



Funded by the
European Union



Contracting Authority: EUROCHAMBRES

EU4Business: Connecting Companies Project

Reference: ENI/2019/411-865

Call for Proposals

Guidelines for grant applicants

Selection of Business Support Organisations

Deadline for submission¹ of applications:

30 April 2021 at 17:00 (Brussels date and time)

NOTICE

Eligibility of the full grant proposal will be checked against the checklist of the grant applications forms and supporting documents requested in the present guidelines.

To apply to this call for proposals organisations must submit the full grant application forms through the e-submission form (see section 2.2.5 of the guidelines).

The aim of the e-submission form is to increase the efficiency of the management of the call for proposals and to offer a better service to business support organisations through a new panel of functionalities such as the online submission and the possibility to follow up online the processing of their application.

All organisations can find the call, the e-submission form and the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) published together with all the documents to be provided for this call on the website of the project. You may also contact our technical support team via the online support form in the e-submission pages.

¹ Online submission via e-submission is mandatory for this call for proposals (see Section 2.5.2). Dates and times are expressed in Brussels time. Applicants should note that the IT support is open Monday to Friday from 00:00 to 12:00 and from 13:00 to 17:00 Brussels time (except for public holidays).

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SECTION 1 - EU4BUSINESS: CONNECTING COMPANIES (EU4BCC)

1.1 BACKGROUND

Boosting sustainable economic development and supporting job creation is at the heart of the EU's contribution to stabilising its neighbourhood. In 2009 the EU launched the **Eastern Partnership** (EaP), (https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/eastern-partnership_en) a joint policy initiative which aims to deepen and strengthen relations between the European Union (EU), its Member States and its six Eastern neighbours: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

In the past years, EaP countries have achieved significant progress in reforming their economies and integrating into the global market place. Since 2010, the overall business climate in the EaP countries has also improved and EaP countries as a whole made substantial efforts to encourage the growth of their Small and Medium Size Enterprises² (SMEs).

However, many SMEs in the region remain tied to low value-added sectors and still don't contribute as they could to job creation and export. There is a need to support them to increase their share in value added production and employment rates, aiming in particular at increasing the export potential of SMEs.

In this context, the European Commission launched the EU4Business initiative (<http://www.eu4business.eu/>) that helps SMEs in the six countries of the EaP region to realise their full potential and boost economic growth. This action covers all EU activities supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the EaP countries. EU4Business programmes are implemented through partner organisations identified through a call for proposals.

a) EUROCHAMBRES

Within the EU4Business initiative, EUROCHAMBRES, the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry, signed a grant contract n° ENI/2019/411-865 in 2019 to implement the project 'EU4Business: Connecting Companies' (EU4BCC).

This project is directly in line with EUROCHAMBRES 'statutory objectives': to improve the general conditions in which businesses operate, to facilitate access to markets within and beyond the EU and to ensure the availability of human, financial and natural resources. More than 93% of these businesses are small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Chambers' member businesses employ over 120 million.

Its unique European network of 1700 regional and local chambers covering the 27 EU members and the 6 EaP countries facilitates outreach to the ultimate beneficiaries of EU4BCC: EaP SMEs with high internationalisation potential.

b) EU4BCC PROJECT

EU4BCC global objectives is to support sustainable economic development and job creation in the EaP countries by helping SMEs to grow - especially by promoting trade, encouraging inward investment and fostering business links with companies in the EU.

EU4BCC specific objectives is to strengthen the capacity of EaP local business associations in promoting trade relations with the EU through different types of actions.

The action implemented within EU4BCC is organised on a sectoral basis. This will allow for a more strategic approach, targeting the specific needs and opportunities of each sector, and allow for the creation of alliances between EU and EaP businesses on a sectoral – and therefore more specific – basis.

² For the purpose of this call the SME is defined in accordance with the EU definition available at https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en

The selected sectors are the following:

- Bio/organic Food
- Wine
- Tourism
- Textiles
- Creative Industries

EU4BCC action within the above-mentioned sectors will be implemented through three types of actions:

- **Twinnings:** Twinning³ here is defined as Capacity Building / Peer to Peer Coaching for BSOs aiming at establishing direct links between BSOs from EU Member States and EaP countries to enable sharing of specific knowledge and best practices, to allow peer to peer exchanges and mutual cooperation. The action is not supposed to be a training, but rather include workshops, on-the-job coaching and/or peer-to-peer exchanges, with the help of facilitators and experts (for examples of types of eligible actions see chapter 2.1.2.)
- B2B matchings
- Study visits.

The action should cover as far as possible three of the following issues:

- gender equality;
- business opportunities opened up with the Eastern Partnership Agreements signed between the EU and EaP countries;
- institutional building, between CCIs and BSOs, best practices, benchmarking, cooperation between companies;
- transfer of know-how, transfer of technology, synergies with existing networks like Enterprise Europe Network;
- job creation and poverty reduction;
- businesses in rural areas run by women and men.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The objectives of this call for proposals is to identify, for each economic sector identified in the EU4BCC project, a partnership of EU and EaP Business Support Organisations having a keen and common interest in elaborating, managing and implementing actions under the supervision of the relevant Sectorial Consortium (see infra 3.5).

a) Definition of Business Support Organisations (BSO):

Are considered as BSOs;

- i) Business associations
- ii) Chambers of Commerce
- iii) Employers' federations
- iv) Women associations
- v) Sectorial federations
- vi) Local and regional economic development agencies established in the eligible countries.

b) Definition of a BSOs Partnership

The action will be jointly implemented by **a partnership composed of EU and EaP BSOs**, therefore:

³ Not to be confused with the EU Twinning instrument for institutional cooperation between Public Administrations of EU Member States and of beneficiary or partner countries. As explained, *twinning* here is defined as Capacity Building / Peer to Peer Coaching for BSOs aiming at establishing direct links between BSOs from EU Member States and EaP countries to enable sharing of specific knowledge and best practices, to allow peer to peer exchanges and mutual cooperation.

- EU BSOs and EaP BSOs interested to implement the action have to team up to present a joint proposal (in that case the lead applicant is automatically the EU BSO).
- The BSOs partnership must be composed of a balanced number of partners: half from the EaP Countries, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, and the other half from the Member States of the European Union.
- Consequently, a BSOs partnership should be composed of at least one EU lead applicant and one EaP co-applicant.
- If the BSOs partnership is composed of several EU and EaP co-applicants, the BSOs partnership should be composed of an equal number of EU BSOs and EaP BSOs (EU lead applicant included).
- The same BSO can apply to receive funds for a maximum of 2 actions from a max of 2 sectors (separate proposals to be submitted for each of the action). If two proposals are presented under the same call and sector, they cannot refer to the same action (i.e., two proposals can be submitted for one study visit and one twinning in the same sector or in 2 different sectors).
- Members of the concerned Sectorial Consortium involved in the implementation of action in any selected sector cannot be part of BSOs partnership.

c) Bodies involved in the implementation of the EU4BCC

To achieve its target, EU4BCC will rely on a:

- **Board of Sectorial Experts (BSE)** is in charge of the elaboration of a long-term strategy to promote investment, trade relations and business cooperation between the two regions.
- **Sectorial Consortium (SC)** is a set up for each identified sector. It is composed of EU Chambers of Commerce and EaP Chambers of Commerce. The SC is in charge of implementing the BSE recommendations and coordinating and monitoring the actions performed by the Business Support organisations.
- **Business Support organisations (BSOs):** Selected BSOs will be in charge of implementing the actions: twinning, B2B matchings, study visits.

The ultimate beneficiaries of the EU4BCC's intervention are the SMEs with internationalisation potential, as well as the BSOs who need support to create new/innovative services for their members.

d) Number of actions per economic sector

- **Bio/organic Food sector: 12 actions**
- **Wine sector: 11 actions**
- **Tourism sector: 12 actions**
- **Textiles sector: 12 actions**
- **Creative Industries: 12 actions**

From the available budget it is mandatory that each proposal will forecast at least 2 visits to Brussels for min. 2 persons for events/trainings/workshops which might be organised under EU4Business: Connecting Companies project.

Activities should be conceived as face-to-face activities, implying travel and subsistence. However, seen the current COVID 19 pandemic, applicants are also required to present a contingency plan allowing for all actions to be implemented online. Applicants are required to explore various applications/tools allowing for online meetings, webinars, training, conferences, B2B matching, etc.

e) Time frame for the implementation of the action

The timeframe for the implementation of the action is from **1 July 2021 to 15 June 2022**. However, considering the potential impact that the COVID 19 pandemic could have on the implementation of the action. Therefore, subject to the prior approval of the EC the timeframe may be extended.

1.3 FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY (EUROCHAMBRES)

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is EUR 3.540.000,00. The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

The implementation of the initiative will be done through at least 59 actions⁴ for the five sectors.

Size of grants

Any grant requested under this call for proposals must fall under the following maximum amount:

- Maximum amount: EUR 60.000,00.

Therefore, the provisional budget for each action cannot exceed € 60.000.

Any grant requested under this call for proposals must fall under the following maximum percentage of total eligible costs of the action:

- Maximum percentage: 95 % of the total eligible costs of the action.

Therefore, EUROCHAMBRES co-financing will amount 95% of the final actual budget

The balance (i.e. the difference between the total cost of the action and the amount requested from the contracting authority) must be financed from sources other than the general budget of the Union or the European Development Fund⁵.

- The remaining 5% must be co-financed by the applicants through their own resources other than the general budget of the Union or the European Development Fund⁶.
- The estimated staff costs (including staff travel and subsistence costs) should not exceed 40% of the total provisional budget of the action.
- **For BSOs partnership visits to Brussels (min 2), € 1.500 per person should be foreseen for the travel and accommodation costs. At least 2 representatives of the BSOs partnership should take part in these visits.**
- Staff cost should be based on actual costs (a justification will be required).
- Each action co-financed by EUROCHAMBRES will be subject to the signature of a grant contract. A copy of a standard grant contract is attached to the present call for proposals.
- All the obligations deriving from the grant contract will be completed by **15 June 2022**
- The above mentioned deadline may be extended, with the prior approval of the EC

⁴ Should the budget allow for further actions to be supported, the number of financed actions can be increased.

⁵ Where a grant is financed by the European Development Fund, any mention of European Union financing must be understood as referring to European Development Fund financing.

⁶ Where a grant is financed by the European Development Fund, any mention of European Union financing must be understood as referring to European Development Fund financing.

a) Modalities of payments

EUROCHAMBRES' co-financing for each action will be paid to the lead BSO according to the following provisions:

- a) A pre-financing of 40% of the provisional budget within 30 days after the signature of the grant contract and upon receipt of the Coordinator's request of payment,
- b) An interim payment of 30% of the provisional budget within 30 days upon receipt and acceptance, by EUROCHAMBRES, of the narrative and financial reports proving that the BSOs partnership have spent at least 90% of the pre-financing instalment,
- c) The final payment of 30% will be paid within 60 days following EUROCHAMBRES' approval of the final technical and financial reports.

If the final actual eligible costs of the action are lower than the provisional budget, EUROCHAMBRES' co-financing will represent 95% of these actual costs.

If the final actual eligible costs are higher than the provisional budget, EUROCHAMBRES' co-financing will represent 95% of the provisional budget.

EUROCHAMBRES' clarification request will suspend the payment deadline indicated until reception of full and correct required documentation. Once full and correct documentation is received, the suspension will be lifted.

b) Obligations to provide narrative and financial reports

Interim and final payments are subject to EUROCHAMBRES' approval of the BSOs partnership narrative and financial reports.

EUROCHAMBRES will provide guidelines and templates for the narrative reports and for the financial reports that will be part of the annexes of the grant contract.

Both reports must be uploaded into EU4BCC Management and Information System (MIS), this system will be used for the management of all actions.

SECTION 2 - GUIDELINES APPLICABLE TO THE PRESENT CALL FOR PROPOSALS

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the actions financed under this call, in conformity with the practical guide, which is applicable to the present call (available on the internet at this address <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/document.do?locale=en>).

2.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

A BSOs partnership is composed of a lead applicant and co-applicant(s).

- The lead applicant must be an EU BSO.
- Co-applicant(s) are EU BSOs and/or EaP BSOs.

If the BSOs partnership is composed of 2 applicants, the co-applicant must be an EaP BSO.

If the BSOs partnership is composed of several EU and EaP co-applicants, the BSOs partnership should be composed of an equal number of EU BSOs and EaP BSOs (EU lead applicant included)

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

- (1) BSOs Partnership
- (2) the actions for which a grant may be awarded (2.1.4)
- (3) the costs of the action: the budget should be composed of a set of eligible costs (2.1.5). The grant awarded by EUROCHAMBRES will be based on the budget of the action.

2.1.1 ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS (I.E. LEAD APPLICANT AND CO-APPLICANT(S))

I. Legal criteria for Lead applicant and co-applicant

a) Eligibility of the Lead applicant

To be eligible, the **lead applicant** must be:

- a private or public legal entity
- a non-profit making entity
- established in a Member State of the European Union (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden)

The Lead applicant is directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s), not acting as an intermediary.

If the BSOs partnership proposal is selected, the lead applicant will be identified as the coordinator in the grant contract to be signed between EUROCHAMBERS and the BSO partnership.

The coordinator is the main interlocutor of the contracting authority. It represents and acts on behalf of any other co-beneficiary (if any) and coordinate the design and implementation of the action.

b) Eligibility of Co-applicant

To be eligible, the **co-applicant(s)** must be:

- a private or public legal entity
- a non-profit making entity
- established in a Member State of the European Union (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden)

- established in one of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine).

Co-applicants participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant.

All applicants must sign the declaration of honour certifying that their organisation is not concerned by any of the cases of the exclusion situation (see the EU exclusion criteria⁷) which prevent any of the applicants to take part to the call for proposals. Applicants must provide all the documents requested in Part C of the application ‘Legal, Technical and financial documents’ (see checklist).

Co-applicants must sign the Agreement and Power of Attorney document. This document includes the agreement of the applicants regarding the implementation of the action and a power of attorney to the lead applicants to sign the proposal and if the proposal is selected, the power to sign the grant agreement. All applicants will have to provide the documents requested in Part C form in the indicated format.

Documents must be supplied in the form of scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals.

Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the European Union, a translation into English of the relevant parts of these documents proving the lead applicant’s and co-applicant(s)’s eligibility, must be attached for the purpose of analysing the application.

Where these documents are in an official language of the European Union other than the language of call for proposal, it is **strongly** recommended, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the lead applicant’s and co-applicants’ eligibility, into English.

If the above-mentioned supporting documents are not provided before the deadline indicated in the request for supporting documents sent to the lead applicant by EUROCHAMBRES, **the application may be rejected.**

II. Technical capacity criteria

In order to be eligible for a grant, applicants and co-applicants must prove they have has proven expertise in the concerned economic sector and qualified staff able to manage and implement the action.

In order to implement the actions, the applicants (lead applicant and/or co-applicant) will have to propose an action team composed of at least 4 persons:

a) Project officer

The requirements for this position are the following:

- Proven capacity of delivering reports in English
- Min. experience in business development, networking and working with SMEs: 4 years.

b) Event manager

The requirements for this position are the following:

- Proven capacity of communicating in English (reading, speaking, writing) at a professional level
- Min. relevant experience as event manager: 2 years.

c) Communication officer

The requirements for this position are the following:

- Proven capacity of communicating in English (reading, speaking, writing) at a professional level
- Min. relevant experience as communication manager (social media included): 2 years.

d) Financial officer

The requirements for this position are the following:

- Proven capacity of communicating in English (reading, speaking, writing) at a professional level

⁷ Section 2.6.10.1 of the PRAG

- Min. experience in financial reporting: 3 years.

CV(s) should be attached to the proposal, highlighting how each person meets the above-indicated criteria. CV(s) should be fulfilled using the **Europass CV** (see template annexed in Part C of the application form).

III. Financial capacity criteria

- Lead applicant must provide the financial statements (balance sheets and profit & loss accounts) of the last two years.
- Lead applicant and co-applicants must have a turnover of min. 50.000 euro/year over each of the last 3 closed financial years (see part C of the call of the proposal).

2.1.2 SUBCONTRACTORS

The beneficiaries are allowed to subcontract part of the action. Activities subject to subcontracting are subject to the procurement procedure as set out in Annex 5 Procurement Procedure.

The beneficiaries cannot be also subcontractors in the action.

In case the beneficiaries want to hire a subcontractor, they must ensure the following conditions are complied with:

- subcontracting does not cover core tasks of the action,
- recourse to subcontracting is justified because of the nature of the action and is necessary for its implementation,
- the estimated costs of the subcontracting are clearly identifiable in the estimated budget set out in Annex 3,
- any recourse to subcontracting, if not foreseen in Annex 4 (Provisional Budget), shall be communicated without delay to the Project coordinator for approval,

When subcontracting, the beneficiary shall take all necessary measures to prevent or end any situation that could compromise the partial and objective performance of the action.

The beneficiary must make sure that the subcontractor shall take all the necessary steps to publicize that the EU has co-financed the action.

2.1.3 ELIGIBLE ACTIONS: ACTIONS FOR WHICH AN APPLICATION MAY BE MADE

Eligible sectors:

Proposals will have to follow a strict sectorial approach linked to one of the following sectors:

- **Bio/Organic Food,**
- **Wine**
- **Tourism**
- **Textiles**
- **Creative Industries**

The Action to be implemented by the BSOs Partnership is composed by different types of activities which must be carefully detailed.

Duration of the action and starting date of implementation

The action must have a duration of min. 4 months and max. 11 months (window for actions to be implemented).

The timeframe for the implementation of actions extends from **July 2021 up to May 2022 (included)**, 11 months, while the reports will need to be submitted by **15 June 2022**.

Actions must start, be implemented and completed within the above-indicated timeframe.

The duration of the action is:

- A. Max. 10 months in the case of **Twinnings**
- B. Max. 6 months in the case of **Business to Business matchings**
- C. Max. 4 months in the case of **Study Visits**.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed with EUROCHAMBRES and the contract amended.

A principle of reciprocity will apply for face-to-face actions. In other words, they will take place both in the EaP and in the EU countries, allowing BSOs/SMEs from each region to visit and learn from their counterparts in the other region.

Starting date of implementation of the action

If following the evaluation procedure (see infra section 2. Item 7) the BSOs partnership signs a grant contract with EUROCHAMBRES, the implementation of the action must start within 5 months from the date of signature of the grant contract.

If the starting date of the action does not take place within this 5 month time period, EUROCHAMBRES will terminate the grant contract on that ground.

The amount of the grant will be used to finance a new call for proposals (study visits or B2B matchings.)

Geographical scope

Each action must take place in one of the six Eastern Partnership countries and in one of the EU countries.

In concrete terms, this means supporting the development of quality business networks, including the provision of adequate support and linkage services for SMEs. The main part of this component will consist of financial support to third parties' actions to reinforce the action of sectorial BSOs, notably the internationalisation of their SMEs, their capacity building, networking of these supported organisations as well as communication and visibility.

Types of action and underlying actions

The call intends to fund minimum⁸ 20 Twinnings, 20 B2B Matching and 19 Study visits.

A proposal must target one of the 3 actions proposed by this call (focus can be on max. 2 actions in 1 sector only).

The action should cover as far as possible one of the following issues:

- gender equality;

⁸ Within the max. amount foreseen for each type of action. The call cannot fund more Study Visits if this involves less actions belonging to the other two categories. Numbers are cumulative for all the 5 sectors. The wine sector will implement at least 11 actions, all other sectors will implement at least 12 actions each.

- business opportunities opened up with the Eastern Partnership Agreements signed between the EU and EaP countries;
- institutional building, between CCIs and BSOs, best practices, benchmarking, cooperation between companies;
- transfer of know-how, transfer of technology, synergies with existing networks like Enterprise Europe Network;
- job creation and poverty reduction;
- businesses in rural areas run by women and men.

Eligible actions are:

A. **Twinning**⁹ (defined as Capacity Building / Peer-to-Peer Coaching for BSOs for establishing direct links between BSOs from EU member states and EaP countries, to enable sharing of specific knowledge and best practices, allow peer-to-peer exchanges and cooperation). The action is not supposed to be a training, but rather include workshops, on-the-job coaching and/or peer to peer exchanges, with the help of facilitators and experts, as well as the following types of activities:

- **Developing better business linkages** including through encouraging the creation of ‘clusters’ of companies that cooperate with each other to launch new or better products, or initiating forums to consider how local companies can improve the linkages between them
- **Workshops** to increase **BSOs internal capacity** and ability to provide sector-specific support to SMEs for export purposes, with the specific objective of increasing cooperation and interlinkages between EaP and EU BSOs
- **Developing Guidance and Best Practice Manuals** on a sector by sector basis, although in an overall working framework
- **Branding and marketing**
- **Market research** (a product for SMEs on internal and external markets)
- **Labelling**
- **Certification**
- **Quality and safety control**
- **ISO**
- **E-commerce**
- **Expand and develop communication** towards EU BSOs/in the EU to diversify and attract more expertise and exchange of experience between EU and EaP SMEs and BSOs.

B. **Business to Business matching** to enhance SME to SME contacts and trade opportunities should include the following types of activities:

- Organise **Business to Business meetings** between EU and EaP countries but also within EaP countries, in line with the 20 Deliverables for 2020’s objective (<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/20-deliverables-for-2020/>) to enhance people to people contacts and trade opportunities.
- **Networking**
- **Participation to trade fairs**
- **Matchmaking on ‘filiera’ level**
- **Business mentoring and e-tools**
- **Coaching on e-commerce**

⁹ Not to be confused with the EU Twinning instrument for institutional cooperation between Public Administrations of EU Member States and of beneficiary or partner countries. As explained, *twinning* here is defined as Capacity Building / Peer to Peer Coaching for BSOs aiming at establishing direct links between BSOs from EU Member States and EaP countries to enable sharing of specific knowledge and best practices, to allow peer to peer exchanges and mutual cooperation.

- **Innovation support**
- C. **Study visits** offering the possibility to learn ‘on-site’ from other BSOs, enhance the understanding and knowledge on EaP within the EU community and vice versa and offering an opportunity for networking. Each study visit will have a specific focus, which can be thematic (e.g. internationalisation service, women entrepreneurship) or sectorial (e.g. bio/organic food, textiles). Within the same action, visits to industrial areas, companies and SMEs of the sector, to local clusters and innovation poles will be encouraged, in order to expose BSOs to the local content and business environment. The proposal should include the following types of activities:
- **Developing Guidance and Best Practice Manuals** on a sector by sector basis, although in an overall working framework.
 - **Establishing direct links** between EU Member States BSOs and EaP BSOs, to increase knowledge and trust from EU BSOs side on trade environment and investment opportunities available in EaP countries. In this framework, implement more long-term partnerships between EU and EaP BSOs in the region.
 - **Expand and develop communication** towards EU BSOs/in the EU to diversify and attract more expertise and exchange of experience between EU and EaP SMEs and BSOs.
 - **Travelling available for SMEs** from the same sector (potentially same activity sector or ‘filière’) – sharing know-how, exchange experience, potentially development of new products/services or innovation on processes.
 - **Travelling available for BSOs** to improve or develop new services for SMEs (website creation, e-commerce, new tools: webinars and online training services available).

Mandatory and optional goals

Each proposal is expected to contribute to the mandatory set of elements below and to at least three of the optional set of elements indicated in the following paragraphs:

A. Mandatory goals:

a) To be achieved by SMEs involved in the action

- Expand their business abroad, or
- Sign new partnership contracts as a result of the action itself, or
- Increase export levels towards the EU.

b) To be achieved by BSOs involved in the action:

- Increase international trade and support internationalisation of their member (SMEs), or
- Develop new/expand existing services for other BSOs and SMEs, or
- Offer tailor-made services to SMEs that contribute to improving their competitiveness and productivity, or
- Develop quality business networks and actively encourage the offer of new products/services.

B. Optional goals:

a) To be achieved by SMEs involved in the action:

- Gather information about the specific market in other countries;
- Gather information on marketing, branding, etc.;
- Gather information related to labelling, quality procedures, certification, etc.
- Gather information about e-commerce and potential networking to increase sells, etc.;
- Increase the number of potential business contacts;

- As a result of the action, cooperate with other SMEs (on a non-structured basis – i.e. no contract) on specific aspects: marketing online, development of campaigns, etc.

b) To be achieved by BSOs involved in the action:

- Develop Business Support Organisations' internal capacity to enhance SME's internationalisation and export capacities;
- Foster EU and EaP Business Support Organisations' cooperation;
- Help gather information on new countries/territories;
- Provide adequate support and business linkages for SMEs (in one the five sectors bio/organic food, wine, tourism, textiles, creative industries);
- Develop sector-specific business support services availability; ensure relevance and appropriateness to EaP context;
- Strengthen support networks for SMEs, for example, Business Membership Associations;
- Contribute to a more conducive business environment for SMEs or to better policies for SMEs;
- Improve gender equality in the aforementioned activities;
- Support development of new/expanded services to BSOs and SMEs.

Sustainability of the action

In order to ensure sustainability, proposals are expected to indicate an exit strategy:

- The action shall focus on only 1 targeted sector (bio/organic food, wine, tourism, textiles, creative industries), with a justification of the economic potential and policy challenges in that sector, potentially with a list of stakeholders interested in the implementation of the cooperation or with a list of concrete and measurable outcomes after the implementation of the action;
- Priority shall be given to actions targeting directly the SMEs and indicating concrete outcomes (launch of new products, signature of new contracts, etc.) and further activities to be autonomously implemented after the end of the funded action.

Indicators to be achieved per action

Each action proposal from BSOs is expected to meet the following requirements:

A. Twinning

Milestones

- Min. 7 BSOs involved on each side (EaP and EU), therefore min. 14, of which:
 - Min. 2 BSOs involving women from top-level management of the organisation
 - Min. 2 BSO from a local rural area.
- Online preparatory activities:
 - 1 online preliminary meeting, allowing BSOs to 'meet each other';
 - 1 online preliminary meeting allowing BSOs to focus on specific aspects (definition of a list of aspects);
 - 1 online preliminary meeting allowing to narrow down said list to the most promising elements allowing for the development of a new service (could be a training module, or a business start-up module, or development of a business module, a business strategies module, market analysis, etc.);
 - 1 online survey to finetune new services.
- Min. 2 new services to develop.
BSOs working on the same aspects previously established (from both EaP and EU) should then work together to define the service and develop it.
- 1 day coaching for each selected service in the EaP (for the BSOs developing that service).
- 1 day coaching for each selected service in the EU (for the BSOs developing that service).

- Piloting each service (EaP or EU).
- Gathering and analysing feedback, support from the other BSOs to improve the module.
- 1 day coaching for each selected service to further improve the service after the analysis of the feedback above.
- Min. 5 business meetings to be organised (involving SMEs in the specific sector).

Optional milestones can include:

- 1 online meeting between BSOs working on the same result to finetune the service after the first coaching.
- 1 online networking meeting (all together) to present their results to the peers - feedback foreseen from the peers.

Additional milestones can be foreseen by the applicants to ensure the achievement of the min. expected results listed below.

Minimum expected results (all compulsory):

- at least 2 new services launched by at least 6 of the BSOs involved, AND
- proof of further use of the service, AND
- at least 1 memorandum of understanding to be signed between 1 BSO in the EaP countries and 1 BSO in the EU countries, AND
- satisfaction survey from SMEs involved in the piloting and further delivery of service at min. 7,5 out of 10.

B. B2B Matchings

Milestones:

- Min. 10 SMEs involved on each side (EaP and EU), therefore min. 20 in all
- Min. 4 SMEs owners under 35 years old
- Min. 5 SMEs owners run by women
- Min. 3 SMEs have their seat in rural areas¹⁰
- Online preparatory activities:
 - 1 online preliminary meeting, allowing BSOs to ‘meet each other’;
 - 1 online preliminary meeting allowing BSOs to focus on specific aspects (definition of a list of aspects);
- Feedback questionnaire to be filled in by the participant SMEs at the end of the action
- Survey to be launched at the end of the action to prove the results achieved by the B2B matching
- Min. 6 business meetings to be organised (involving sectorial SMEs)

Additional milestones can be foreseen by the applicants to ensure the achievement of the min. expected results listed below.

Minimum expected results:

a. All compulsory:

- measured and proven increase of export/import for at least 4 of the 20 SMEs involved, and
- min. 3 contracts signed between participating SMEs (joint venture, commercial contract, etc.), and
- proven increased production or sells for at least 1 SME, or proven increase of income or share market.

¹⁰ Criteria can be cumulated, i.e. the same SME can count for two criteria if run by a woman and have the seat in a rural area

b. Only 1 compulsory:

- new branding or new marketing plan, or
- joint production or development of new product, or
- innovation, or
- other forms of cooperation etc.
- 1 survey prepared during the action and launched 6 months after the end of the action to prove the achievement of the key indicators (ref. is made to the logframe for each consortium).

C. Study visits

Milestones:

- Min. 8 SMEs and BSOs involved on each side (EaP and EU), therefore min. 16 in all
- Min. 2 SMEs owners under 35 years old
- Min. 5 SMEs owners women-led
- Min. 3 SMEs having their seat in rural areas are involved¹¹
- Min. 2 BSOs involving women from top-level management of the organisation
- 1 online preliminary meeting, allowing SMEs and BSOs to ‘pair’
- 1 online preliminary meeting allowing the pairs to focus on specific aspects (definition of a list of aspects)
- 1 online preliminary meeting allowing to narrow down the listed aspects to the most promising elements allowing for the development of a service/product (for BSOs and SMEs) or for the signature of a commercial agreement (for SMEs only)
- 3 days visit to the ‘pair’ EU SME/BSO involved to jointly work on the result (i.e. product/service/definition of the contract/commercial cooperation, creation of a new marketing plan, etc.);
- 1 online meeting to finetune the result
- 1 online networking meeting (all together) to present their results to the pairs - feedback foreseen from the pairs
- 3 days visit to the ‘pair’ EaP SME/BSO involved and launch of the new service (e.g. training module developed by BSOs for SMEs; signature of a commercial contract by the ‘paired’ SMEs, the launch of a product, of a new marketing campaign, etc.)
- 1 survey prepared during the action and launched 6 months after the end of the action to prove the achievement of the key indicators (ref. is made to the logframe for each consortium)
- At least 1 participation to a sector-related fair
- Min. 5 business meetings to be organised (involving sectorial SMEs).

Additional milestones can be foreseen by the applicants to ensure the achievement of the min. expected results listed below.

Minimum expected results:

a. All compulsory:

- at least 2 new services launched by at least 3 of the BSOs involved and at least 2 concrete results (commercial contract, launch of product, creation and launch of a new marketing campaign or increased safety and quality plans, etc.) involving 4 of the SMEs involved, AND
- at least 1 memorandum of understanding to be signed between 1 BSO in the EaP countries and 1 BSO in the EU countries, AND
- new branding or new marketing plan (for SMEs only).

¹¹ Criteria can be cumulated, i.e. the same SME can count for two criteria if run by a woman and have the seat in a rural area

- b. Only 1 compulsory:
- joint production or development of new product/service, or
 - innovation, or
 - other forms of cooperation, etc.

Management of the actions through work packages

Work Package definition: a work package (action package) is a major sub-division of the proposed action with a verifiable end-point - normally a deliverable or a milestone in the overall project.

Work package 1: Project management

Within this Work Package, the applicants should ensure the overall organisation of the action, as well as the core events:

- B2B matching, or
- twinning online/face to face events, piloting of services, or
- study visits.

A table/diagram identifying the timing should be prepared in the form of, for example, a chart (see Part A of the form).

A project officer will be proposed, and her/his CV will be attached.

Work Package 2: Communication management

Within this Work Package, the applicants should ensure all the communication and visibility actions, including testimonials, success stories, video, etc.

The applicants should explain:

- a) their capacity of reaching and communicating with relevant stakeholders: sectoral associations, policymakers, public administration, etc;
- b) the number of SMEs and/or BSOs in the sector they are already in direct contact with (on each side: EaP and EU);
- c) how they will reach SMEs and BSOs in the sector in order to engage them in the implementation of the actions;
- d) which is their awareness-raising capacity, explaining how many BSOs/SMEs will be reached by communication activities;
- e) explain how they will reach the minimum expected results under visibility actions
 - 1 item shared on social media for each type of action, as follows:
 - Twinning – at least 1 testimonial (interviews) OR success story¹² AND several posts (6+) with pictures, graphic elements, etc.
 - B2B matching – at least 1 video to be produced and posted on social media to highlight the results of the action and several posts (6+) with pictures, graphic elements, etc.;
 - Study Visit – at least 1 video to be produced and posted on social media to highlight the results of the action and several posts (6+) with pictures, graphic element.

A communication officer should be proposed, and her/his CV will be attached.

¹² Success stories: The success stories/quotes/testimonials from entrepreneurs/BSOs, who have successfully participated in the project

Work Package 3: Engaging third parties and concept development

Within this Work Package, the applicants should ensure:

- a) Contact with third parties: SMEs and/or BSOs
- b) Capacity of engaging SMEs and/or BSOs – how, through which networks, how many
- c) Concept development.

Work Package 4: Implementation of the action including online actions

Within this Work Package, the applicants should ensure the achievement of at least the minimum expected results listed below:

- at least 2 new services launched by at least 3 of the BSOs involved (final beneficiaries) / at least 2 concrete results (commercial contract, launch of product, creation and launch of a new marketing campaign or increased safety and quality plans, etc.) involving 4 of the SMEs involved AND
- at least 1 memorandum of understanding to be signed between 1 BSO in the EaP countries and 1 BSO in the EU countries AND
- new branding or new marketing plan, or
- joint production or development of a new product, or
- innovation, or
- other forms of cooperation etc.

The Work package should also ensure the achievement of the minimum milestones indicated above (see section 2.7).

Work Package 5: Final result and reporting

Within this Work Package, the applicants should ensure:

- a) Narrative Reporting
- b) Financial Reporting.

Applicants are kindly reminded that a contingency plan for online activities only (due to the COVID-19 outbreak) should also be provided within the application.

Contractors

For the implementation of the action, BSOs partnership are permitted to award contracts however contractors are not considered as co-applicants.

Members of a BSOs partnership cannot also be contractors in the action.

Contractors are subject to the procurement rules as set up the relevant annex to the standard grant contract.

Ineligible actions and underlying actions

- actions concerning only or mainly individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses;
- actions concerning only or mainly individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- purchase of hardware and equipment at large (including vehicles, machinery), financial support to enterprises, one-off conferences, support to political parties, actions including proselytising, actions which discriminate individuals or groups on the grounds of their sexual orientation, religious beliefs or lack of them, or their ethnic origin;

- actions for which the applicant has or is already receiving funding, e.g. from the Governmental budget, other community programmes, or other funds;
- actions started before the entry into force of the contract with EUROCHAMBRES;
- actions consisting solely of commercial activities;
- actions which are ideologically biased or partisan in nature;
- financial support activities (i.e. the use of the grant to make further grants (financial or in-kind) or loans to other organisations or individuals such as for those who are establishing their businesses);
- construction or investments for the adoption of new/supplementary facilities;
- actions that include provisions to finance the core activities currently carried out by applicants;
- actions consisting solely of the development of strategies, plans or other similar documents;
- social service actions such as the provision of food, clothing.

Visibility of the action

The applicants must take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the European Union has financed or co-financed the action. As far as possible, actions that are wholly or partially funded by the European Union must incorporate information and communication activities designed to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences of the reasons for the action and the EU support for the action in the country or region concerned, as well as the results and the impact of this support.

Applicants must comply with the objectives and priorities and guarantee the visibility of the EU financing (see the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU external actions specified and published by the European Commission at http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/communication-and-visibility-manual-eu-external-actions_en).

When awarded the grant contract, a Visibility Manual of the EU4Business programme will be provided by EUROCHAMBRES, as well as the visibility framework for the EU4BCC project (templates, etc.).

In terms of communication, the twinnings, study visits and the B2B matches are events which will be promoted and recorded (pictures, short video declarations, etc.), to offer input for both the website's news section and for the social media channels.

No additional website can be created for the EU4Business: Connecting Companies project. The website for all actions (with specific pages for each sector) is <http://connectingcompanies.eu/>.

All beneficiaries of the actions will have to liaise with the Consortium managing their sector and send information to be published on the official website of the project.

Websites of the beneficiaries can be updated during the actions, links to the official page of the project can be embedded, and a notice of support from the EU has to be incorporated as above explained.

Social media channels need to be created by the consortia for the sector and by all beneficiaries for each action. Posting and re-posting are strongly encouraged between the network of social media channels (formed by beneficiaries, consortia members and EUROCHAMBRES).

In accordance with the social media strategy of the project, communication in general and posts, in particular, should present the project as a valuable opportunity for BSOs to connect, to acquire knowledge, to exchange best practices; and for the SMEs to get in touch with potential partners, to increase their network of contacts, to have opportunities for better trade, development and internationalisation.

Minimum expected results under visibility actions:

- 1 item shared on social media for each type of action, as follows:

- Twinnings – at least 1 testimonial (interviews) OR success story¹³ AND several posts (6+) with pictures, graphic elements, etc.;
- B2B matching – at least 1 video to be produced and posted on social media to highlight the results of the action and several posts (6+) with pictures, graphic elements, etc.;
- Study Visit – at least 1 video to be produced and posted on social media to highlight the results of the action and several posts (6+) with pictures, graphic elements, etc.

2.1.4. ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS: COSTS THAT CAN BE INCLUDED

Provisional Maximum Budget of the action

The provisional budget must be composed of ‘eligible costs’ as defined by the European Commission. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for ‘eligible costs’.

The reimbursement of eligible costs may be based on any or a combination of the following forms:

- actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies);
- no simplified cost options **except for per diems (unit costs) for the staff of the implementing BSOs and for lump sums for final beneficiaries.** The unit cost should be checked ex-ante (before the signature of the contract). Afterwards, the unit cost cannot be put into question. It is in the applicants’ interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget.**

The amounts or rates have to be based on estimates using objective data such as statistical data or any other objective means or with reference to certified or auditable historical data of the applicants.

Additionally in Part B form Provisional Budget of the Action,

- In worksheet #2 second column ‘justification of the estimated costs’ per each of the corresponding budget item or heading applicants must describe the information and methods used to establish the amounts of unit costs,
- In worksheet #3 Daily Rate Calculation it is recommended to use the calculation done upon the basis of the last closed financial year each time it is possible (i.e. for employees already hired during the previous year). For the other cases, a forecast will need to be done.

The total amount of the provisional budget, on the basis of unit cost options, that can be authorised by the EUROCHAMBRES for each action cannot exceed EUR 60.000,00.

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checks preceding the signing of the grant contract do not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (such as arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, unrealistic costs and ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead EUROCHAMBRES to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. It is not possible to increase the grant or the percentage of EU co-financing as a result of these corrections.

It is, therefore, in the applicants’ interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget.** In particular, applicants are invited to submit balanced proposals regarding the repartition between human resources and the cost of the action.

¹³ Success stories: The success stories/quotes/testimonials from entrepreneurs/BSOs, who have successfully participated in the project

Important consideration

The selected BSO Partnership will be invited by EUROCHAMBRES or the Sectorial Consortium to attend training sessions, networking and benchmarking activities at the level of the overall EU4BCC project (i.e. training sessions on the grant contract financial procedures and on project performance indicators, EU4BCC stakeholders' annual meetings, workshops for exchange of experiences and best practices etc.) Minimum visits: 2.

To attend these meetings €1.500,00 per person should be foreseen to cover travel and accommodation costs. At least 2 representatives of the BSOs partnership should take part in these visits.

The participation of the BSOs partnership in the EU4BCC final conference will be covered by EUROCHAMBRES within the limit of 130 participants for the final beneficiaries SMEs and BSOs.

Attendance instructions and information will be given in due time.

Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under this call for proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of Article 14 of the general conditions to the standard grant contract (see Annex G of the guidelines) and in particular with the following:

- the cost of staff assigned to the action, corresponding to actual gross salaries including social security charges and other remuneration-related costs; salaries and costs shall not exceed those normally borne by the beneficiary(ies);
- Staff costs should not represent more than 40% of the total budget
- travel and subsistence costs for staff taking part in the action, provided they do not exceed those normally borne by the beneficiary(ies) nor the rates published by the European Commission at the time of such mission if reimbursed on the basis of incurred costs;
- travel and subsistence costs for other persons taking part in the action (final beneficiaries BSOs and SMEs owners), provided they do not exceed the lump sum indicated in Annex B Sheet 5- Per Diems;
- costs entailed by contracts awarded by the beneficiaries for the purposes of the action;
- costs deriving directly from the requirements of the contract (dissemination of information, evaluation specific to the action, certified translations, reproducing, insurance, etc.);
- duties, taxes and charges, including VAT, paid and not recoverable by the beneficiaries.
- In practise this means that , apart from the staff costs which are based on actual costs, the other eligible costs will be reimbursed without taking into account the VAT rates. However, if the beneficiary is able to prove that he can not recover it from his VAT administration, in this case the VAT will become an eligible cost.
- The amount of the eligible costs should be indicated in the budget without VAT, In the case were the VAT is cannot be recovered, the amount of the eligible costs can include VAT. eligible cost.
- The Beneficiary will need to send adequate legal proof in order to justify he is not able to recover the VAT (e.g a letter from the VAT authority or a legal proof that he is not subject to VAT in its country)
- In addition, visibility costs are also eligible as long as the conditions previously mentioned are fulfilled (please refer to the section 'visibility' above).

The applicants agree that the expenditure verification(s) referred to in Article 15.7 of the general conditions to the standard grant contract (see annexes to the standard grant) will be carried out by the EUROCHAMBRES,

the Sectorial Consortium or by EU Auditors. Therefore, they have the obligation of keeping the recordings for 5 years after the receipt of the final instalment.

Exchanges Rates

Where actual expenditure is incurred and paid in any other currency than Euro, the conversion into Euro shall be made at the InforEuro rate corresponding to the month (and year) of payment of the invoice itself. InforEuro rates can be found at the following web address:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm

Under this call, there are **no** eligible **indirect** costs.

Costs considered as ineligible.

The following costs are not eligible:

- financial allowances for trainees and participants in events (training sessions, workshops, seminars, conferences, working meetings, etc.);
- actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses;
- indirect costs;
- debts and debt service charges (interest);
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action/initiative or work programme receiving a European Union grant;
- purchases of land or buildings;
- currency exchange losses;
- costs for actions started before the signing of the contract.

In-kind contributions are not foreseen for this call.

Reporting requirements

Beneficiaries will be requested to submit the following reports based on their actions:

- a) Twinning – max. duration: 10 months
 - Narrative and financial 5-month reports (therefore 2 narrative and 2 financial reports in all if the action lasts longer than 5 months: 1 interim and 1 final narrative reports and 1 interim and 1 final financial reports).
- b) B2B Matching – max. duration: 6 months
 - Narrative and financial reports (therefore 2 reports in all: 1 Narrative and 1 Financial report).
- c) Study Visit – max. duration: 4 months
 - Narrative and financial reports (therefore 2 reports in all: 1 Narrative and 1 Financial report)

Interim narrative and financial reports can be linked with a request for payment of an additional 30% if these documents prove that BSOs partnership has spent at least 90% of the pre-financing instalment.

The final payment of 30 % will be paid within 60 working days following EUROCHAMBRES' approval of the final narrative and financial reports.

General rules for reporting

The BSOs partnership will have to:

- provide, within the deadlines to the relevant Sectorial Consortium all narrative and financial reports, as well as the KPIs reached (reference is made to the log frame), along with all relevant supporting documents;

- submit to EUROCHAMBRES via the Management and Information System (MIS all the concerned supporting documents for incurred costs;
- declare all income generated by the co-financed actions or any other income that should be considered as affecting the final amount of the grant;
- comply with set requirements with regard to the eligibility of costs, needed supporting documents and procedures to be adopted.

Furthermore, BSOs partnership should abide to the following rules:

- a) The **narrative** (interim and final) report shall cover the actions performed and the results obtained by the project during the reporting period. The report shall be analytical in approach, include a presentation of difficulties and shortcomings, and a discussion of possible remedies.
- b) The **financial reports**

Financial support beneficiaries are responsible for ensuring that the *financial accounting* and reporting is done in line with the third party financing rules, i.e. payments will only be made **for actual incurred costs** carried out during the reporting period, based on evidence and eligibility of the costs, as long as staff and other direct cost are concerned. For the travel and subsistence costs of the final beneficiaries (BSOs and SMEs), lump sums are accepted provided that they do not exceed the Per Diem calculation inserted in part B - Budget.

Financial reports

All expenses included in the interim or final financial reports by the Implementing beneficiary must meet the following minimum criteria:

1. They are incurred in accordance with the provisions of the project
2. They are necessary for carrying out the actions as described in the proposal
3. They are foreseen in the estimated Project Budget
4. They are incurred during the implementation period of the project
5. They are genuine, reasonable, justified, comply with the principles of sound financial management
6. They are identifiable, recorded in the Implementing Beneficiary accounts in accordance with the accounting practices of the Implementing Beneficiary and backed by supporting documents.

Final report

Within 30 calendar days following the end of the last reporting period, the formal final report will include:

- Final narrative report;
- Final financial statement (inc. detailed budget execution, signed cost claim, staff costs calculation sheet, and all supporting documents);
- Final outputs produced during the project (KPIs with reference to the general framework).

The BSOs Partnership coordinator will have to:

- Collect reports and supporting documents;
- Check and verify and request additional information;
- Draft the report and financial statements.

All reports (including the financial statements) must be submitted in the language of the (General) Grant Agreement.

Reports must be submitted to the relevant Sectorial Consortium through the EU4BCC Management and Information System (MIS).

All financial reports shall be submitted in Euro and shall cover the total expenses for the project actions to be implemented by the BSOs partnership, including expenses covered by the 5% co-funding contribution of the Implementing Beneficiary, in accordance with the conditions of this call.

In case the BSOs partnership accounting is established in a currency other than the Euro, the BSOs partnership must convert the costs recorded in their accounts into Euro, at the average of the daily exchange rates published in the C series of the Official Journal of the European Union, calculated over the corresponding reporting period. If no daily euro exchange rate is published in the Official Journal of the European Union for the currency in question, they must be converted at the average of the monthly accounting rates published on the Commission's website, calculated over the corresponding reporting period.

Ethics clauses and Code of Conduct

a) Absence of conflict of interest

The applicant must not be affected by any conflict of interest and must have no equivalent relation in that respect with other applicants or parties involved in the actions. Any attempt by an applicant to obtain confidential information, enter into unlawful agreements with competitors or influence the evaluation committee or EUROCHAMBRES during the process of examining, clarifying, evaluating and comparing applications will lead to the rejection of its application and may result in administrative penalties according to the Financial Regulation in force.

b) Respect for human rights as well as environmental legislation and core labour standards

The applicant and its staff must comply with human rights. In particular and in accordance with the applicable act, applicants who have been awarded contracts must comply with the environmental legislation including multilateral environmental agreements, and with the core labour standards as applicable and as defined in the relevant International Labour Organisation conventions (such as the conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining; elimination of forced and compulsory labour; abolition of child labour).

Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and sexual abuse:

The European Commission applies a policy of 'zero tolerance' in relation to all wrongful conduct which has an impact on the professional credibility of the applicant.

Physical abuse or punishment, or threats of physical abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation, harassment and verbal abuse, as well as other forms of intimidation, shall be prohibited.

c) Anti-corruption and anti-bribery

The applicant shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations and codes relating to anti-bribery and anti-corruption. The European Commission reserves the right to suspend or cancel project financing if corrupt practices of any kind are discovered at any stage of the award process or during the execution of a contract and if EUROCHAMBRES fails to take all appropriate measures to remedy the situation. For the purposes of this provision, 'corrupt practices' are the offer of a bribe, gift, gratuity or commission to any person as an inducement or reward for performing or refraining from any act relating to the award of a contract or execution of a contract already concluded with the contracting authority.

d) Unusual commercial expenses

Applications will be rejected or contracts terminated if it emerges that the award or execution of a contract has given rise to unusual commercial expenses. Such unusual commercial expenses are commissions not mentioned in the main contract or not stemming from a properly concluded contract referring to the main contract, commissions not paid in return for any actual and legitimate service, commissions remitted to a tax haven, commissions paid to a payee who is not clearly identified or commissions paid to a company which has every appearance of being a front company.

Grant beneficiaries found to have paid unusual commercial expenses on projects funded by the European Union are liable, depending on the seriousness of the facts observed, to have their contracts terminated or to be permanently excluded from receiving EU/EDF funds.

e) Breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud

EUROCHAMBRES reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to a breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud. If the breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud are discovered after the award of the contract, EUROCHAMBRES may refrain from concluding the contract.

2.2 HOW TO APPLY AND PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

Request for clarifications before submitting the proposal

Any clarification request or question to this call may be sent to the following e-mail eu4bcc@eurochambres.eu no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of applications.

The request must indicate the concerned sector.

Replies will be given no later than 11 days before the deadline for the submission of applications.

Therefore, the deadline for requesting any clarifications from EUROCHAMBRES 9 April 2021

Last date on which clarifications are issued by EUROCHAMBRES 19 April 2021.

All the questions received as well as their respective answers will be anonymised and published on the EU4BCC's website <http://connectingcompanies.eu/> in the section Calls for Proposals. Therefore, applicants should periodically consult the aforementioned site in order to be duly informed of the published questions and answers.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, EUROCHAMBRES and/or the Consortia cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, co-applicants, on a project or specific actions.

No individual replies will be given to questions. All questions and answers as well as other important notices to applicants during the course of the evaluation procedure, will be published on the website of the project (<http://connectingcompanies.eu/>), as the need arises. As stated, it is advisable to consult the above-mentioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

2.2.1 Deadline for submitting the proposal and on line uploading procedure

The deadline for submission of applications is **April 30th, 2021 at 17:00 pm (date and time of Belgium)**.

Applicants are strongly advised not to wait until the last day to submit their applications, since the resulting exceptional overload or a failure of the internet connection (power outages, etc.) could make it difficult to finalise the submission. EUROCHAMBRES will not assume any responsibility for delays owing to such situations.

Any request submitted after the indicated period will be rejected automatically.

Instructions to prepare the proposal and procedure to follow

General information

- a) Information in PADOR will NOT be drawn upon in the present call. (PADOR: Potential Applicant Data On-Line Registration is an online database in which organisations register themselves and update regularly their data)
- b) EU4BCC working language being English, proposals must be submitted in this language. Applicants must fill in all sections of the application form. Not filled-in sections may lead the rejection of the proposal on this sole basis.
- c) Any error related to the points listed in the checklist (Part C, Section Checklist of the application form) or any major inconsistency in the application (e.g. if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the proposal.
- d) The application form for the present call for proposals is composed of three separate forms:
 - Part A. Concept note and Description of Action Proposal
 - Part B. Provisional budget of the action
 - Part C. Legal, technical and financial documents to be provided by the applicants.

2.2.2. Part A Concept Note and Full Description of Action

Concept note

The concept note should include:

- the rationale behind the action
- the relevance and design of the proposed action
- the multiplier effect of the action
- if the targets, as well as a set of indicators, are provided
- if the proposed action tackles one or more of the following key issues:
 - gender equality;
 - business opportunities opened up with the Eastern Partnership Agreements signed between the EU and EaP countries;
 - institutional building, between CCIs and BSOs, best practices, benchmarking, cooperation between companies;
 - transfer of know-how, transfer of technology, synergies with existing networks like Enterprise Europe Network;
 - job creation and poverty reduction;
 - businesses in rural areas run by women and men.

Full description of the action

In this part, applications should present a rationale behind the action, provide the full description of the action and include the annex **Logical Framework**.

Other elements to tackle:

- Eligible sector
- Duration of the actions
- Geographical scope
- Types of actions and underlying actions
- Mandatory and optional actions
- Sustainability of the actions
- Indicators to be achieved per action
- Management of the actions through work packages
- Contingency plan
- GANTT diagram

2.2.3 Part B Provisional budget of the action

Applicants must present the provisional budget of the action and make sure that

- the correct template is used
- Worksheet # 1 has been correctly filled in
- Worksheet # 2 has been correctly filled in
- Worksheet # 4 has been correctly filled in
- Eligible costs are in line with the requirements mentioned in Section 2, point 2.1 of the present guidelines
- Staff costs including travel and accommodation costs represent a maximum of 40% of the provisional budget
- The provisional budget includes € 1.500,00 for each participant taking part in training activities
- The provisional budget is realistic and cost-effective budget.

Staff costs should be based on actual costs, justification of the staff costs can be requested by EUROCHAMBRES or the Sectorial Consortium.

Applicants must submit via the e-submission system the excel file.

2.2.4 Part C Legal, technical and financial documents to be provided by the applicants

Part C includes all the legal, technical and financial to be provided by the applicants and the checklist which will allow the lead applicant to check if the proposal includes all the requested forms and documents:

- Annex 1 – Declaration of the lead applicant for the lead applicant only
- Annex 2 – Declaration of Honour for all applicants
- Annex 3 – Mandate for co-applicant (Power of Attorney) for co-applicant(s) only
- Annex 4 – Previous experience for all applicants
- Annex 5 – Composition of the team for the lead applicant
- Annex 6 – CVs of the staff for all applicants (Technical capacity and relevant staff CVs)
- Annex 7 – Financial identification form for the lead applicant only
- Annex 8 – Statement turnover for all applicants
- Annex 9 – Checklist filled in for lead applicant
- Annex 10 – Annual accounts 2018, 2019 for the lead applicant only

Please save everything as a unique PDF and upload the file into the e-submission system.

No additional annexes should be sent.

2.2.5 Where and how to send the proposal

a) Preliminary measures

Lead applicants must verify that their application is complete using the checklist. Incomplete applications may be rejected

Applications (i.e. concept note and full application form, the budget, the technical capacity form) **must** be submitted online through the online submission system at the following link.

<https://submissions.connectingcompanies.eu/>

For any question regarding technical problems encountered during the online submission of the applications, please write an e-mail to eu4bcc@eurochambres.eu

IT support is open Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 12:00 and from 13:00 to 17:00 Brussels time (except for public holidays)

b) Online uploading procedure of the application forms

When submitting the online application, the applicant will upload **separately the 3 forms composing the application**

- a) Part A: Concept Note, Description of the action proposal (full application form) and the required annex
- b) Part B: Provisional Budget of the action
- c) Part C: Legal, technical and financial and all the required annexes.

No additional annexes should be sent.

Once the submission of the online application through the system is completed, the applicant will receive an acknowledgement of receipt **within max. 72 hours**.

Requests sent by any other means (for example, via post, fax or e-mail) or to addresses other than the system will be rejected.

Only complete application (forms and the required annexes) which have been correctly uploaded will be transmitted to the evaluators.

2.3 EVALUATION PROCEDURE AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the consortia, EUROCHAMBRES and approved by the Project Advisory Board (chaired by the European Commission). All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in Section 2, point 1, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

(1) STEP 1: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS AND CONCEPT NOTE EVALUATION

Stage 1 : Opening and administrative check

The eligibility verification will be performed on the basis of the supporting documents

1. The statutes or articles of association of the lead applicant and of each co-applicant (proving they are a not for profit entity and that they respect in full the eligibility criteria)
2. A copy of the applicants' turnover statement for the three last years
3. A Financial Identification Form of the lead applicant (not from co-applicant). The financial identification form has to be either certified by the bank to which the payments will be made or accompanied by a recent bank statement. This bank should be located in a country where the lead applicant is established.
4. The decision of the lead applicant's and of the co-applicants' managing bodies to implement the project along with the mandate entrusted to a/the person(s) empowered to represent and sign for the co-applicant: Agreement and Power of Attorney of the co-applicants
5. An authorisation or other licenses are necessary for the implementation of the project if required by the law.
6. All the legal, technical and financial documents as requested in Part C application form have been provided

Documents must be supplied in the form of scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals.

Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the European Union, a translation into English of the relevant parts of these documents proving the lead applicant's and co-applicant(s)'s eligibility, must be attached for the purpose of analysing the application.

Where these documents are in an official language of the European Union other than the language of call for proposal, it is **strongly** recommended, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the lead applicant's and co-applicants' eligibility, into English.

If the above-mentioned supporting documents are not provided before the deadline indicated in the request for supporting documents sent to the lead applicant by EUROCHAMBRES, **the application may be rejected**.

Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application on the reserve list that falls within the available budget for this call for proposals.

During the opening and administrative check, the following will be assessed:

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.

If the application meets all the criteria specified in the checklist in Part C of the grant application form. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis, and the application will not be evaluated further

Stage 2 Evaluation of the concept note

The concept notes will be evaluated on

- a) the rationale behind the action
- b) the relevance and design of the proposed action
- c) the multiplier effect of the action
- d) if the targets, as well as a set of indicators, are provided
- e) if the proposed action tackles one or more of the following key issues:
 - gender equality;
 - business opportunities opened up with the Eastern Partnership Agreements signed between the EU and EaP countries;
 - institutional building, between CCIs and BSOs, best practices, benchmarking, cooperation between companies;
 - transfer of know-how, transfer of technology, synergies with existing networks like Enterprise Europe Network;
 - job creation and poverty reduction;
 - businesses in rural areas run by women and men.

The concept notes will receive an overall score out of 50 using the breakdown in the evaluation grid below. The evaluation will also check on compliance with the instructions on how to complete the concept note, which can be found in Part A of the application form.

Technical proposal (Application form – Part A)

Relevance of the action: the project is relevant for the sector and takes into account the needs of the SMEs and BSOs and is implemented in the sector for which the application is submitted.

The action plan is coherent, realistic and feasible.

The proposal addresses the following key elements:

- needs in the sector are identified
- the activities to be performed are clear
- the timetable is realistic
- the expected results of the action are quantified and sustainable (for instance the number of business opportunities opened up by the contracts signed between EaP and EU SMEs, etc.)
- indicators are identified and achievable
- indicators correspond to the logical framework indicators
- the impact has quantitative, measurable and verifiable data
- means of verification are indicated
- critical risks and mitigation plan is indicated
- gender balance is taken into account
- rural/urban area balance is also considered when selecting the BSOs and/or SMEs to involve.

Further general elements should be indicated in a more general vision, considering that the goal of the actions should be to foster:

- trade between Member States of the EU and EaP countries;
- growth for the SMEs;
- institutional building, between CCIs and BSOs, best practices, benchmarking cooperation, contracts between companies;
- transfer of know-how, transfer of technology, synergies with existing business networks;
- job creation and poverty reduction.

The evaluation criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

1. Relevance of the action	30
1.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for proposals and to the specific themes/sectors/areas or any other specific requirement stated in the guidelines for applicants ?	5
1.2 How relevant is the proposal to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies), region(s) and/or relevant sectors (including synergy with other development initiatives and avoidance of duplication)?	5
1.3 Does the proposal contain particular added-value elements (e.g. innovation, best practices, etc.)?	5
1.4 To which extent does the proposal integrate relevant cross-cutting elements such as environmental/climate change issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, BSOs and SMEs from a local rural area(if there is a strong prevalence in the target country/region)?	5
1.5 Does the proposal identify the needs and constraints of target groups and final beneficiaries?	5
1.6 Are all the relevant KPIs mentioned in the proposal and addressed? How will the partnership reach them? How relevant are the activities proposed?	5
2. Design of the action	20
2.1 How coherent is the overall design of the action? Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the action? Does the intervention logic explain the rationale to achieve the expected results?	5
2.2 Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5
2.3 Does the design take into account external factors (risks and assumptions)? Are the activities feasible and consistent in relation to the expected results (including timeframe)? Are results of the action (output, outcome and impact) realistic?	5
2.4 To which extent does the proposal integrate relevant cross-cutting elements such as environmental/climate change issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, youth, combating HIV/AIDS (if there is a strong prevalence in the target country/region)?	5
Total Score	50

Stage 3 Evaluation of the Provisional Budget

The check of the provisional budget will take into account the following:

- Budget has been filed in using the correct template
- Worksheet # 1 has been correctly filled in
- Worksheet # 2 has been correctly filled in
- Worksheet # 4 has been correctly filled in
- Eligible costs are in line with the requirements mentioned in Section 2.1 of the present guidelines

- Staff costs including travel and accommodation costs represent a maximum of 40% of the provisional budget
- The provisional budget includes a lump sum of €1.500,00 for each participant taking part in training activities
- The provisional budget is realistic and cost-effective.

Budget has been filed in using the correct template	Yes	No
Worksheet # 1 has been correctly filled in		
Worksheet # 2 has been correctly filled in		
Worksheet # 4 has been correctly filled in		
Eligible costs are in line with the requirements mentioned in Section 2, points 2.1 and 3.2 of the present guidelines		
Staff costs including travel and accommodation costs represent a maximum of 40% of the provisional budget		
The provisional budget includes a lump sum of €1.500,00 for each participant taking part in training activities (see <i>important consideration in Section 2, point 3.1</i> of the guidelines)		
The provisional budget is realistic and cost-effective.		

Once all concept notes have been assessed, a list will be drawn up with the proposed actions ranked according to their total score.

Firstly, only the concept notes with a score of at least 30 will be considered for pre-selection.

Secondly, the number of concept notes will be reduced, taking account of the ranking, to the number of concept notes whose total aggregate amount of requested contributions is equal to at least 200% of the available budget for this call for proposals. The amount of requested contributions of each concept note will be based on the indicative financial envelopes for each lot, where relevant.

After the evaluation of concept notes, the contracting authority will send letters to all lead applicants, indicating whether their application was submitted by the deadline, informing them of the reference number they have been allocated, whether the concept note was evaluated and the results of that evaluation.

(2) STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

Firstly, the following will be assessed:

- If the step (1) has been fully implemented and if the assessment is positive. In the affirmative case, the proposal will be assessed from a technical and financial point of view (step 2). If instead any of the requested information is missing, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis, and the application will not be evaluated further.

The full applications that pass step (1) will therefore be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants and co-applicants. They will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: selection and award criteria.

The selection criteria help to evaluate the applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s operational capacity and the lead applicant's financial capacity and are used to verify that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the proposed action and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding (this only applies to lead applicants);
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This applies to applicants and any affiliated entity(ies).

The award criteria help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives and priorities set forth in the guidelines, and to award grants to projects which maximise the overall effectiveness of the call for proposals. They help to select applications which the contracting authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities. They cover the relevance of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the call for proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

Financial and operational capacity

Applicants must have stable and sufficient economic resources to maintain their activity throughout the duration of the grant and to participate in its funding. The applicants' financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following supporting documents:

- the profit and the loss account, the balance sheet for the last two financial years for which the accounts were closed;
- the turnover statement for the last three financial years;
- the technical capacity form: applicants must have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed action. In this respect, applicants have to submit a curriculum vitae Europass format - in English - of the main persons primarily responsible for managing and implementing the different activities;
- a list of previous projects and activities (if any) performed and connected to the field of the call for proposal or to the action to be carried out or to the sector for which the application is submitted.

Technical proposal (Application form – Part A)

The proposal addresses the key elements:

- needs in the sector are identified
- potential participants are clearly pre-identified
- both partners are involved in the action
- the activities to be performed are clear
- the timetable is realistic
- the expected results of the action are quantified and sustainable (for instance the number of business opportunities opened up by the contracts signed between EaP and EU SMEs, etc.)
- indicators are identified and achievable
- indicators correspond to the logical framework indicators
- the impact has quantitative, measurable and verifiable data
- means of verification are indicated
- visibility actions are foreseen (including a list of the tools to be used, justification on how activities will reach the identified target groups, etc.)
- critical risks and mitigation plan is indicated
- gender balance is taken into account
- rural/urban area balance is also considered when selecting the BSOs and/or SMEs to involve.

Further general elements should be indicated in a more general vision, considering that the goal of the activities should be to foster:

- trade between Member States of the EU and EaP countries;
- growth for the SMEs;

- institutional building, between CCIs and BSOs, best practices, benchmarking cooperation, contracts between companies;
- transfer of know-how, transfer of technology, synergies with existing business networks;
- job creation and poverty reduction.

Scoring:

The evaluation grid is divided into Sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

Evaluation grid

CRITERIA GRID FOR THE FULL APPLICATION FORM	Max. points
1. Financial and operational capacity	15
1.1. Do the applicants and their co-applicants have sufficient technical expertise in the sector? (in particular, knowledge of the issues to be addressed) TOPICS OF PROJECTS (support to BSOs, sectorial approach).	3
1.2. Do the applicants and their co-applicants have sufficient management capacity (including staff, equipment and capacity to manage the budget of the action)?	5
1.3. Does the lead applicant have stable and sufficient sources of funding? Ref. is made to positive Financial Statements (balance sheets and profit&loss accounts) in each of the last two years.	5
1.4. Do both (or all) applicants have stable equity ratio? Ref. is made to the statement of turnover.	2
2. Relevance of the action	30
Score transferred from the Concept Note evaluation (step 1)	
3. Effectiveness and feasibility of the action	20
3.1 Are the proposed activities appropriate, practical and in line with the objectives and expected results of the action? Is the plan to reach the expected results clear and achievable? Does the proposal mention how it will improve the situation of the final recipients and beneficiaries? Is the choice of activities well justified and will enable them to achieve the expected results? Are they effective and viable? Does the proposal indicate any (proven) methodology that facilitates the implementation of the action?	5
3.2. Is the organisation and level of participation of the applicant and co-applicants in the action satisfactory? Ref. is made to the organisational structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of the different actors (applicant, co-applicant and if they consider the participation of recipients or local authorities, etc.). • Team to manage the action, the roles staff has and the reasons why they have been assigned those roles. • Is there a contingency plan? • Is there any synergy with other projects, especially EU-funded initiatives? 	5
3.3. Is the activity plan clear and feasible? Ref. is made to the identification of the timing and actors involved in the action, as well as to the activity plan.	5
3.4. Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable performance indicators? Reference is made to the logical framework.	5
4. Sustainability of the action	10

4.1. Is the action likely to have a tangible effect on the target groups? Can the proposal have multiplier effects (including the possibility of reproducing and extending the results of the action and disseminating information?) Ref. is made to the impact and replicability of the action: quantitative, measurable and verifiable data and the possibility to replicate the results.	5
4.2 Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable? Is the proposal providing a table with critical risk analysis and mitigation measures?	5
5. Visibility and Communication plan towards BSOs and SMEs	5
5.1. Does the proposal provide a visibility and communication plan? How does the partnership intend to reach the target groups?	5
6. Budget cost-effectiveness of the action	20
6.1. Are the activities duly reflected in the budget? Ref. is made to the activities proposed and the allocated budget for those specific activities.	10
6.2 Is the relationship between estimated costs and expected results satisfactory? Ref. is made to the logical framework and relationship between the KPIs, means and the project objectives, and total budget.	10
TOTAL	100

If the total score for Section 1 (financial and operational capacity) is less than 12 points, the application will be rejected. If the score for at least one of the subsections under Section 1 is 1, the application will also be rejected.

The evaluation will be made on a sectorial basis.

Minimum threshold

The minimum threshold for the selection will be 70 points. Applications below said threshold will not be retained for funding and will not be part of the reserve list.

Stage 4 Provisional selection

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached and above the threshold indicated in the previous paragraph.

This table will be drawn up per sector, and the selection will be made taking into consideration the need for a balance between the types of actions per sector (i.e. if two applications have the same score, the one allowing for more balance between the financed actions will be granted as a priority).

In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria. This list will be used if more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list (until the end of the award procedure).

Once all the actions foreseen in one sector will be selected for granting and should there be any remaining funds, the specific amount of the surplus can be re-directed towards another sector, should there be actions on the reserve list which can be retained for funding in accordance with the above criteria (minimum threshold, table with ranking and balance between the types of actions).

The lead applicant of the proposal which has been provisionally selected or placed on the reserve list will be informed in writing by EUROCHAMBRES.

EUROCHAMBRES can ask the leader of the preselected proposal additional information or clarification.

(3) STEP 3: FINAL DECISION

Stage 5 Final selection

After receiving the required clarifications (if needed), EUROCHAMBRES will make the final decision updating the list of provisional selection of proposals into the final list.

2.4 NOTIFICATION OF THE DECISION

The lead applicants will be informed in writing of the EUROCHAMBRES' decision concerning their application and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision. This letter will be sent by e-mail.

An applicant believing that it has been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may lodge a complaint by e-mail to the eu4bcc@eurochambres.eu

Applicants and, if they are legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion, their personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the early detection and exclusion system, and communicated to the persons and entities concerned in relation to the award or the execution of a grant contract.

For more information, you may consult the privacy statement available on http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm.

2.5 INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

Publication 01/03/2021

	DATE	TIME
1. Information call	March 2021	To be announced*
2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from EUROCHAMBRES	9 April 2021	N/A
3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by EUROCHAMBRES	19 April 2021	N/A
4. Deadline for submission of full applications	30 April 2021	17:00, Brussels Time
5. Information to lead applicants on the evaluation of the full applications (Step 2, stage 4)	Up to 31 May 2021(*)	N/A
6. Notification of award (Step 3)	11/06/2021 (*)	-
7. Contract signature	Second part of June 2021	N/A

8. Implementation of the actions (financial support to 3rd parties)	From July 2021 for max. 11 months (up to May 2022 included).	N/A
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All times are in the time zone of Belgium.

This indicative timetable refers to provisional dates (except for dates 2, 3, and 4) and may be updated by the contracting authority during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the web site of the project: <http://connectingcompanies.eu/>

2.6 SIGNATURE OF THE GRANT CONTRACT

A grant contract between EUROCHAMBRES and the BSOs partnership represented by the lead applicants will be signed (see section 2.8).

The grant contract includes, amongst others, the following provisions:

- Article 1. Purpose of the grant contract
- Article 2. Implementation period of the action
- Article 3. Financing of the action
- Article 4. Reporting and payment arrangements
- Article 5. Role of the relevant Sectorial Consortium
- Article 6. Role of the coordinator
- Article 7. Obligations of the beneficiaries – Delay in the implementation of the action – Exclusion of a beneficiary
- Article 8. Contact addresses
- Article 9. Subcontractors
- Article 10. Visibility rules
- Article 11. Processing of personal data
- Article 12. Ownership of the results – Pre-existing intellectual rights
- Article 13. Recovery of undue payments
- Article 14. Obligation to Keep Records and supporting documents – EU Checks and Audits
- Article 15. Liability towards third parties
- Article 16. Early termination of the grant contract
- Article 17. Amendment to the contract
- Article 18. Applicable law and settlement of dispute
- Article 19 – Annexes

3 SECTION 3 - LIST OF ANNEXES

3.1 DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

Application form composed of 3 parts Part A, Part B and Part C:

1. Part A – Application form
2. Part B – Budget
3. Part C – Technical capacity

Annex (to Part A):

- Annex 1 Logical Framework

Annexes (1-9 included in Part C):

- Annex 1 – Declaration of the lead applicant for the lead applicant only
- Annex 2 – Declaration of Honour for all applicants
- Annex 3 – Mandate for co-applicant (Power of Attorney) for co-applicant(s) only
- Annex 4 – Previous experience for all applicants
- Annex 5 – Composition of the team for the lead applicant
- Annex 6 – CVs of the staff for all applicants (Technical capacity and relevant staff CVs)
- Annex 7 – Financial identification form for the lead applicant only
- Annex 8 – Statement turnover for all applicants
- Annex 9 – Checklist filled in for lead applicant
- Annex 10 – Annual accounts 2018, 2019 for the lead applicant only

3.2 DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION AND USEFUL LINKS

Annex G: Standard grant contract

- Annex II: general conditions
- Annex III: special conditions
- Annex IV: contract award rules
- Annex V: standard request for payment
- Annex VI: model narrative and financial report

Prag link: <https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/>

Annex H: Daily allowance rates (per diem), available at the following address:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/about-procurement-contracts/procedures-and-practical-guide-prag/diems_en

Annex J: Information on the tax regime applicable to grant contracts signed under the call

Annex K: Guidelines for assessing simplified cost options.

Useful links:

EU Practical guide line applicable to grants

<https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/>

Project Cycle Management Guidelines

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/aid-delivery-methods-project-cycle-management-guidelines-vol-1_en

Implementation of grant contracts: Users' Guide

<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/companion/document.do?nodeNumber=19&locale=en>

Financial Toolkit

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/procedures-beneficiary-countries-and-partners/financial-management-toolkit_en

Please note: The toolkit is not part of the grant contract and has no legal value. It merely provides general guidance and may in some details differ from the signed grant contract. In order to ensure compliance with their contractual obligations, beneficiaries should not exclusively rely on the toolkit but always consult their individual contract documents.
