



Call for Proposals FAQ



EU4Business

EUROCHAMBRES

EU4BUSINESS: CONNECTING COMPANIES

Call for Proposals: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Introduction

This document has been produced with the questions received through the project's contact email (eu4bcc@eurochambres.eu), during the networking sessions, and during the presentation of the call for proposals. Please note the project team is not allowed to give answers to questions by email and this is the reason why this FAQ document has been created.

The FAQ will be updated on a weekly basis to add the questions received after the publication of the first edition. EUROCHAMBRES project team will continue adding questions and answers until 9 August (17:00, Brussels time) and the last version will be published on April 19.

FAQ

ELIGIBILITY

Question 1: *Writing this on behalf of the Azerbaijan Microfinance Association in relation to EU4BCC project.*

Azerbaijan Microfinance Association is the BSO and union of the Microfinance Institutions in Azerbaijan.

We planned to apply to the EU4BCC project for the study visit to advance the experience and capability of our member institutions in respect to digitalisation and digital transformation of microfinance / financial services.

Given that the sectoral focus of the EU4BCC doesn't include finance / microfinance, are we eligible for applying for such a study tour? If we understand right, only BSOs or businesses with focus or activities in the pre-determined sectors can apply to the EU4BCC project's current round.

Answer: The call is open for Business Support Organisations which are non-profit making public or private entities. The proposed projects should cover one of the four business sectors: Creative Industries, Textile, Tourism and Wine and involve BSOs and/or SMEs (depending on the type of action) from these sectors as final beneficiaries.

Question 2: *According to the text of the call, it seems that only Moldova, Belarus and Azerbaijan should be involved for the tourism sector. What about Armenia, is it still an eligible country?*

Answer: This is not correct, all EaP countries are eligible. The text of the call does not say the other EaP countries are not to be involved or not eligible.

Question 3: *Regarding the co-applicant, can we consider Croatia as co-applicant and the other 2 EaP countries as partners?*

Answer: You can consider any EaP and EU based non profit entity as co-applicants, as long as the partnership remains balanced.

Question 4: *Can a partnership be built with the following partners: one EU BSOs and one EAP BSO (but located and registered in EU country - for instance: EAP country Chamber in Spain)... could this be considered as an eligible partnership then?*

Answer: The partnership needs to be balanced: 1 BSO established in a Member State of the European Union, 1 BSO established in one of the EaP countries. All BSOs need to meet the other eligibility criteria (e.g. : non profit entities, etc.).

Question 5: *According to the guidelines: "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)". If the EaP Co-Applicant is an association of different local support agencies that operate on the territory, the minimum required turnover is referred to the single local organisation that applies the call or can be considered the global turnover of the Association (sum of the local agencies' turnovers)?*

Answer: The lead applicant AND co-applicant(s) need to have a turnover exceeding 50.000 euro/year over the last 3 financially closed years. Each separate legal entity (public or private) applying for the call needs to be a non profit entity and to have a turnover of min. 50.000,00 euro / year over each of the last 3 closed financial years. We cannot know the particular case and cannot analyse specific situations. As a general rule, if the various agencies are part of the same legal entity and this legal entity has a unique profit and loss account / financial statement for all agencies, the entity seems to be unique and entitled to present that unique turnover.

Question 6: *Can the SME which is recently registered and started its operation in August 2021 apply for the grant?*

Answer: To be eligible the applicants must meet the following criteria:

- private or public legal entity
- a non-profit making entity

- The lead applicant in the BSOs partnership must be established in a Member State of the European Union, whereas co-applicants can be established in a Member State of the European Union or in one of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries.

The applicants must also have a turnover of min. 50.000 euro/year over each of the last 3 closed financial years.

The SME established in August 2021 shall not meet the eligibility requirements of the call.

Question 7: *Can the BSO company be the local Armenian company?*

Answer: The call is open to business support organisations (BSOs) that meet the following criteria:

- a private or public legal entity
- a non-profit making entity

The lead applicant in the BSOs partnership must be established in a Member State of the European Union, whereas co-applicants can be established in a Member State of the European Union or in one of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries.

Question 8: *Is the university allowed to submit a proposal to this project?*

Answer: The call is open to business support organisations (BSOs) that meet the following criteria:

- a private or public legal entity
- a non-profit making entity

The lead applicant in the BSOs partnership must be established in a Member State of the European Union, whereas co-applicants can be established in a Member State of the European Union or in one of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries.

Question 9: *I would like to ask you a question regarding the eligibility of our second organisation to be the lead partner in EU4Busines: Connecting Companies project. In the call for proposals it is stated that the project is dedicated to Business Support Organisations, such as unions, association, etc. Our organisation is a non-profit organisation which deals with cultural and educational projects between Germany and East European countries. But we are not any of the organisations described in your call for proposals in 1.2a. With our partner, we would like to create a project in the area of Creative Industries. But as we are not sure whether our organisation is a BSO, we would like to double check it with you.*

Answer: Are considered as BSOs:

- Business associations
- Chambers of Commerce
- Employers' federations
- Women associations
- Sectorial federations
- Local and regional economic development agencies established in the eligible countries,

- Business incubators,
- Business/Creative hubs,
- etc.

In general, the organisation applying to the call for proposal should have 'business support' at the core of its activities.

Question 10: *We would like to check if the sector of ceramics is included in the creative industry sector.*

Answer: The creative industries definition from the UK Government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is: 'Those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property.'

Question 11: *Can you, please, confirm the eligibility of our Agency to be a lead partner for the EU4BCC call for proposals?*

We are the Regional Development Agency. Our legal form is a joint stock company acting ruled by the Polish Commercial Code. In the Statute, the entry in the paragraph 41, pint 2 states: 'all the profits generated in years 2002 to 2025 will be allocated for the statutory objectives of the company'. Are we eligible with this statement as a non-profit organisation?

Answer: Even though the Statute states that all the profits will be allocated for the statutory objectives of the company, the organisation in question is a joint-stock company, ruled by the Polish Commercial Code, which excludes it to be a non for profit organisation. Therefore, unfortunately, the Agency is not eligible.

APPLICATION

Question 1: *We have submitted a proposal within the previous call within EU4Business: Connecting companies and the proposal has been approved. Now, we are willing to submit another proposal for another sector and the B2B Matchings as a type of eligible activity. Since the min. 6 business meetings are milestones within the B2B Matchings, how many physical events should the partners organise? One in an EU and one in an EaP country?*

Answer: All activities should be planned face to face. There is no limit on the number of physical events, as long as it respects the minimum KPIs of the call. You can incorporate several meetings in one international travel, for example.

Question 2: *We are glad to be part of the EU4BCC program with our proposal "From Grape to Trade" for Azerbaijani and Bulgarian Wine exporters (study visit)! Are the regulations still the same, or could we apply once more for a study visit? The same question appears for the wine sector.*

Answer: If the applicant has already received the grant within the first call for proposals, for the second call it cannot apply for the same type of action. Please remember that if the applicant has already received two grants within the EU4BCC project, it is no longer eligible for this call.

Question 3: *I would like to ask you a question regarding part C of the proposal. My organisation has submitted an action proposal for the last call as lead applicant and got it accepted, and we are planning to apply for a different action in the second call as lead applicant again. Would it be possible to reuse the documents (in particular Annexes 1, 2, 7, 8, the statutes and annual accounts) that were already sent for the first call, even if these were completed and signed a few months ago?*

Answer: No. Please send the updated documents using the application forms of the new call for proposals.

Question 4: *In Milestones to achieve per B2B Matchings action, the Guideline speaks about Business Meetings. Should the meetings be collective, or can they be individual?*

Answer: Meetings can be individual or collective, but all SMEs (final beneficiaries) should be involved in meetings. The BSOs partnership should look into the KPIs set out in the call guidelines for more details.

Question 5: *I would like to ask a question on the key issues of the EU4BCC call. Regarding the key issues identified in the form (gender equality, business opportunities, institutional building, transfer of know-how, job creation and poverty reduction and businesses in rural areas run by women and men), there is also an “other key issues” option. Is it possible to define a key issue of our choice, considering the action’s objectives? Or should it be taken from any reference list or document?*

Answer: As set out in the call guidelines, the project proposals should cover a minimum of three key issues from the proposed list. Please also note that some of the cross-cutting key issues (gender equality, job creation, businesses in rural areas) are among the mandatory KPIs to be achieved by the actions. The BSOs partnership can always add ‘other key issues’ of its choice as far as they are relevant to the project’s objectives, but should respect the indicators.

Question 6: *We would like to know if there is any limit for the length of the study visit; there are mentioned 3-days in the call document, is this the minimum stay of the limit?*

Answer: According to the guidelines (section 2.1.3, p.16), the milestones to be achieved for the study visit include:

- 3 days visit to the 'pair' EU SMEs/BSOs involved to jointly work on the result (i.e. product/service/definition of the contract/commercial cooperation, creation of a new marketing plan, etc.)
- 3 days visit to the 'pair' EaP SMEs/BSOs 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.)

The applicant can foresee additional days (additional to those 6) for the visits in order to achieve the objectives of the action. Please also take into account the rest of the milestones to be achieved (e.g. Min. 5 business meetings to be organised (involving sectorial SMEs)).

Question 7: *The study visit could be just on one side, or we are obliged to organise one study visit in every country taking part in the proposal?*

Answer: the study visit should be organised to the EU and the EaP.

Question 8: *Due to the current situation in some of the EaP countries, can we organise from the beginning the study visit there (if required to do so) virtually?*

Answer: All activities should be planned face to face. The applicant needs to provide the contingency plan in the application on how to mitigate the risk of continuous restrictions due to the pandemic. Following the contract signature, if the BSOs partnership sees that the travel is still not possible, it should request the amendment to the budget to reshuffle the travel budget and switch to the implementation of the contingency plan.

Question 9: *I write you concerning a question that came up during the preparation of a Study Visit proposal.*

In the call, it is mentioned that it is mandatory to include the attendance to a sector fair. In our case, we have conducted a research for events and it was difficult to find anything worthy in terms of usefulness for the project happening in January/February 2022. That is why we have come up with the idea of organising the fair internally, that is, relying on the participants' mobilisation capacity and experience. It would not have any budget implication, but in our opinion this approach would enable to organise a more targeted event that works for the benefit of the SMEs and BSOs participating. Would then be possible to foresee the organisation of the sectorial internally to the project instead of assisting to an external event?

Answer: Yes, the applicant can foresee the organisation of the trade fare. However, it needs to involve other stakeholders and BSOs and SMEs than the final beneficiaries.

Question 10: *There will be 4 team members. How many should be from the lead applicants and how many from the co-applicant?*

Answer: The call for proposal requests the applicants (lead applicant and/or co-applicant) to propose an action team composed of at least 4 persons. The applicants are free to decide on the composition of their action team provided that they meet the requirements of the call.

Question 11: *There is written that there should be at least 8 SMEs and then 2 should be under 35, etc. Can 2 from 8 be under 35 or 8+2?*

Answer: The specific indicators can be found in Annex 1 Logical Framework to Part A. If the call requires to involve at least 8 SMEs, at least two SMEs owners should be under 35 years old.

Question 12 : *Those two who should travel to Brussel. Should they be from the lead applicant or co-applicant? Should they be from the core team?*

Answer: The call requests at least 2 representatives of the BSOs partnership to take part in visits in Brussels. BSOs are free to decide on their representatives visiting Brussels.

Question 13: *Are that 4 months including preparation and final reporting or the study visit should be 4 months and + preparation and final reporting?*

Answer: The duration of the action is 4 months. The narrative and financial reports need to be sent to the Eurochambres within 1 month after the action is completed and not later than 15 June 2022.

Question 14: *In the EU4BCC-call there are 4 sectors available to address. Do we need to choose only one of them or can we choose to work within several?*

Answer: A proposal presented by a BSOs partnership should target only one of the available sectors. A separate proposal must be presented if the same BSOs partnership wants to receive funds in another sector as well. However, the same BSOs partnership may apply for a grant for a maximum of 2 actions in 2 sectors (maximum). If two proposals are submitted under the same call, they cannot refer to the same action (i.e.

two proposals can be submitted for one study visit and one B2B matching in the same sector or in 2 different sectors).

Question 15: *We would like to apply for study visits: if we sign the contract at the end of November (as stated in the application) it is foreseen to start the project activities max at the end of December. Our 4 months timeframe will have to include anyhow Christmas time and we will waste several days to work in the action. If funded, can we sign the contract the 30 Nov and then start the project the 30 of Dec?*

Answer: The contracts will be signed in November, with the activities starting in December (1st of December). The selected BSOs partnerships can start their actions according to their schedule (i.e. after 1st of December), however, the implementation of the action must start within 1 month from the date of signature of the grant contract. At the same time, all activities should finish till May 2022 (included). The final reports should be presented by 15 June 2022 (max).

Question 16: *I would like to ask if in one chosen sector - for examples wine - and the action "study visits" - we can organise only one visit or few visits e.g. 3 visits within one project?*

Answer: According to the call for proposals, there is no restriction in organising more than 2 visits (keep in mind one on each side, for 3 days, is compulsory: one on the EU and one on the EaP sides). However, the applicants should consider the availability of the budget to organise more than 2 study visits of min. 3 days.

Question 17: *Is it possible to submit a proposal that include only 2 BSOs (one from EU and one from an EaP country)?*

Answer: Yes. The lead BSO should be from the EU.

Question 18: *Is it possible that this action is composed of staff from the various members of the consortium and not only form the Lead Applicant?*

Answer: Yes. Moreover, it is highly recommended that all BSOs in the partnership are equally represented and the distribution of the tasks is balanced.

Question 19: *Is each partner able to propose a staff of 4?*

Answer: It is recommended to have a staff composed min. of four people for the BSOs Partnership. The partnership can propose more staff members taking into account that the staff cost does not exceeds 40% of the total provisional budget.

Question 20: *For the study visits, we have an indicator of visits to sectorial fairs. Can it be a general exhibition with exhibitors from the sector or it must be a specialised fair? Does it have a space limit regarding where the fairs should be organised? Can we visit a trade fair at a 400 km distance from our BSO?*

Answer:

- It can be a general exhibition, where the representatives of the concrete sectors also participate. In this case, the project proposal should clearly demonstrate the benefits of participation in this fair for the beneficiaries.
- There is no distance limit where the fairs can be organised; however, it should be in the EU and/or in the EaP countries.

Question 20: *The video created about the results can be made with a good camera phone, or do we have to subcontract a filming service?*

Answer: You can make a video with a camera/phone or have a filming service; it depends on the capacity of the BSOs Partnership.

Question 21: *At the implementation phase, the Board of sectorial experts or an expert from Eurochambres will guide on implementation?*

Answer: Board of Sectorial Experts is not directly involved in the implementation of the projects, but is in charge of elaborating a long-term strategy for each economic sector (bio-food, creative industries, textile, tourism, wine) to promote investment, trade relations and business cooperation between the EU and EaP. The Sectorial Consortia, together with the EU4BCC project team, will provide guidance and assistance to the selected BSOs Partnership throughout the project implementation.

Question 22: *Should we open a special bank account for the projects, different for the two sectors?*

Answer: No need to open a special account. The lead BSO should indicate its bank account details in the Financial Identification Form (included in Part C of the application).

Question 23: *Can the trade fair be in Paris or London or China?*

Answer: All activities should be implemented in the EU and/or the EaP countries.

Question 24: *Can the financial officer on leader BSO's side be its legal representative? Mr President was also engaged in other projects as a staff / consultant.*

Answer: There is no restriction in such direction.

Question 25: *How will we need to prove, for example, the B2B min. expected result: "measured and proven increase of export/import for at least 4 of the 20 SMEs involved"?*

Answer: It can be proven through year on year increase declared by the SMEs in the final survey EUROCHAMBRES will produce and circulate, as well as copies of the signed contracts, video testimonials from SME owners, etc.

BUDGET

Question 1: *If we would like to have a long visit, if eligible, of 10 days, could it be co-financed by the participants or any other source of funding we could find, or do we just have to limit to the proposal/call funding?*

Answer: It's not forbidden to have a longer visit, which is co-financed by other sources of funding, however, the budget of the call should only include expenses covered by and be eligible for the EU4BCC project. Please also take into account that the sheet 2 "Justification of the budget", has to be filled in with clarifications on how the days will be used and how the costs will be covered.

Question 2: *To what extent can we appoint external experts through subcontracting?*

Answer: You can do so, as long as you respect the procurement procedures.

Question 3: *The travel and accommodation costs for attending the B2B in presence (if possible), are considered within the budget of 60.000 euro?*

Answer: Yes.

Question 4: *Do we still have to foresee an event in Brussels, besides the B2B?*

Answer: Indeed.

Question 5: *Regarding study visit: are eligible the following expenses: hiring of a collective local private transport (bus probably) for the different agenda meetings/trips we will include in the 3-days study visit;*

Answer: The applicants are allowed to rent a bus to transport the participants in the action. However, the use of the service needs to be linked to the agenda and meetings of the action as described in PART A of the application form.

Question 6: *What about the caterings, since the participants will have “per diem” allocated, are eligible catering for the common meals with the local participants in the visits (business breakfast, networking lunch...) or not.*

Answer: In case a catering is provided, the daily allowance (per diem) for the participants needs to be reduced by a respective amount. For example, final beneficiaries travelling to Moldova are entitled to a maximum daily allowance of 100 EUR. However, if the budget foresees a catering price of 20 EUR/person, the final beneficiaries should receive only 80 EUR.

Question 7: *Considering the distribution of the budget, is it allowed to allocate a lower per diem to the staff members travelling abroad than the amount indicated in the Excel sheet 5. Per Diems - Official column? For example, allocate 250 EUR/day for the stay in Azerbaijan, instead of the official figure of 293 EUR. If so, when it comes to reimbursing the actual costs, will you only reimburse up to the limit of the figure indicated?*

Answer: Subsistence costs (hotels, meals) for a staff member travelling abroad are reimbursed based on actual costs up to the limits indicated by the EC. Therefore, the applicants are not allowed to go above the aforementioned limits in their budget. However, the applicants may indeed plan a lower per diem amount in the budget.



Thank you for your time and look forward to cooperating with you!

EU4Business: Connecting Companies Team

