyond Europe;
- To better support SMEs in global competition.

By reinforcing cluster and business network cooperation and supporting the shaping of pan European cluster consortia in a more strategic manner at European level, the action will help SMEs in the defence and security sector to internationalise and take a leading position globally.

This programme will focus on the promotion of cluster internationalisation where interested consortia will have the opportunity to develop a joint international strategy and support SME internationalisation beyond Europe.

The aim will be to support European defence-related clusters to intensify collaboration across borders with other non-defence industrial clusters and to develop and implement joint strategies in areas of dual use technologies, products and services towards non-EU countries.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

It will support preparatory actions for the establishment and shaping of up to four 'European Strategic Cluster Partnerships – Going International' (ESCP-4is) in the Defence and Security sector (dual-use technologies).

Consortia must be composed of at least three legal entities established in three different EU Member States (legal entities of all applicants to be established in EU Member States only).

EXPECTED RESULTS

This programme shall contribute to accelerate the development of more world-class clusters in this area in the EU by facilitating cluster internationalisation in a more strategic manner at EU level to better support European SMEs in global competition.

This programme will encourage European cluster consortia to work concretely together, notably across sectoral boundaries, to exploit synergies and develop a joint 'European' strategic vision with a global perspective and common goals towards specific third markets in the area of Dual-Use.

This will contribute to increase the number of "European Strategic Cluster Partnerships – Going International" established in Europe and help more SMEs access third markets and generate growth from international activities. It is expected that overall, 4 Partnerships will be supported through this action.

This should generate a least 4 cooperation agreements / Memoranda of Understanding between the European Strategic Cluster Partnerships (ESCP-4i) and international partners and

8 business partnership agreements to develop collaborative projects between European SMEs involved in ESCP-4i and business stakeholders from third countries.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for proposals	Clusters Go International – Dual-use technologies	800 000
TOTAL		800 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call	Q3 2017
Award	Q4 2017
Signature of the contract/grant agreement	Q4 2017
Indicative total duration of the contract/grant agreement: 24 months	

INDICATORS

1. Number of cluster organisations or business network organisations from different COSME participating countries having benefited from the supported actions;
2. Number of partnership agreements resulting from the supported actions;
3. Impact of the supported actions to be measured in the number of resulting cooperation projects between international cluster and business network partners;
4. Number of SMEs having directly or indirectly benefited from the supported actions, resulting in business cooperation projects, as measured through an ex-post survey within two years after the end of the supported actions;
5. Increase in the percentage of the turnover from international activities, and employment in Europe, of the SMEs having benefited directly and indirectly from the supported actions, compared to a similar group of SMEs not benefiting, as measured through an ex-post survey within two years after the end of the supported actions.

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

75%

D. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE

The fourth specific objective of COSME is “*to promote entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial culture*” described in Article 12 of the COSME Regulation.

The COSME Regulation specifies that an indicative 2.5% of the total budget has to be devoted to promoting entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial culture.

In 2017, there will be up to 3 actions to be financed under this specific objective with a budget of around EUR 11 million.

GRO/SME/17/D/01 – ERASMUS FOR YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

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

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

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

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

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

The interim evaluation of the preparatory action confirmed the added value of this action and

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

The initiative will be implemented via Call(s) for Proposals. The 2016 and 2017 budget will partly be used to co-finance selected proposals via Specific Agreements to cover the first operational period 1/02/2017-31/01/2019 following the call for proposals for Framework Partnership Agreements 2016-2021. Additionally, in order to attract new IOs in the network, a call for proposals for the award of grant agreements will be published.

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

The rate of Union co-financing shall be up to 90 % of eligible costs incurred by the IOs. The European Union contribution shall not exceed 75 % of the programme management costs but may be up to 100 % of the sum allocated by beneficiaries (IOs) to third parties (sub-grantee. i.e. new entrepreneurs) participating in a mobility action.

Financial assistance to new entrepreneurs participating in a mobility action shall take the form of a scale of unit cost of maximum EUR 6 600 per entrepreneur.

Additionally, budget is needed for a specific contract (using existing framework contract) for IT support.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The initiative expects to have achieved the following results by January 2019:

- Circa 2400 exchanges matched;
- Circa 5000 entrepreneurs registered;
- Circa 120 Intermediary Organisations involved in the implementation of the programme;
- At least 28 countries covered;
- Rate of successful exchanges above 90%.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call(s) for proposals and Specific Grant Agreements using Framework Partnership agreements	Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs	8 406 500
Specific contract using existing framework contract	IT tool	273 500
TOTAL:		8 680 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call (9) for proposals	Q1 2016
Communication of results to applicants	Q4 2016
Signature of the grant agreements	Q4 2016/Q1 2017
Start of implementation of the action	Q1 2017

INDICATORS

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

Impact indicators:

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

MAXIMUM RATE OF CO-FINANCING

90%

GRO/SME/17/D/02 – PEER-LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND IN WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The overall objective will be to help increasing coordination between different actors as well as the exchange of experiences between countries, and to facilitate the setting up or improvement of strategies to promote entrepreneurship.

Policy makers increasingly recognize the benefits that higher levels of entrepreneurial attitudes and skills can bring to the economy, and also to society at large. Participants in entrepreneurship education are more likely than other groups to engage in entrepreneurship. Their start-ups tend to be more innovative, to have a larger turnover and to hire more people. Moreover, young people with strong entrepreneurial skills are more employable: entrepreneurial employees within a business will help ensure that opportunities are fully realized.

Female creativity and entrepreneurial potential are an under-exploited source of economic growth and new jobs that should be further developed. Women represent more than 50% of the European population, but only 29% of the entrepreneurs in Europe. Education, stereotypes, lack of confidence, reconciliation issues and difficulties in accessing finance and business networks are the key barriers that held women from entering the market.

The Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan proposes in its first Pillar to reinforce co-operation and the exchange of experience between the Member States in entrepreneurship education, while in its third Pillar it proposes the creation of an e-platform for women entrepreneurship in Europe.

The Resolution of the European Parliament of 8 September 2015 on “Promoting youth entrepreneurship through education and training” recommends to:

- Encourage better cooperation and exchange of good practices between Member States that have already integrated entrepreneurship education into their curricula (...) and those Member States that are still at the beginning of this process.
- Encourage and support institutions and organisations in exchanging good practices, sharing ideas, knowledge and experience and forming cross-sectoral strategic partnerships (...).

Moreover the Resolution of the European Parliament on external factors that represent hurdles of 19 January 2016 asks the European Commission and Member States to take measures to better support and facilitate women entrepreneurship in Europe.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO BE FINANCED

This action will create a framework to organise Peer-Learning workshops for public administrations and key public and private stakeholders.

During the workshops good practices will be presented, experiences will be shared and the impact of policies will be discussed. Space for bilateral conversations on request of participants will be also part of the programme so that *ad hoc* advice can be given on “*how to...?*”. The action will seek to enhance mutual learning and to explore possible collaborations in specific areas both between countries and between stakeholders. The activities should contribute to designing new European and national strategies for the promotion of entrepreneurship.

The action will focus on **two priority areas**:

1. Entrepreneurship Education;

2. Women Entrepreneurship.

For Entrepreneurship Education:

Peer-learning workshops will address national or regional administrations and relevant stakeholders, both public and private (e.g. business associations, start-up support organisations, educational institutions, NGOs, etc.). The overall goal will be to help increasing coordination between different actors, and to facilitate the setting up or improvement of strategies to make entrepreneurship education widely accessible to young people and more effective.

The workshops will focus on themes such as (among others): designing new national or regional strategies; introducing entrepreneurship education in school, VET and university curricula; training teachers; mobilising the business world; linking education to instruments to support start-ups; evaluating existing strategies and measures in view of improving them.

As an outcome of peer-learning activities and based on their results the contractor will present a strategic vision of progress expected in the coming years, and will propose a new European Agenda for Entrepreneurship Education (as a follow-up to the 2007 Oslo Agenda for Entrepreneurship Education in Europe).

This initiative builds on previous activities like the High Level Reflection Panels (2008-2010) and the more recent COSME 2014 grant to support a European Entrepreneurship Education Network (www.ee-hub.eu).

For Women Entrepreneurship:

Up to now there has not been any European initiative bringing together public and private stakeholders on women entrepreneurship to discuss the area, present concrete actions, policy priorities and national strategies. This is the first such initiative that would have a European added value as it will enable, besides bringing together public and private sector from one country, cross national exchanges with the participation of stakeholders from different countries.

It is planned to organise cross national peer-learning workshops that will address national and regional administrations and relevant stakeholders (women entrepreneurship associations, chambers of commerce, SMEs organisations, gender equality organisations, universities and community centres etc).

The workshops will focus on access to skills, networks and funding, access to new markets and growth, addressing environmental factors that influence women start-ups and business performance and benchmarking.

Overall, 6 cross-national workshops will be organised under this action (3 on Entrepreneurship Education and 3 on Women Entrepreneurship). For each of those two areas, the objective is to have at least 15 COSME countries participating and benefiting from the exchanges.

Synergies between the two policy areas of Entrepreneurship Education and Women Entrepreneurship will be explored and encouraged in all phases the peer-learning exchanges.

EXPECTED RESULTS

This initiative will contribute to accelerating and deepening the introduction of entrepreneurship education in schools and universities, through better cooperation between national authorities and all relevant stakeholders. A wider entrepreneurial spirit and culture will lead to more young people taking initiative, turning ideas into action and starting new businesses.

This initiative will also contribute to creating or reinforcing tailor-made women entrepreneurship strategies regionally or nationally, through a tighter cooperation between regional/national authorities, private sector initiatives and relevant stakeholders. The design of women entrepreneurship strategies at regional/national level will assist in increasing the number of women entrepreneurs in Europe and thus contribute to women empowerment and women economic independence principles as well as to the Barcelona objectives for employment.

Concrete deliverables will be:

- the cross-European dissemination and transfer of best practice in developing strategies and measures to offer all young people effective education in entrepreneurship;
- the cross-European dissemination and transfer of best practice in developing national and regional strategies and actions to support women entrepreneurship;
- the organisation of 6 Peer-Learning Workshops;
- a proposal for a new European Agenda for Entrepreneurship Education.
- a proposal for a new European Agenda for Women Entrepreneurship.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Call for Tender or specific contracts under a framework contract	Peer-Learning exchanges to support entrepreneurship education and women entrepreneurship.	1 400 000
TOTAL:		1 400 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the call for tender:	Q1 2017
Signature of the contract:	Q4 2017
Indicative duration: 36 months	

INDICATORS

- Number of countries involved in the Peer-Learning workshops;
- Number of Peer-Learning workshops organised;
- Number of good practices that will be shared;
- Total number of participants for the two priority areas.

GRO/SME/17/D/03 - SOCIAL BUSINESS INITIATIVE: DIGITISATION/ COLLABORATIVE ECONOMY AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE – PROMOTING SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS INTO PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

OBJECTIVES PURSUED

Social enterprises, which are mainly local SMEs, have emerged as an effective tool to deliver policy objectives in two key areas of social and economic policy: goods and service delivery and social inclusion. Social enterprises therefore combine societal goals with an entrepreneurial spirit. These enterprises focus on achieving wider social, environmental or community objectives.

Policy makers at EU, Member States and regional level recognize the benefits of social enterprises and have undertaken efforts to consolidate the social enterprise sector by providing adequate support services, including access to finance, knowledge sharing and business support services.

The Commission aims to create a level playing field in order to stimulate social entrepreneurship and reinforce social enterprises to make them compete effectively and fairly in the Single Market, without regulatory discrimination and taking into account their particular needs.

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

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION TO BE FINANCED

The action to be financed is entitled " Social Business Initiative: digitisation/collaborative economy and social enterprise – promoting social considerations into public procurement".

These activities build on previous activities under the SBI and current discussion in the Expert Group on Social Entrepreneurship (Groupe d'experts de la Commission sur l'entrepreneuriat social – GECES) to stimulate social enterprises development.

The action is presented in two lots.

Lot n°1. Digitisation, collaborative economy and social enterprises.

SMEs are increasingly becoming digitised and social enterprises need to make the best use of new technologies to develop their potential.

In a rapidly changing and globalised economy, internet-based services, digital technologies and networking opportunities can significantly strengthen social enterprises autonomy, diversity, and level of participation within the EU Single Market, therefore enhancing their potential and value-adding contributions to sustainable growth in Europe.

As social enterprises are becoming increasingly professionalized, technology now represents an accepted and fundamental component of many socially-minded programmes. However, social enterprises could play a more active role in the economy provided they use the full potential of digitisation.

In order to unlock (and fine tune) the growth potential of social enterprises, there is a need to recognise not just how they could use the digital economy, but also to ensure that those

enterprises can help shaping the way in which it functions. For instance, besides benefiting from established models of shared economy, social enterprises can also help improving the functioning of e-platforms, in particular offering better working conditions and create social safety for workers in the sharing economy.

The call for tender to be launched will explore the different issues at stake concerning the digitisation process among social enterprises and evaluate benefits for them.

It will propose recommendations and collect best practices on:

- how social enterprises could better use digital economy in order to foster their growth
- how they can be active in shaping a digital ecosystem that will fully unleash the growth potential of the new sharing and collaborative economy.

Lot n° 2. Promoting social considerations into public procurement procedures for social enterprises.

The revised EU public procurement directives to be fully implemented by MS by April 2016 set out the rules under which public bodies purchase goods, services and works, and aim to guarantee equal access to and fair competition for public contracts within the EU market. These rules put a focus on qualitative aspects such as social, innovative and environmental considerations.

Social enterprises, that are mainly SMEs, can make use of these new provisions provided Member States decide to take advantage or not of the opportunities offered by the directives.

The GECES invites the Commission to support contracting authorities in Member States in fully implementing those new provisions for social enterprises. By using social criteria in their bidding procedures, public authorities can influence the choice of those SMEs' in participating in public procurement.

The call for tender to be launched will aim at setting up training and awareness raising events for contracting authorities in Member States in order to make them aware of the different opportunities at stake by using social clauses in their purchasing procedures.

The selected contractor will organise, in at least 15 Member States and in cooperation with national and regional/local authorities, a full day event focussed on training purposes on social responsible public procurement. The contractor will identify and invite relevant national, regional and local authorities, as well as suppliers to the public sector (including SME organisations) that may be interested in knowing more about the different issues at stake. A focus will be given to best practices and peer review from other MS.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The expected results are:

- Improved understanding of social enterprises issues and developments;
- Input for the evidence-based policy making and identification of the needs to adjust social enterprises policies;
- Increase creation, development and competitiveness of social enterprises;
- Increase number of social enterprises participating in public procurement procedures.

THE METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE INDICATION OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Calls for tender	Lot 1 - Digitisation, collaborative economy and social enterprises.	250 000
	Lot 2 - Promoting social considerations in procurement procedures for social enterprises.	750 000
TOTAL		1 000 000

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Publication of the calls for tenders	Q2/ 2017
Award	Q/4 2017
Signature of the contract	Q/4 2017
Indicative duration: Lot 1 = 12 Months Indicative duration : Lot 2 = 18 Months	

INDICATORS

Lot 1:

- Quality of the study as basis for policy development;
- References to report in future EU and MS policy;
- Increased awareness about key opportunities and actions developed for the benefit of the social enterprises.

Lot 2 :

- Quality, relevance and added-value of training, seminars and materials provided;
- Total number of public practitioners who will directly benefit from this measure and will acquire new or improved knowledge.
- Increase in the percentage of social enterprises participating in public procurements and benefiting directly and indirectly from the supported actions,

Annex I - Overview Table COSME 2017 Work Programme

Work Programme COSME 2017		Draft BUDGET	
ABAC CODE	TITLE OF THE ACTION	02 02 01	02 02 02
Objective A: Access to Finance			
GRO/SME/17/A/01	Financial Instruments – Loan Guarantee Facility including the SME Initiative		112,429,120
GRO/SME/17/A/02	Financial Instruments – Equity Facility for Growth		110,000,000
GRO/SME/17/A/03	Accompanying Actions		1,450,000
Total	TOTAL		223,879,120
Objective B: Access to markets			
GRO/SME/17/B/01	Enterprise Europe Network	60,569,143	
GRO/SME/17/B/02	Your Europe Business Portal	450,000	
GRO/SME/17/B/03	EU-Japan Centre For Industrial Cooperation	2,800,000	
GRO/SME/17/B/04	Internationalisation of Light Industries' SMEs - Market access	800,000	
GRO/SME/17/B/05	IP pre-diagnostic and improving access To Patent Protection For Innovative EU SMEs	4,300,000	
GRO/SME/17/B/06	Training for SME-friendly policies in central purchasing bodies	350,000	
GRO/SME/17/B/07	Creating links for the facilitation of public procurement of innovation	600,000	
GRO/SME/17/B/08	Improved user-friendliness of Points of Single Contact	500,000	
GRO/SME/17/B/09	Open for Business Campaign 2018 - 2020	2,000,000	
Total	TOTAL	72,369,143	
Objective C: Framework Conditions for Enterprises			
GRO/SME/17/C/01	SME Policy (SPR, SBA, start-up, outreach)	5,920,000	
GRO/SME/17/C/02	EU REFIT Stakeholder Platform for Better Regulation	1,110,000	
GRO/SME/17/C/03	Accelerating the uptake of big data and supporting the establishment of B2B Digital Platforms in Europe	2,400,000	
GRO/SME/17/C/04	Monitoring Digital transformation and KETs	2,200,000	
GRO/SME/17/C/05	European Cluster Excellence programme	1,200,000	
GRO/SME/17/C/06	Industrial Modernisation and Smart Specialisation	6,700,000	
GRO/SME/17/C/07	Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills	6,400,000	

GRO/SME/17/C/08	Nano-materials Observatory	600,000	
GRO/SME/17/C/09	Tourism	5,400,000	
GRO/SME/17/C/10	European Incubation Network(s) for creativity-driven innovation	2,600,000	
GRO/SME/17/C/11	Construction 2020	585,000	
GRO/SME/17/C/12	Cluster Internationalisation Programme for SMEs in the defence & security sector	800,000	
Total	TOTAL	35,915,00	
Objective D: Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurial Culture			
GRO/SME/17/D/01	Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs	8,680,000	
GRO/SME/17/D/02	Peer-Learning activities in Entrepreneurship Education and in Women Entrepreneurship	1,400,000	
GRO/SME/17/D/03	Social Business Initiative: digitisation/collaborative economy and social enterprise – promoting social considerations into public procurement	1,000,000	
Total	TOTAL	11,080,000	
TOTAL 2017 COSME BUDGET		119,364,143	223,879,120

Annex II - Eligibility criteria and Selection and award criteria

Eligibility criteria

Applicant organisations must be established:

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

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

Selection and award criteria

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

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

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

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

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