



## Call announcement for the selection of third parties (2<sup>nd</sup> Open Call)

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## Structure of the document

This document is structured in **two chapters**. The **first chapter** includes a wide range of details regarding the dates of the publication of the calls, the submission, the channels that will be used for the dissemination of the call announcements, as well as the eligibility criteria and the scoring system that will be applied to select the beneficiaries. In more detail, the subchapters included are as follow:

- A description of the support scheme for SMEs, including the objectives and main activities of the project and the benefits of being part of the project.
- List of activities that qualify for receiving financial support in line with the specific objectives of the project
- Types of eligible beneficiaries
- Awarding criteria for the financial support
- Submission of detailed action plans from the applying SMEs
- Specifications concerning the publication of the calls and deadlines

The **second chapter** provides an outline of the execution timeline, the commitment of the partners of the consortium towards the third parties/beneficiaries and the commitment of these concerning confidentiality aspects and communication procedures. The document is accompanied by four Annexes - which constitute an integral part of the call.

## CHAPTER 1

### The RESETTING Project in brief

The full name of the project, which we commonly refer to as RESETTING, is 'Relaunching European smart and sustainable tourism models through digitalization and innovative technologies'. In essence, RESETTING aims to facilitate a transition towards more resilient, circular and sustainable operational models of European tourism enterprises through the testing and mainstreaming of innovative and digitally-driven solutions which reduce unnecessary burdens, enhance the quality of the tourist experience, contribute to the decarbonization of the tourism sector and, ultimately, to more inclusive economic growth for SMEs and residents.

Furthermore, RESETTING aims at building a network between small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the tourism sector across five different European countries, namely, Albania, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. The added value of this project is to provide SMEs with innovative digital tools and everlasting competencies to further promote and enhance sustainable tourism in Europe.

It is important to highlight that RESETTING is one of the nine COSME projects across the European continent, which has been selected by the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency ([EISMEA](#)), back in 2021. This project started in January 2022 and will end in June 2024 (30 months).

The overall budget of RESETTING is 1.3M €, of which the European Commission funds 75% of this amount. The remainder is provided by the consortium partners through a funding cascading model.

### RESETTING objectives

In a nutshell, the four objectives identified by the project are as follows:

- To support tourism SMEs in **receiving funding** through a cascading model that will allow them to **improve their technical capabilities in their digital transformation**.
- To enable tourism SMEs a **transition to more resilient, innovative, circular and sustainable business models** that add more value to the product / service of companies, with lighter ecological footprint.
- To stimulate **transnational knowledge transfer** by thinking about how to replicate the model in a **scalable way**, and especially about its **continuity** once the project is completed.
- To help accelerate the **decarbonisation of SMEs** to contribute to more **inclusive economic growth** in the tourism sector and destination residents.

### Who are we?

The eight partners that constitute the consortium are based in five different countries, as explained here below:



Eurecat, Technology Centre of Catalonia, is a non for profit independent private foundation that brings together the expertise of over 650 professionals. The staff is fully dedicated to serve more than a 1,700 companies and public entities in order to thrive, to be more competitive and

innovative. Eurecat has a unique multitechnological approach and is involved in more than 200 R+D+I projects with high strategic value. Furthermore, Eurecat has 153 patents and 7 spin-offs. At present, Eurecat is the second largest private research organization in Southern Europe.

Albanian Trip is an inbound Albanian tour operator that develops and delivers creative tours and media services across large parts of Southwestern Europe, including Bosnia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Macedonia. Albanian Trip focuses on sustainability, prioritizing collaboration with local businesses and individuals, offering original interpretations of classic cultural tours, offering niche-market tourism that encourages authentic experiences, and assisting various media conglomerates in reaching their creative journalistic goals.



The Cluster TIC Catalunya Sud is an association promoted by the public sector and led by the private sector, which has the support of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili. Our main objective is to promote and contribute to the competitiveness in the value chain of the Information and Communication Technologies sector in the Camp de Tarragona and Terres del Ebre. At present, the Cluster TIC Catalunya Sud is made up of more than sixty companies that generate more than 1500 direct jobs.



During the last three decades of operations, the Heraklion Development Agency has delivered expertise and leadership on local and regional development actions to both private and public sector in the prefecture of Heraklion (Crete), by means of programmes and projects financed by European and State funds. HDA is a significant instrument and a point of reference when it comes to interventions for rural, social and entrepreneurial development. This is the result of the Agency's infrastructure, human resources and administration skills, the high quality of services provided, the acknowledges transparency of operations and the certified effectiveness in the management of projects and programs, European and national alike. Heraklion Development Agency main areas of intervention are rural development, entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism.



[Iscte - University Institute of Lisbon](#) celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2022. It currently has around 10K students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate programs and is organized in four schools that gather 16 departments, 8 research units, and 6 laboratories. Iscte's participation in the RESETTING project is the result of a multidisciplinary collaboration of two of its research units: [ISTAR](#) and [BRU](#).



The City of San Benedetto del Tronto is a local public body located in the Marche Region, along the coast of the Adriatic Sea. The Authority manages a coastal stretch of more than 7 km consisting mainly of beaches equipped for seaside tourism, with considerable annual presences (about 1,000,000 tourists per year). The City also includes in its territory a Nature Reserve (Regional Nature Reserve Sentina) that covers 1.7 km of coastline, a land Natura 2000 site, recently expanded to the sea (SCI IT5340001). Historical seaside tourist center of the Marche Riviera, has for many years, a considerable number of tourists and visitors. These characteristics, together

with the presence of a fishing port of national importance and a basin for yachting, highlight the reasons for COMSBT's involvement in the project partnership.

# audax

Audax was established on the assumption that Innovation & Entrepreneurship is indispensable for the creation of value in organizations, nascent or already existing, for the training of people, from young to adults, and to the sustained growth of nations. Audax is also lined up with the central philosophy of the

RESETTING project promoting the interaction between business, education and innovation, which are key drivers of a knowledge-based society.



The Business Federation of Hospitality and Tourism of the province of Tarragona (FEHT) is a non-profit organization that represents the interests of the tourism business of the province of Tarragona. The Federation includes four different associations that represent the inbound travel agencies, the campsite, the hotel and tourism apartments sector on the Golden Coast of Catalonia.

Out of these eight partner organisations, four of them act as **Business Support Organisation (BSO)**, namely the Cluster TIC, HDA, AUDAX, FEHT. These will be the main contact points for the SMEs.

### Why should SMEs participate?

In this ever evolving and hyperconnected world that we are living in, where the access to sources of information surpasses, oftentimes, our imagination, the post-pandemic tourist is better informed and is more concerned about the impacts that they can cause when visiting a destination, not only at the environmental but also at the social level. This change of paradigm has certainly been fueled by the penetration of many technological and data-driven solutions in the tourism market, which have subsequently produced a disruption in the conventional ways in which commercial transactions and customers experience used to take place traditionally. Having in mind this new scenario, it is of paramount importance that tourism SMEs hop on the innovation wagon to fully embrace all the positive advantages that they can benefit from applying digital and transformative changes in their daily business operations. This transition into a more digitally driven world will unavoidably trigger new business models and will rebalance new dynamics.

To this end, the **RESETTING project will ultimately help the beneficiaries to have a broader understanding of the different digital tools that are currently in the market and whose**

**adoption can assist to make the tourism SMEs, not only more profitable, but also more innovative, competitive and sustainable in the long run.**

RESETTING is launching the second Open Call in January 2023 in order to give the chance to European SMEs to be the recipients of funding and this call aims to foster SMEs' capacities and skills to uptake innovative, digital and smart solutions and new technologies, which would improve their tourism management and the tourism offer in general. This call also addresses training and business needs that tourism SMEs require to adapt to trends, challenges and opportunities.

#### Who can apply?

Any tourism SME that complies with all the following requirements is allowed to submit its 'action plan' for funding. It is important to bear in mind that only one application per SME is accepted. In case that more than one application is submitted by the same SME, the most recent application will be considered. The **5 compulsory requirements that have to be met** are:

- Be a Small and medium enterprise (SME) as defined by the EU recommendation 2003/361:

Company category	Staff headcount	Turnover	OR	Balance sheet total
Medium-sized	< 250	≤ € 50 m		≤ € 43 m
Small	< 50	≤ € 10 m		≤ € 10 m
Micro	< 10	≤ € 10 m		≤ € 2 m

- **And** be a tourism SME from one of the following **categories**, corresponding to **Nace codes [I55](#) and [N79](#)**:
  - Hotels and similar accommodation (Nace code: I5510)
  - Holiday and other short-stay accommodation (Nace code: I5520)
  - Camping grounds, recreational vehicle parks and trailer parks (Nace code: I5530)
  - Travel agency, tour operator reservation service and related activities (Nace code: N79)
- **And** be registered in:
  - The province of Tarragona (**Spain**)
  - **Portugal**
  - Heraklion province (**Greece**)
  - Tirana, Vlora, Shkodra, Gjirokastra, Fieri, Berati or Korça (**Albania**)
  - Coastal municipalities of the Marche region: San Benedetto del Tronto, Grottammare, Cupra Marittima, Pedaso and Porto San Giorgio (**Italy**)
- **And** the **budget** of the action plan submitted for funding must be **between 7.000€ and 9.000€**
- **And** the **timeframe** planned for the implementation of the activities outlined in the action plan must not go beyond **6 months**.

#### What do we offer?

Each beneficiary will receive a voucher of up to €9.000 in order to implement the action plan presented in the **Application form** (*Annex I*) about their digital transition and the adoption of Smart Tourism Tools that RESETTING project will elaborate. The exact financial support that



will be transferred in the end to the SMEs will depend on the budget presented in the application form by the SMEs and clearly defined in the **Action Plan Agreement (Annex IV)**. Please, see the *Financial support chapter* for further details.

This second call will fund up to six (6) SMEs per country. This call uses funds obtained within the scope of RESETING project funded by the European Union COSME Programme under GA no. 101038190.

The beneficiaries will be monitored by a team of digital marketing experts who will develop a satisfaction and a quality index using a number of advanced techniques, such as text mining and sentiment analysis. For instance, it will be interesting for the SMEs to have a concise idea of their customers satisfaction levels after using their services, which will be the result of evaluating reviews in social media using a proxy such as emotions, attitudes, interaction and this will be combined with track using online surveys in a convenience sample of tourists to measure engagement perceptions. Similarly, through the creation of a quality index, the above-mentioned experts will analyse gaps in the operation of the service provider versus tourist expectations and benchmarks and as a result, this will shed some light onto the way that operations are run and recommendations on how to improve this index might be identified.

Another benefit that beneficiaries can take advantage from - if they happen to be selected - is the fact that all the SMEs will be forming a vibrant 'Community' with the aim to foster exchanges and transnational cooperation and to promote synergies. For example, this will include Twinning, Matchmaking, Peer Learning, and Knowledge Sharing features.

### List of eligible activities

The beneficiary's action plan should include activities that improve their use of digital and smart technology, such as improving their data management in-house practices, embracing innovative tools based on artificial intelligence, blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT), streamlining communication channels etc. **Hence, the ultimate objective shall be to raise the improved competitiveness levels of these SMEs by offering more customized, efficient and effective tourism products whilst improving the quality of their services.**

The following table shows a detailed **list of eligible activities** for the SMEs' Action Plan.

<b>Travel, registration and accommodation costs</b> allowing active participation of tourism SMEs in support activities, such as training courses, workshops, study visits, coaching sessions, twinning, matchmaking, peer learning, knowledge sharing events etc.*
<b>Digital innovation and smart tourism investments</b> , which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Costs of advisory services and skills improvement, for example, in mapping specific digitalisation / innovation related needs to be addressed by an individual SME, as well as in receiving advisory services in specific areas -where the consortium team has expertise on-, such as Augmented and Virtual Reality, Crowd detection, Drone-based and Beacon-based sustainable tourism tools (see examples <a href="#">here</a>).</li><li>- Costs in improving employees' skills to digitalise the operations of SMEs, etc.</li><li>- Compliance adaptations necessary to improve the possibility of cooperation</li></ul>



with other actors of the value chain in the area of digitalisation, innovation, new technologies or smart tourism, including costs of standardisation.

- Costs related to the adaptation of operational procedures, documentation, data collection etc.

*\* It is important to underline that this set of activities should foster transnational and cross-border cooperation in digitalisation, innovation new technologies and smart tourism.*

It is key to stress the fact that investments in a physical infrastructure, which may include power, backup generators, surge control systems, connectivity (cabling), hardware and software are not eligible.

Based on this list, the applicant SMEs will have to carefully come up with an action plan, describing what activities they would like to take part/enroll, and last this plan will be assessed by RESETTING evaluation committee and will decide whether funds can be granted or not.

SMEs can present more than one proposal for the second call, but only the last one presented will be evaluated. SMEs that have already received funds in previous calls of the RESETTING project are not eligible. Furthermore, only one proposal/application per fiscal code will be considered.

#### How to apply?

Applicants are required to complete the application form available through this link: <https://www.resetting.eu/opencall> The application form can be found in the Open Call Guide and on the project website, as well as on the project partner's websites.

**Submission opening date:** 23rd January 2023, 09:00 CET

**Submission deadline:** 20 March 2023, 23:59 CET.

During this period, questions on the application process can be addressed at: [opencall2023@resetting.eu](mailto:opencall2023@resetting.eu)

All submitted proposals received after the submission deadline will not be considered.

The Evaluation Committee will assess the quality of the submitted applications from 20 March to 20 April.

Applicants will be informed about the outcome of their application by late April 2023. Activities are planned to start at mid-May 2023 and last for a maximum of six months after the signature of the funding contracts.

Please note that all information provided will be treated confidentially and stored only for the purpose of this call.

A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document will also be available on the open call website by the time of the launching.

English is the official language for the RESETTING Open Call. Submissions done in any other language will not be evaluated. All official communication between the applicant and RESETTING will be done in English. It will be the only official language during the whole execution of the project.

## SMEs commitment

Throughout the project's lifespan, the applicants shall comply with the following requirements:

- Each applicant will implement its proposed action plan as selected from the list of proposed services
- The applicants will not transfer or assign directly or indirectly any portion of the support to other ends not included in the initial application
- The applicants will implement their action plan in accordance with the rules and requirements of the call and in accordance with the contract
- The applicants will designate a person to lead the communication between the applicant and the RESETTING consortium throughout the duration of the action plan. In addition, a pilot project coordinator will be responsible (per project partner) for the management of the action plan and replying to any request of information within the scope of the contract
- The applicants will supply any information requested by the RESETTING consortium partners for the purpose of ensuring that these requirements are complied with any written request or direction received from the European Commission concerning the proper management of the action plan
- The applicants will not be entitled to require further supporting for the mere reason that they disagree with the results of the support by the RESETTING consortium partners
- The applicants will comply with dissemination and communication requirements as described in the Confidentiality and Communication Rules (next chapter) relating to the open call published together with the application documentation of the RESETTING call.

## Evaluation process

As per the proposal submitted, the evaluation of each submitted application/application will be carried out by an **Evaluation Committee** consisting of 2 experts from the RESETTING consortium partners. These two representatives have solid knowledge on topics related to digital transformation, sustainable tourism and capacity building and vocational skills development training and therefore their views and opinions will ensure that the most suitable candidates are selected. Moreover, each of the four BSOs will nominate a “rapporteur” of SMEs application who will liaise closely with the Evaluation Committee and who will be responsible to elaborate a concise report for each applicant/SME. Among other things, these four members will be in charge of providing quality insights in regard to their reputation and financial status.

An application will be eligible only if **all** the following **eligibility criteria** are met:

1. it must be submitted before the submission deadline date, applying the requested submission procedure
2. all the required fields in the application form (see [ANNEX I](#)) must be completed
3. the enterprise is a Small Medium Sized business, based on the COM. EC/361/2003
4. the enterprise submitting the proposal is based in one of the Project partner's countries and more specifically based in the territory specified in the table above
5. its main economic activity is in the tourism sector as indicated by country partners in their local strategy
6. the official representative declares that the SMEs actions are in compliance with EU regulations by signing a specific declaration of honor – [ANNEX II](#)
7. the official representative declares no Incompatibility with other EU funding for the same actions proposed in its action plan – ANNEX II
8. When filling in the application form, applicants are asked to confirm that no conflict of interest could arise in connection with this open call. This will ensure to prevent any

situation where the impartial and objective selection of the proposal is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ("conflict of interest"). Applicants who cannot confirm that there is no conflict of interest, will not be considered for the selection. – ANNEX II

The evaluation process will be managed by two internal evaluators. The evaluation and selection will be based on five main criteria. Each criterion could receive from 1 to 6 points, 1 being the lowest score and 6 being the highest. The minimum threshold for each criterion is 2 out of 6. Failing to score a 2 out of 6 in any of the five main criteria will suppose the disqualification of the proposal. Here below, a brief explanation of each criterion can be found:

1. Enterprise viability: demonstrate a discernible competitive advantage, be financially and commercially viable, possess the management and financial resources to absorb project intervention.
2. Proposals should clearly demonstrate that:
  - a. the project reflects the management strategy and vision
  - b. the expected outputs bring further expansion of the business
3. Cross-cutting: demonstrates the impact in developing sustainable tourism (alignment with SDGs), local development, addressing youth employment and/or gender issues. If the SME holds any sort of eco-label/certification to certify its commitment towards sustainable tourism will be taken in consideration.
4. Innovative approach: demonstrate what aspects of the digitalization process will add value to their current business model.
5. Level of current technical skills to implement new projects/ideas: In case the SME do not have them, then what actions/ideas could be proposed to offset this lack of skills internally.

The maximum number of points that an applicant may receive is 30. The Evaluation Form follows the example of the Guidelines for awarding Financial Support to Third Parties of COSME Call and is available in the [ANNEX III](#). In this annex there is a detailed explanation of the six main criteria.

The scoring will take into account the average score of the members of the Evaluation Committee. Both members of the selection committee need to participate in the evaluation to assign a final score.

The Evaluation Committee will evaluate each application in a transparent and fair way, respecting the confidentiality of any information identified as confidential at the time it is provided. Evaluations will be performed applying the highest ethical and moral standards.

The applicant's contact person (provided in the form) may be contacted during the evaluation to provide further clarification on all aspects of the application. Upon consideration of the problem and the proposed services, the Evaluation Committee may suggest different services or make observations on the proposal.

If the proposal is awarded, the details of the action plan of each SME will be discussed during the contracting period with staff from the RESETTING partners responsible for the pilot testing.

**The applicants will be informed about the decision** made by the Evaluation Committee **by late April** via email. The notification can be:

- **Not selected:** your application has not been selected for the programme, based on 'on-off' criteria.
- **Not selected (in reserve list):** your application has not been selected for the programme but has been put in reserve list, in case one of the selected companies does not finally participate.
- **Selected:** your application has been selected for the programme. the RESETTING consortium partners will engage in a contract negotiation with regard to the specific terms and conditions of the service.

The final decision will also be published on the RESETTING website.

Within 2 working days of the reception of the communication, **applicants may submit a request for redress** if they believe that there has been a shortcoming in the way their proposal has been evaluated that may affect the final decision on whether they are selected as beneficiary or not.

A designated internal review committee of the RESETTING project will examine requests for redress, which must be:

- Related to the evaluation process or eligibility checks
- Clearly describe the complaint and reasons for potential consideration
- Received within the time limit (2 working days) from the communication of the result is delivered
- Sent by the same enterprise legal representative that submitted the proposal

The committee will review the complaint and will recommend an appropriate course of action. If there is a clear evidence that a shortcoming(s) could have affected the eventual decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated by the internal review committee.

The committee will not call into question the scientific or technical judgement of appropriately qualified experts. In addition, any redress request that call into question the scientific or technical judgement of appropriately qualified experts will be automatically rejected.

The evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. This score could be lower than the original score.

Only one request for redress per application will be considered by the committee. All requests for redress will be treated in confidence and must be sent to [opencall2023@resetting.eu](mailto:opencall2023@resetting.eu)

#### [Dissemination activities and further information / Publication of the call](#)

RESETTING partners will organize a series of informative webinars/workshops to provide additional information (on proposal drafting, evaluation process, etc.) to potential applicants. More information on the open call and webinars will be found on the open call project webpage: <https://www.resetting.eu/>

## CHAPTER 2

### Financial support

#### Financial allocation of the call

The overall indicative amount made available under the call for proposals is €180.000. RESETTING partner organisations reserve the right not to award all available funds. The final voucher amounts will be agreed upon and addressed during contract negotiations. The RESETTING partners will not be obliged to provide any further funding to the applicants.

#### Size of financial support

Any grant requested under this call for proposals must fall between the following amounts:

- **Minimum amount: € 7.000**
- **Maximum amount: € 9.000**

The financial support shall take the form of a **voucher**. The exact voucher amount will depend on the budget presented in the **Application form** (see *Annex I*) by the SME and clearly agreed with the relevant **BSO** in the **Action Plan Agreement (APA)**, see Annex IV.

#### Negotiation process

After the evaluation process is concluded and the applicants have been notified, the RESETTING consortium will start the APA preparation in collaboration with the beneficiaries. Case by case and based on the evaluators' comments regarding the cost-effectiveness of the project, the APA will go through a negotiation process which could include a budget adjustment. In case the cost effectiveness of the proposed activities, outputs and expected results is considered unbalanced by the evaluator and the RESETTING consortium members (that is, the budget is estimated too high or too low in relation to the proposed activities), **the SME will be proposed an adjusted budget for its proposed action.**

The **objective** of the APA preparation is fulfilling the legal requirements between the RESETTING consortium and every beneficiary of the Call.

#### Financial process

At the end of the negotiation, the SME will have **30 calendar days** to accept or reject the APA. Therefore, the following scenarios might happen:

- 1) The SME **accepts and sends** the signed APA in time: the execution of the action plan starts
- 2) The SME **refuses** the APA: the following SME in the reserve list is contacted
- 3) The SME **does not send** the signed APA within the 30-days deadline: the SME is automatically excluded and the following SME in the reserve list is contacted

In the first scenario, an initial **pre-financing payment** of **75%** of the voucher total value is made at the latest 30 days after the entry into force of the APA.

The beneficiaries will have **6 months** to use the funds granted starting from the signing of the APA. A **3-month extension** can be granted providing a written and well argued justification.

The payment of the **balance** will be done within 30 days from the validation of the **financial reporting** documenting the cost claimed for the implementation of the solution as described in the awarded “Action Plan”.

In case of any request for clarification or incoherence in the costs claiming and related proof of expense, the 30 days will be **stopped** and resumed as soon as the clarifications will be provided to the Consortium partner and validated accordingly.

If the required information and documents on the development of the action plan, such as financial and final reporting, are not provided in time (SMEs have one month from the moment that all the activities of the Action Plan Agreement have been undertaken to present the reporting) or incomplete (e.g.: receipts missing, timesheets not signed, etc.), the funding received will need to be **promptly returned**. Here there are some **concrete examples** of complete or partial refund of the financial support received:

- If the SME signs the APA but at a certain point after receiving the pre-financing decides to resign, the SME will need to fully reimburse the entire amount of the pre-financing received
- If the SME completes some activities but not all the budgeted ones, the SME will need to return the additional funds received and will not receive the final payment
- If the SME completes all activities but cannot present evidence of all the budgeted costs, the SME will need to return the unjustified funds received and will not receive the final payment
- If the SME completes all the activities but does not present the final and financial report in time without having required in advance a justified extension of maximum 3 months, the SME will need to fully reimburse the entire amount of the pre-financing received

Please, be aware that the list above is only a **limited** list of examples.

### Confidentiality and Communication

All the information submitted by the applicants will be handled only by the RESETTING project team involved in the Open Call. The identity of the sender and the content of the proposal will be treated strictly confidential by the Evaluation Committee, who will perform the work impartially applying the highest ethical and moral standards.

The application will be stored on a web-based, password-protected collaborative platform to which only the RESETTING members will have access. Data with regard to the proposal may also be exchanged between the RESETTING Evaluation Committee by way of corporate e-mail.

Confidential information disclosed by the applicant must be marked as confidential. The applicant shall disclose to the RESETTING consortium confidential information, in its sole discretion, if the applicant deems necessary or desirable for the purpose of assessing the application. The RESETTING consortium will strictly apply confidentiality rules -as laid down in its consortium agreement- and will not use confidential information of applicants for any purpose other than to meet the objectives of this Open Call.

Media files need to be of high resolution but do not need to disclose IP. The applicant of the selected action plan is aware of this and authorizes the EC and RESETTING to publish, in whatever form and whatever channel, with the applicant's prior approval, information related to action plan while underlying IP and other sensitive information will remain confidential.

Any communication or publication under the Open Call should clearly indicate that the development of tool / service / training or other has received funding from the European Commission within the scope of the Resetting project (GA no. 101038190) displaying the EU logo on all printed or digital material, including websites and press releases and the following disclaimer will also have to be visible:

*“The content of this [insert appropriate description, e.g. report, publication, conference, etc.] represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility; it cannot be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission and/or the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) or any other body of the European Union. The European Commission and the Agency do not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.”*

The selected enterprises - throughout the duration of their involvement with RESETTING - will take appropriate measures to engage with the public about such involvement and to highlight the financial support of the EC.

If an external person/company (e.g. consultant) is submitting the proposal on behalf of an SME, ANNEX VI should be filled and presented it alongside with the rest of documentation.



## ANNEXES

ANNEX I: Application Form

ANNEX II: Declaration of Honor

ANNEX III: Evaluation Form

ANNEX IV: Action Plan Agreement (APA)

ANNEX V: Guidelines for awarding financial support to third parties (FSTP)

ANNEX VI: STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATION

## ANNEX I – Application Form



### RESETTING 1<sup>st</sup> OPEN CALL FOR TOURISM SMES

This section shows the information and fields that are required in your application. In order to complete and submit the application, it is mandatory to do it online by using the following link.

Each applicant may only fill out and submit one application form.

For further queries, or if you experience technical issues, please contact: [opencall2023@resetting.eu](mailto:opencall2023@resetting.eu)

#### A. Applicant Information

The information in this questionnaire will be shared with the members of the Evaluation Committee only for the purpose of assessing the application. You will be asked to confirm that you agree with this at the end of the application form under “AUTHORIZATION”.

Enterprise Name	
Postal address	
Fiscal ID	
Country	
Region	(DROP DOWN LIST OF REGIONS)
Telephone number	
Website	
Email	
NACE Code	(DROP DOWN LIST OF NACE Codes)

Provide contact information for each of the following:

1. Queries with regard to the application form

Full name	
Title / Department	
Telephone number	

Email	
2. Brief description of the problem to be solved with the proposed action plan (max. 1 page)	
3. Proposed action plan aimed at solving the problem (according to the indicative action's list in the catalogue) *Please review the Open Call guide for more details. (max. 1 page)	

#### B. Enterprise Presentation (maximum 500 words)

4) Demonstrate the financial and commercial status of the enterprise ( annual turnover, staff members, other crucial points)
5. Provide an elevator-pitch-type presentation of your enterprise (ie. Main goals, markets, sectors, R&D efforts, etc.). Additional documents can be attached to support the presentation. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the project reflects the management strategy and vision</li> <li>b. the expected outputs bring further expansion of the business</li> </ul>

## C. Action Plan Outline

### 5. Detailed description of the problem (maximum 1,000 words)

Which is the problem/challenges your enterprise needs to address/solve? Which is the objective you seek to achieve with the participation in this Open Call? How will your company benefit from the proposed action plan?

Please, include any images, statistics, studies or documents that may help illustrate your point.

### 6. Proposed Solution (maximum 1,000 words)

Which actions that could be undertaken might solve this problem and how? Please refer to the Innovative approach of each proposed action and what aspects of the digitalization process will add value to your current business model. Please, refer to the proposed actions of the catalogue.

### 7. Impact (maximum 500 words)

Explain which are the potential impacts that may derive from your participation in the Open Call, towards SMEs digitalization and Smart Tourism? Please, demonstrate the impact in developing sustainable tourism (alignment with SDGs), local development, addressing youth employment and/or gender issues. If the SME holds any sort of eco-label/certification to certify its commitment towards sustainable tourism will be taken in consideration.

### 8. Expertise and resources (maximum 500 words)

Name the key resources that you will provide to implement the action (e.g. man-hours, materials, external experts etc.). Please, include any images or documents that may help illustrate your point.

Please refer the level of current technical skills to implement new projects/ideas: In case the SME does not have them, then what actions/ideas could be proposed to offset this lack of skills internally

### 10. Budget of the action

Clearly indicate the budget for each category and the total budget estimated. Please, remind that the maximum budget is €9000 and only some specific costs are eligible (see *List of eligible activities* of the call text). The budget that will not be justified will need to be returned.

Drop down menu from the list of eligible activities (page 11)

Ex.

Category A: Travel

Category B: STT investment

1. Personnel
2. Training courses
3. Website development
4. VR – AR tools
5. Applications
6. Other software
7. Other (please specify)

## 10. Additional Documentation

Please, include any other relevant documentation that you deem relevant.

## D. Authorization

### Authorization for sharing information

I, the undersigned [ENTER FULL NAME], CERTIFY that the information stated above is true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge. Likewise, I confirm that the enterprise has no objection to the information contained herein being shared with the Evaluation Committee and that there does not exist any conflict of interest.

Name

Signature

Date (DD/MM/YYYY)

...../...../.....

...

Full title/Position

Enterprise name

**RESETTING 1<sup>st</sup> OPEN CALL FOR TOURISM SMES**

Action Plan title: .....

By signing this declaration, I hereby declare that:

- I have read and accepted terms and conditions set out in this Call for Proposals and its annexes;
- I have read and accepted the Guidelines for Awarding Financial Support to Third Parties (Tourism SMEs) of the **COSME Programme COS- TOURINN – 2020-3-04 GRO/SME/20/C/07 call** (see Annex V); ;
- I have read the Confidentiality and Communication rules applicable to this Call for Proposals;

I, the undersigned ....., representing the «.....» /  
..... (Name of SME in local language and in English) hereby state that:

- I am legally authorised to sign this statement on behalf of SME.....;
- All information provided by SME ..... required as a condition for participating in the Call for Proposals is correct to the best of my/our knowledge;
- SME ..... has the adequate legal capacity to participate in the Call for Proposals and especially to submit all required documents;
- SME ..... has the adequate organisational and financial capacity to implement the project, if awarded, as described in the Proposal and in accordance with the contractual framework of this Call for Proposals;
- SME ..... is not part of a bigger group of enterprises (such as holdings or similar)
- The information in the Proposal is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge;
- The information in the Proposal is not plagiarised from another SME Proposal present in this Call
- SME ..... is not bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding up procedures, its assets are not being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is not in an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are not suspended or it is not in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided under national legislation or regulations;
- It has not been established by a final judgement or a final administrative decision SME ..... is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the law of the country in which it is established or those of the country of the implementation of the action plan;
- SME ..... is in compliance with its obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established;
- SME ..... and any person legally authorised to represent it has not been involved in fraud, corruption, cooperation with a criminal organisation, money laundering or other illegal activity;
- SME ..... is not under reimbursement obligation of State Aid deemed illegal or incompatible with the European market;
- SME ..... and any person legally authorized to represent it has not been guilty of grave professional misconduct;

- *SME* ..... is not subject to a conflict of interest
- *SME*..... hasn't received funding from other public entities (including other programmes funded by the European Union) for the same item of costs for the present action plan

I understand that *SME* ..... will not be receive funding under this Call for Proposals if:

- It finds itself in one of the situations of exclusion listed above;
- It has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information;
- It is subject to a conflict of interest.

In the event that the Action Plan is successful, I/we authorise the RESETTING consortia to publish the following information in any form and medium, including via internet:

- The Project Partner's name and address
- The subject of the Project and a short description thereof
- The amount awarded and the Grant rate

I understand that if *SME* ..... will not provide the required information and documents on the development of the action plan, such as financial and final reporting, will need to promptly return the funding received.

By signing this declaration, I accept all the conditions set out in this Call for Proposals and its annexes.

Place, Date	
Name – Surname of Legal Representative	Stamp of the SME

### ANNEX III - Evaluation Form



### RESETTING 1<sup>st</sup> OPEN CALL FOR TOURISM SMES

Proposal N.	
Action Plan title:	
<b>Award Criterion 1</b> Score: (Minimum threshold is 3 out 5)	Enterprise viability: Does the action plan demonstrates a discernible competitive advantage Is it financially and commercially viable, and does it possess the management and financial resources to absorb project intervention?
<b>Award Criterion 2</b> Score: (Minimum threshold is 3 out of 5)	Does the action plan clearly demonstrate that: a) reflects the management strategy and vision, b) the expected outputs bring further expansion of the business?



<b>Award Criterion 3</b> Score: (Minimum threshold is 3 out of 5)	Does the action plan take into consideration cross-cutting issues: demonstrates the impact in developing sustainable tourism (alignment with SDGs), local development, addressing youth employment and/or gender issues? If the SME holds any sort of eco-label/certification to certify its commitment towards sustainable tourism will be taken in consideration.
<b>Award Criterion 4</b> Score: (Minimum threshold is 3 out of 5)	Is there any Innovative approach in the action plan: does it demonstrate what aspects of the digitalization process will add value to their current business model?
<b>Award Criterion 5</b> Score: (Minimum threshold is 3 out of 5)	Which is the level of current technical skills to implement new projects/ideas: In case the SME does not have them, then what actions/ideas are proposed within the action plan to offset this lack of skills internally?

#### Scoring options:

**0: The proposal fails** to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information;

**1 Poor:** The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses;

**2 Fair:** While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses;

**3 Good:** The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary;

**4 Very good:** The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible;

**5 Excellent:** The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

**I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, I have no direct or indirect conflict of interest in the evaluation of this proposal.**

The evaluator,

<b>Name</b>	—
<b>Surname</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

## ANNEX IV - Action Plan Agreement (APA)

### Action Plan Agreement (APA)

Agreement number: RESETTING\_2nd CALL\_N° (hereinafter referred as the “Agreement”)

Name of the Partner providing the financial support: \_\_\_\_\_

Registered office: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Reg. No: \_\_\_\_\_

Tax ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the authorised representative:

(hereafter referred as the “Awarder”),

AND [THE Third-party Beneficiary]

Name of the Third-party Beneficiary awarded:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Registered office: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Reg. No: \_\_\_\_\_

NACE Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the authorized representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the bank: \_\_\_\_\_

IBAN: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel.: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

(hereafter referred as the “third-party beneficiary”)

CONSIDERING THAT the third-party beneficiary has been successfully selected, pursuant the EU RESETTING PROGRAMME Project, Grant Agreement number: **101038190** (hereinafter referred as the “the Project”) terms and conditions, to receive financial support under the conditions set out in this Agreement,

HAS AGREED the following conditions and all details and conditions of the Call for Participation published on to the Project website <https://www.resetting.eu/opencall> (Hereinafter referred as the “OPEN CALL FOR TOURISM SMEs”) and its annexes

### WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS

#### Article 1 - Aim and purpose of the financial support

1.1. The RESETTING project aims to support tourism SMEs through financial support for covering their costs as detailed in the Plan of Action as submitted so far.

1.2 The financial support will have to be used for covering specific costs as below-mentioned.

1.3 The Action Plan submitted by the third-party beneficiary and approved by the Resetting Evaluation Committee consists in:

#### Article 2 - Use of the financial support

2.1. Financial support can be used solely for the following objectives:

- Support the digital transformation of tourism SMEs
- Promote innovative and digitally-driven solutions for tourism SMEs, start-ups as well as networks of SMEs in tourism sector
- Enhance the quality of tourist experience through digital / smart tools
- Promote inclusive economic growth of SMEs and local residents
- Support actions that promote the tourist flows in targeted areas

#### Article 3 - Amount of the financial support

3.1. The maximum amount of financial support cannot exceed 9.000€ (nine thousand euros).

3.2. This amount is deemed to support the third-party beneficiary in the execution of the Action Plan as mentioned in the Article 2 of this Agreement.

3.3. The final amount of financial support granted to the present third-party beneficiary under the conditions set out in this Agreement is equal to \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **Article 4 – Reporting**

4.1. The third-party beneficiary will be requested to submit a financial and final report, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the use of funds and monitoring of the different claiming of costs, supporting documents and transfer of payment to the beneficiaries. The third-party beneficiary will have 6 months to use the funds granted starting from the signing of this agreement. A 3-month extension can be granted providing a written justification. SMEs will have one month of time (from the moment that all the activities of the Action Plan Agreement have been undertaken) to present the final and financial report.

4.2 Check of the eligible costs.

Eligible costs against the budget included in the 'Action Plan' will be reported as follows.

Compliance, adaptations and innovation implementation:

- services: contract/order, invoices/receipts; proof of payments
- working hours spent for the development of the action, if proved by signed timesheets
- travel and accommodation costs + subsistence allowances for face-to-face activities, e.g.: Third Party Beneficiary's internal rules on travel, if any; booking, receipts; other documents (proofs of attendance such as minutes of meetings, reports; proof of payments).

#### **[SPECIFIC RULES TO TRAVEL COSTS]**

Travel, accommodation costs and subsistence allowances must be in line with usual SME practices or respect any maximum ceiling for travel and hotel costs established at the National level, whichever prevails. Travel arrangements must prioritise the use of public and collective transport modes. The most cost-efficient means of transportation shall be used. No business or first-class tickets for air transport are eligible irrespective of the fact that this may be allowed by internal rules of the Third-Party Beneficiary institution. Business-or first-class train tickets are allowed if it can be proved that they are the most economical travel option when booking the ticket (e.g. through screenshots of booking webpages). Daily rates for hotels are considered as cost-adequate, if not ruled at the national or international level, when they are below the amounts mentioned in the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2016/1611 of July 2016. Higher daily rates shall be considered as exceptional and must be duly justified.

Daily subsistence allowances must be in line with the national and internal rules of the Third Party Beneficiary. If not rule at the national or international level, as well as in the case of international organisations, the maximum eligible daily allowances are those defined in the official list available on <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32016R1611>

All costs must be linked to the Project activities. If no daily euro exchange rate is published in the EU Official Journal for the currency in question, the rate used must be the average of the monthly accounting exchange rates established by the Commission and published on its website: [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm)

All invoices and accounting documents must be in the name of the Third-Party Beneficiary. All the forms and documents must be uploaded on to the on-line platform, filled in by the beneficiaries and will be stored by the Consortium Partners for the period of the 5 years and will be available for any EU Commission check, if requested.

4.3 Very strict rules for costs.

All costs to be reimbursed must:

- be an efficient prove of the expenses (a scanned copy, etc.), (and traceable, cash payments are not allowed);

- be necessary to implement the action as resulted from the budget included in the Plan of Action, which is the subject of the micro-grant awarded;
- be reasonable and justified, and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular as regards economy and efficiency;
- have been incurred during the action, as defined in the action plan
- not be covered by another EU grant;
- be identifiable, verifiable and, in particular, recorded in the Third-Party Beneficiary accounting records and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where it is established and its usual cost-accounting practices;
- comply with the requirements of applicable national laws on taxes, labour and social security;
- be supported by adequate records and other documentation to prove the costs declared, such as contracts, subcontracts, invoices and accounting records. In addition, the beneficiaries' usual cost accounting practices and internal control procedures must enable direct reconciliation between the amounts declared, the amounts recorded in their accounts and the amounts stated in the supporting documentation. In case reports are incomplete in any part and documents, the Consortium can ask for additional information; participants must provide within 10 calendar days from the request, otherwise, the report will be rejected and the grant revoked. In case reports are incomplete in any part and documents, the Consortium can ask for additional information; participants must provide within 10 calendar days from the request, otherwise, the report will be rejected and the final grant revoked. confidentially and fairly.

## **Article 5 – Payment arrangements**

5.1. An initial pre-financing payment of 75% of the voucher total value will be made at the latest 30 days after the entry into force of the Financial Agreement. The payment of the balance will be done within 30 days from the validation of the financial reporting documenting the cost claimed for the implementation of the solution as described in the awarded “Action Plan”.

In case of any request for clarification or incoherences in the costs claiming and related proof of expense, the 30 days will be stopped and resumed as soon as the clarifications will be provided to the Consortium partner and validated accordingly.

If the required information and documents on the development of the action plan, such as financial and final reporting, are not provided in time or incomplete (e.g. receipts missing, timesheets not signed, etc.), the funding received will need to be promptly returned.

## **Article 6 – Checks and audits**

6.1 At any moment of implementation of the action and up to five years later, the Consortium the EISMEA Agency and the Commission has

the right to carry out checks, reviews and audits, to ascertain:

- the proper use of funds concerning the eligible costs;
- compliance with the obligations laid down in the Call;
- the truthfulness of the declarations and information produced by the Third-Party Beneficiary.
- Occurring the above situations or in case of impossibility of carrying out the checks, reviews and audits for reasons attributable to the Third Party Beneficiary, the contribution may be reduced, rejected or revoked and may lead to criminal prosecution under national law. The contribution will be revoked in case of express renunciation of the contribution by the Third Party Beneficiary. In case of revocation, any up-front instalment/pre-financing received by the Third Party Beneficiary must be reimbursed, legal interests included, to the Consortium within 15 calendar days from the official communication.

6.2. By signing of this Agreement, the third-party beneficiary declares, that in the case that, as a result of the paying the financial support mentioned in the Article 3.3. of this Agreement, the third-party beneficiary incurs any obligation under the rules of their tax law, the third-party beneficiary will fulfil this obligation himself/herself.

6.3. State Aid “De minimis regime”. The Guidance Notice of the European Commission on the notion of “State aid” clarifies that direct funding from the European Union, including from an Executive

Agency, is not considered as a State Aid. As a consequence, the financial distribution to third parties as integral part of the funding granted under the RESETTING Project by the EISMEA in application of the EU Financial Regulation does not constitute “State aid” and is not to be taken into account for the calculation of the “de minimis” rule.

## **Article 7 - Confidentiality**

### **7.1 General obligation to maintain confidentiality**

During the implementation of the action and for five years after the payment of the balance from the EISMEA to the Consortium, all parties must keep confidential any data, documents or other material (in any form) that is identified as confidential at the time it is disclosed (‘confidential information’). The confidentiality obligations no longer apply if (a) the disclosing party agrees to release the other party; (b) the information becomes generally and publicly available, without breaching any confidentiality obligation; (c) the disclosure of the confidential information is required by EU or national law.

### **7.2 Consequences of non-compliance.**

If a Third Party Beneficiary breaches any of its obligations under this Call, the grant may be reduced. Such breaches may also lead to any of the other measures such as rejection of ineligible costs, reduction of the grant, recovery of undue amounts and potential administrative and financial penalties.

## **Article 8 - Promoting the action — visibility of EU funding**

### **8.1 Communication activities by the Third Party Beneficiaries.**

General obligation to promote the action and its results. The awarded SMEs are obliged to promote the action and its results. The Consortium of partners, and/or one of the organisations belonging to it, will lead and drive the awarded organisations with a timescale/detailed-rules to implement such dissemination and promotion of the Programme in the proper way. Contents specific to this will be circulated to the awarded organisations and will be followed by the winners.

### **8.2 Information on EU funding — Obligation and right to use the EU emblem graphic purpose.**

Unless the EISMEA requests or agrees otherwise, any communication activity related to the action (including at conferences, seminars, in information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via social media, etc.) and any infrastructure, equipment or major result funded by the grant must:

- display the EU emblem
- include the following text: “This [insert appropriate description, e.g. report, publication, conference, infrastructure, equipment, insert type of result, etc.] was co-funded by the European Union’s COSME Programme.” When displayed in association with another logo, the EU emblem must have appropriate prominence. For their obligations under the Call, Third Party Beneficiaries may use the EU emblem without first obtaining approval from the EISMEA. This does not, however, give them the right to exclusive use. Moreover, they may not appropriate the EU emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means.

## **Article 9 – Contact person**

9.1. Any communication in connection with this Agreement shall be done by the third-party beneficiary in writing to the contact person mentioned below.

9.2. Contact person of the Business Support Organisation:

BSO: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Function: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

9.3. Contact person of the Third-party Beneficiary:

SME: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Function: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tel.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Article 10 – Bank account**

10.1. Payment of the financial support will be made as follows:

Name of the third-party beneficiary bank account holder:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the bank:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Registered office:

\_\_\_\_\_  
IBAN:

\_\_\_\_\_  
BIC/SWIFT:

**Article 11 – Applicable law and competent jurisdiction**

11.1. This Agreement is governed by the terms mentioned in this Agreement under the law of *COUNTRY*

11.2. The courts having jurisdiction for matters relating to this Agreement shall be the courts of *CITY*.

**Article 12 – Termination of this Agreement**

12.1. The BSO may terminate this Agreement if the third-party beneficiary has inadequately discharged or failed to discharge any of the contractual obligations, insofar as this is not due to force majeure, after notification to the third-party beneficiary, who discharged or failed to discharge any of his contractual obligations, by registered letter has remained without effect for one month. The notice period is 1 (one) month, which begins on the 1st calendar day of the month following the month in which the notice was delivered to the third-party beneficiary.

**Article 13 - Amendment**

13.1. Any amendment to this Agreement must be the subject of a written supplementary agreement. No oral agreement may bind the parties to this effect.

13.2. This Agreement shall come into force on the day when it has been signed by all parties. Specific country rules and regulations are detailed as follow (if applicable):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13.3. Done in 2 copies, one for each party.

City, Country, Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Business Support Organisation's authorised representative



City, Country, Date

Signature of third-party beneficiary authorised representative

○

## ANNEX V - Guidelines for awarding financial support to third parties (FSTP)

### Guidelines for Awarding Financial Support to Third Parties (Tourism SMEs)

The selection of third parties which may receive financial support from beneficiaries in the COSME co-funded action “Boosting the uptake of digitalisation, innovation and new technologies in tourism through transnational cooperation and capacity building” (GRO/SME/20/C/07)

Beneficiaries of the call (GRO/SME/20/C/07) are requested to:

- provide financial support to the tourism SMEs in line with the provisions of the Call for Proposals, particularly Sections 12.1f and 12.2. The conditions to award financial support to third parties are laid down in Article 11a of the Model Grant Agreement.

The above mentioned Article 11a requires that Annex 1 of the grant agreement includes, among other conditions, the persons or categories of persons that may receive financial support.

At this regards, Article 204 of the Financial Regulation forbids the exercise of discretion by the beneficiaries when defining the conditions for the giving of such financial support to third parties.

These third parties shall be selected through open calls.

Projects must publish widely their open calls and respect principles of transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest and confidentiality. All calls for third parties must be published by the beneficiary/ies on a relevant web site linked to the project (call page). The calls must remain open for at least two months. If call deadlines are changed this must immediately be published on the relevant call page and all registered applicants must be informed of the change.

Further technical details are available within the Call's Terms of Reference.

**It is the responsibility of the applicants to define in their project proposals the rules for publishing the call for applications, and for evaluating and selecting the third parties that may receive financial support.**

Nevertheless, aiming to assist the beneficiaries in the definition of those rules, the Agency provides the following guidance. This guidance is not to be construed as binding obligations on the beneficiaries, which, ultimately, remain responsible for defining the rules and principles that they will apply for selecting third parties.

#### **1. Introduction**

Your call should be carried out in the light of the following basic principles:

- i. **Excellence.** The proposal(s) selected for funding must demonstrate a high quality in the context of the topics and criteria set out in the call;
- ii. **Transparency.** Funding decisions must be based on clearly described rules and procedures, and all applicants should receive adequate feedback on the outcome of the evaluation of their proposals;

- iii. **Fairness and impartiality.** All proposals submitted to a call are treated equally. They are evaluated impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants;
- iv. **Confidentiality.** All proposals and related data, knowledge and documents are treated in confidence;
- v. **Efficiency and speed.** Evaluation of proposals and award of the financial support should be as rapid as possible, commensurate with maintaining the quality of the evaluation, and respecting the legal framework.

The costs to the action of managing the open call are limited to those which are actual, economic and necessary<sup>1</sup>. They may be claimed under the relevant cost category.

## **2. Preparation activities**

### **The Call Announcement**

You will inform the Agency Project Adviser about the call contents at least 30 days prior to its expected date of publication, by submitting to him/her a deliverable for approval. The deliverable must include a draft of your Call Announcement, full Call details and a reference to the relevant web page where the full details are to be published.

Thereafter, a complete test version of the website (call page) must be available for your Project Adviser to verify at least 5 days before the expected date of publication of the Call Announcement.

### **The Full Call Details**

You should prepare a dedicated section of your action's website (call page), which will give proposers the Full Call Details. This must contain:

- A clear description of the support scheme for SMEs your project is offering. Applicant SMEs need to clearly understand through the Call: what are the objectives of the project, what kind of activities your project is offering/organising and how the selected SMEs would benefit from, and what kind of objectives do you set for SMEs participating in the scheme
- A clear and exhaustive list of the types of activities that qualify for receiving financial support, in line with the specific objectives of your project.
- Any restrictions on participation in any part of the call (e.g. only certain types of organisation are required, only organisations based in certain countries etc.).
- The criteria determining the award of the financial support. Applicants are required in their applications to convince you why they are among the most suitable enterprises to participate in the support scheme you propose. An SME in its application should convince you that it will be successful in learning, adapting and meeting the targets, and that it has a potential to achieve the best results in line with your project's specific objectives, when compared to other potential candidates.
- The criteria for determining the exact amount of financial support and the form (ex. lump sums, vouchers etc.) that the financial support may take.
- The specific arrangements that the beneficiaries may impose on the third parties (e.g. specific reporting and feedback obligations from the third party towards the beneficiary in

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<sup>1</sup> Article 6 of the Model Grant Agreement

respect to the implementation of the supported activities; specific arrangements for providing the financial support; specific rights for the beneficiaries to access and use the results of the supported activities).

- The coordinates (email address and telephone number) of a help facility which you must maintain for proposers during the call
- The email address to which proposals should be submitted and the call identifier which will be used on these emails
- The deadline for submission of applications, clearly specifying the local time involved (normally this is local time at the website where the applications are received).

For selecting the third parties that may receive financial support, you are advised to ask for factual applications from tourism SMEs, relatively simple to complete.

**All applicants must receive fair and equal treatment. Information or facilities which you supply to any applicant must be equally available to all.**

### **3. Publication of the call**

The Call Announcement must be published at least on the relevant website.

The call must remain open for the submission of applications for a period of at least two months. If call deadlines are changed, this must immediately be published on the call page and all registered applicants (if there are any) must be informed of the change.

### **4. Reception of Applications**

You are advised to close the call on a Wednesday, so that your help facility is available to applicants throughout the last three days of the call, and that there are two working days after the call to deal with any unresolved problems. You should close your call at 17h00 *local time*.

Applicants are asked to submit their applications by email. On receipt of each application you will email an Acknowledgment of Receipt to the applicant (see Annex 2).

You cannot accept late submissions; late submitters must receive by return email a "call closed" message from you.

You should evaluate the applications as submitted: after the close of call no additions or changes to received applications should be taken into account.

### **5. Evaluation and Selection**

#### **Evaluation criteria**

The beneficiaries will evaluate applications received in the light of the criteria laid down in the Full Call Details. You may use the attached form (see Annex 3).

The beneficiaries remain responsible for the evaluation towards the third parties. Beneficiaries can choose to coordinate the exercise internally or through the assistance of experts<sup>2</sup>.

It is recommended that two evaluators linked to the beneficiaries evaluate each of the proposals.

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<sup>2</sup> The selection of these experts should follow the conditions foreseen in Article 10 of the Model Grant Agreement.

If you engage experts for evaluating the applications, you must ensure that they are independent of the organisations involved in the consortium and of any applicant.

Evaluators should sign with you a declaration of confidentiality concerning the contents of the applications they read (see Annex 4). The form which they use in the evaluation also carries a declaration of freedom from conflict of interest which they agree to by signing them.

(It is a wise precaution to be prepared to bring in a “reserve” expert in case of sickness or the last-minute discovery of a conflict of interest.)

### **Evaluation procedure**

The evaluation should take place at a maximum of six weeks from the close of the call. Note that you can only finally confirm the appointment of your experts after the close of call, when you have discovered who all the applicants are and therefore you can select your experts without risk of conflict of interest.

Each evaluator will record his/her individual opinion of each application on the attached evaluation form. They will then meet or communicate together to prepare a single “consensus” form for each application, representing opinions and scores on which the evaluators agree and which they will sign.

Using the overall scores for each application, the evaluators will generate a ranked list, or several ranked lists if the call is in different parts.

### **Selection of Applications**

Using the scores given on the consensus form, you will normally select the highest scored application/s for the call (or for the different part of the call if more than one).

However, the beneficiary is not obliged to select the highest scoring application where it has objective grounds for objecting to the third party, for example commercial competition. In this case the choice may pass to the next-ranked application.

The consortium may conclude that even the highest scoring application is of inadequate quality, in which case it will make no selection. This conclusion is obligatory if all the applications fall below the threshold scores given on the attached evaluation form.

In the event of no selection being made or selection of limited number of applications only, you may re-open the call at a later date.

## **6. Reporting**

### **Reporting**

In a deliverable taking the form of a written report submitted one month after the conclusion of the evaluation process, you will supply the Agency Project Adviser with a brief report on the evaluation and selection process, comprising as a minimum:

- A report of the call and its evaluation (including e.g. dates of call, publications used, dates of evaluation etc.), and the outcome indicating the selected applicant(s);
- A listing of applications received, identifying the proposing organisations involved (name

and address)

- The names and affiliations of the evaluators/experts involved in the evaluation;
- If the applicant selected was not the highest scoring one, the report must record the objective reasons why the highest scoring one was passed over.

The signed individual and consensus forms – alongside all other relevant documents - used in the evaluation should be retained by the beneficiaries for at least 5 years since ex-ante or ex-post financial and/or auditing checks may be carried out accordingly by the contracting authority.

### **Communications with applicants**

After the evaluation of the applications, you will get into contact with the successful applicant(s).

Remember that the beneficiaries are responsible for the proper use of the funding by the recipients and must ensure that they comply with certain obligations under the grant agreement with the the Agency.

Obligations that must be extended to recipients:

- Avoiding conflicts of interest
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Promoting the action and giving visibility to the EU funding
- Liability for damages

In order to be able to fulfil this obligation, the beneficiaries should impose contractual arrangements on the recipients (including control measures and/or reducing the financial support).

You will communicate to the other applicants that their application was not successful in the call, and will enclose to each an unsigned version of the consensus report of the evaluation of their application.

## **Annex 1 – Call announcement format**

### **Announcement of an open call for recipients of financial support**

**Action acronym: XXX**

**Action grant agreement number: XXX**

**Action full name: YYY**

The action XXX, co-funded from the European Union's COSME programme under grant agreement No XXX, foresees as an eligible activity the provision of financial support to third parties, as a mean to achieve its own objectives.

The types of activities to perform that qualify for receiving financial support are XXX.

**Deadline: XXX**

**Expected duration of participation: XXX**

**Maximum amount of financial support for each third party: XXX**

**Call identifier: XXX call**

**Language in which proposal should be submitted: XXX**

**Web address for further information (full call text/proposal guidelines): [www.xxx-project.eu](http://www.xxx-project.eu)**

**Email address for further information: [XXX@XXX.com](mailto:XXX@XXX.com)**



## **Annex 2 - Acknowledgment of receipt**

### **Acknowledgement of receipt**

Dear XXX,

Thank you for submitting your application for consideration to receive financial support in the frame of the COSME action XXX.

This evaluation will take place in the next few weeks. You will be notified as soon as possible after this of whether your application has been successful or not.

On behalf of the consortium of the project XXX I would like to thank you for your interest in our activities.

Yours sincerely,

**Annex 3 – Evaluation form**

**Individual evaluation/Consensus** (delete as appropriate)

<b>Proposal No. :</b>	<b>Acronym :</b>
<b>1. Award criterion 1</b> <i>Note: when a proposal only <b>partially addresses the topics</b>, this condition will be reflected in the scoring of this criterion</i>	<b>Score:</b> <i>(Minimum threshold 3/5;)</i>
<b>2. Award criterion 2</b>	<b>Score:</b> <i>(Minimum threshold 3/5;)</i>

<b>3. Award criterion 3</b>	<b>Score:</b> <i>(Minimum threshold 3/5;)</i>
<b>Remarks</b>	<b>Overall score:</b> <i>(Minimum threshold 10/15)</i>

**I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, I have no direct or indirect conflict of interest in the evaluation of this proposal**

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Name	
Signature	
Date	

0 The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information; 1 Poor The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses; 2 Fair While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses; 3 Good The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary; 4 Very good The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible; 5 Excellent The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

#### **Annex 4 – Confidentiality and conflict of interest declaration**

**I the undersigned declare that, in participating as an independent expert in the evaluation of proposals received in the COSME open call of the action XXX**

**I undertake to treat as confidential all information contained in the proposals which I am asked to evaluate, both during the evaluation and afterwards.**

**I will not reveal to any third party the identity or any details of the views of my fellow evaluator(s), neither during the evaluation nor afterwards.**

**I do not, to the best of my knowledge, have any interest in any of the proposals submitted in this call, I have not been involved in their preparation and I do not benefit either directly or indirectly from the eventual selection. Should I discover a conflict of interest during the evaluation, I undertake to declare this and to withdraw from the evaluation.**

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	



## ANNEX VI – STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATION

I, the undersigned ....., representing the «.....» / ..... *(Name of representing company in local language and in English)* hereby state that I authorize Mr./Mrs. (name and surname) to submit this proposal on behalf of the SME I represent, and I agree with all the information written in this proposal.

Moreover, I undertake the responsibility to implement the proposed Action Plan in case of selection from the Evaluation Committee.

Name – Surname

Signature

Stamp of the SME

