



EU4BUSINESS: CONNECTING COMPANIES

MOBILITY SCHEME

connectingcompanies.eu





GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS



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ABOUT THE PROJECT | EU4BUSINESS: CONNECTING COMPANIES AND THE MOBILITY SCHEME

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) was launched in 2009 as a strategic and ambitious partnership based on common values and rules, mutual interests, and commitments, as well as shared ownership and responsibility¹.

Eurochambres, the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI), is the only European business organisation having as member the national CCIs in all the countries covered by the EaP.

Funded by the European Commission under the EU4Business initiative and managed by Eurochambres, the <u>EU4BUSINESS: CONNECTING COMPANIES</u> (EU4BCC) project aims at promoting trade between the EU member states and the EaP. Its main aims are to:

- Contribute towards the development of sustainable and equitable economic growth models in the Eastern Partnership countries.
- Support capacity of sectorial Business Support Organisations (BSOs) to enhance EaP Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) internationalisation, export capacities and access to new markets.
- > Support SMEs towards trade, more specifically export towards EU countries.

It is organised on a sectoral basis to allow a more strategic approach, targeting the specific needs and opportunities of each sector, and allowing for the creation of alliances between EU and EaP businesses on a sectoral basis.



THE PROJECT TARGETS 5 STRATEGIC SECTORS:



Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. Belarus suspended its membership in June 2021.

¹ At the time of preparation of this guidelines, there were five participating countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the





The mobility scheme: a win-win experience!

This exchange programme, developed under the EU4BCC project, aims at providing BSOs and SME owners and managers from the EaP with an enriching mobility exchange in the European Union with a deep insight on the organisational/business structure and information exchange to enhance cooperation between participants.

The initiative will sponsor the business exchange between **50** BSOs (staff) and **35** SMEs (entrepreneurs, business owners or managers) from the EaP and the EU between February and June 2023.

The exchange between SMEs will last one month while the exchange between BSOs can last one month to two months.

The exchange is defined in natural months, understood as a period from a particular numbered day in one month to the day with the same number in the next month.

The financial support for SMEs is equal to the lump sum of the destination country for one month while the financial support for BSOs is equal to the lump sum of the destination country for one month or two months.



Given the current invasion of Russia in Ukraine and the impact that this situation is having on the Ukrainian business community, applications from Ukrainian SMEs and BSOs will be prioritised².

BENEFITS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

For BSOs

- As an outgoing staff of an EaP BSO, participants will benefit from the exchange of procedures, tools, and ways of working, as well as from the exchange of good practices concerning the services to be provided to SMEs.
- As a receiving staff of an EU BSO, participants will get to know more the EaP, will gain a better understanding of the context, and will be able to give accurate information and promote more business exchanges with the region.
- Both sides will benefit from experiencing and sharing different approaches and ways of working, will enrich their own experience and will look into new services to offer to the SMEs interested in the EaP or the EU region.

² Ukrainian applicants don't need to be based in Ukraine at the moment of the application neither they need to travel from Ukraine once the exchange is granted.



For SMEs

- As an outgoing entrepreneur, SMEs owners/managers will benefit from « on-the-job training » and exchange of experiences in a SME in another participating country. This will ease the successful start of business cooperation and/or strengthen the capacity of the EaP business. Participants on both sides (EaP and EU) can also benefit from access to new markets, international cooperation, and potential further collaboration with business partners abroad.
- Receiving entrepreneur, SMEs owners/managers can benefit from fresh ideas from a motivated EaP counterpart. The EaP participants may have new visions, specialised skills, or knowledge in an area the host does not master, which could also complement the competences of the receiving business.
- > It is a win-win collaboration whereby both sides can also discover new markets or business partners, as well as different ways of doing business.
- > In the longer-term, participants benefit from wide networking opportunities, and, possibly, decide to continue their collaboration as long-term business partners (e.g., joint ventures, subcontracting activities, contractor-supplier relationships, etc).

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Participants in the sub-grants granted by EU4BCC in 2021 and 2022 are eligible to participate as outgoing and hosting participants!

Outgoing participants

Applicants from all industries and sectors of activity are welcomed to participate, however, due to sectoral approach of the project, priority will be given to <u>applicants operating in one of the target</u> sectors:

BIO/ORGANIC FOOD

WINE

TOURISM

TEXTILE

CREATIVE











The programme does not require a minimum age to participate, however, a good command of English and the language spoken in the host country for EaP participants is required to ensure a good communication before and during the exchange.



Entrepreneurs, SME³ business owners or managers from the EaP countries⁴ interested in gaining useful know-how for their business as well as making available their own business skills to contribute to the development of the hosting SME.

Employees of a BSO⁵ based in one of the EaP countries interested in learning new procedures, tools, and ways of working. The visiting employee will be willing to share useful information about the EaP region to promote business exchanges between the EU and the EaP.

Hosting participants

Experienced **SMEs/entrepreneurs** with more than three years of professional experience that are looking to share their knowledge and expertise are able to take part in this initiative. The company shall be based in one of the Member States of the EU and the staff involved in the exchange must be committed to work with the outgoing SME employee/Entrepreneur towards developing his/her skills and know-how.

Applicants from all industries and sectors of activity are welcomed to participate, however, due to sectoral approach of the project, priority will be given to applicants operating in one of the target sectors.

To be a **hosting BSO**, organisations need to be based in one of the Member States and have business interests in the EaP region.

Outgoing participants can only participate once in the exchange programme, however, hosting participants can participate more than once but are not allowed to host more than one outgoing participant at a time.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The project financial support to **outgoing participants** has been conceived as **monthly "lump sums"**⁶, which is a fixed amount deemed to cover expenses such as travel, accommodation, subsistence, and insurance linked to the travel and the stay abroad. This amount is paid without justification of costs incurred.

Outgoing participants will receive a monthly lump sum based on the living standard of the hosting country. For further information about the applicable lump sums, see here.

³ See here for the definition of SME: https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-definition_en

⁴ The company shall be registered in one of the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Ukrainian applicants are allowed to apply even if they are currently based in another country (EU or non-EU).

⁵ BSOs should meet the following criteria: 1) be a private or public legal entity, and 2) be a non-profit making entity. Are considered as BSOs: Business associations, Chambers of Commerce, Employers' federations, Women associations, Sectorial federations, Local and regional economic development agencies, Business incubators, Business/Creative hubs etc.

⁶ Applicable bank charges related to the transfer of the lump sums to the participants (if applicable) shall be borne by the beneficiary.



Participants cannot ask for additional financial support should their expenses exceed the amount of the lump sum. Likewise, the designated consortium cannot ask for the return of unspent funds.

Outgoing entrepreneurs and SME owners and managers are only entitled to 1 lump sum, provided they spend 1 month abroad (therefore 4 full weeks of cooperation with the hosting participant).

Employees of BSOs are entitled to 1 lump sum (therefore 4 full weeks of cooperation with the hosting participant) or 2 lump sums (therefore 8 full weeks of cooperation with the hosting participant).

Periods in between 1 month and 2 months (for instance 45 days) do not allow the participants to receive a second lump sum. Additionally, the project will not offer additional financial support for periods above 1 month for SMEs and 2 months for BSOs.

Outgoing participants will receive a monthly lump sum based on the living standard of the hosting country. For further information about the applicable lump sums, see here.

Participants should provide sufficient evidence to proof the exchange and its duration. For further information please refer to the section reporting.

Hosting participants will receive **350 euro/month**, to be paid once the final report is received and approved by the designated consortium. For those BSOs hosting BSO employees for two months, 700 euro will be paid once the final report is received and approved by the designated consortium. The amounts paid to the hosting organisation, should apply the national VAT legislation, if VAT should be paid, the amount will be eligible is maximum 350 euro VAT included.

INTERESTED? HERE IS THE REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

Application and participation in the exchange programme is free of charge for all participants, outgoing and hosting organisation.

Both hosting and outgoing applicants need to complete an online registration form in order to be able to participate in the programme. The registration deadline has been extended to the 20th of April 2023, however, seen the short duration of the mobility scheme and the need to find a match, we strongly encourage immediate registration to allow enough time for the commitments to be prepared on both sides.

The form is available on the project website under the section "opportunities". You can also click [here] to access the link.

The registration form will collect the necessary information to assess the eligibility of the BSOs or SME to participate in the programme. Please note that once the application is submitted, the support office

⁷ https://connectingcompanies.eu/index.php/opportunities/mobility-scheme/



will use that email address to contact the applicant. It is therefore important to ensure the right information is available in this field.

Applicants who have completed their registration will be assigned to a consortium and a contact person who will oversee the application and, if approved, the business exchange. This person will be in touch with the applicants within the following five working days to confirm the status of the application. Possible status:

- > ACCEPTED: the application fulfils all the requirements.
- > ON HOLD: relevant information is missing, or unclear and additional steps are required.
- > REFUSED: the application is not eligible.



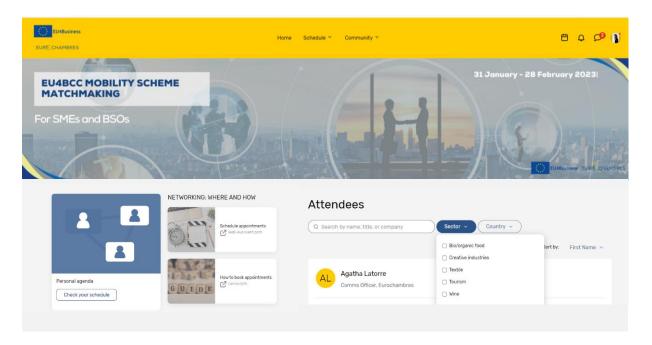
Note that there is no legal right to participate in the programme. The project management team reserves the right to exclude applicants that are not eligible or not in line with the aims of the programme.

Once the profile is accepted, the applicant will have access to an online networking platform that will allow them to search and contact potential matches for the exchange programme.

Applicants can also propose a matched couple based on their own research or on a previously existing business relation — regardless on whether the business relation was developed in the framework of the EU4BCC project or not —. The two members of the pre-identified match shall complete the individual registration procedure stating the name of the potential partner.

A B2B matchmaking platform – C-vent – will be available for accepted applicants to facilitate the task of finding a partner. The platform will allow participants to search profiles based on their goals, connect with them and schedule bilateral meetings to discuss cooperation.

Participation in the platform is strongly recommended and compulsory for those participants who registered but have not found a suitable partner yet.





THE LETTER OF COMMITMENT



Once hosting and outgoing SMEs and BSOs have made a match, they will be required to sign the letter of commitment. See here to find the template. This document defines the intention of both parties, the terms of collaboration and it helps to measure the success of the exchange.

The document must be filled up and signed by both parties in the exchange, hosting and outgoing SMEs or BSOs, and sent to the designated consortium together with <u>Table 1</u> (if applicants are SMEs) or <u>Table 2</u> (if applicants are BSOs).

The designated consortium will evaluate the work plan and revert to the applicants within 10 working days.

Before signing the letter of commitment, participants shall take into account the following:



The programme cannot provide any assistance in the case of accident or sickness. It is the responsibility of the outgoing participants (both employees of a SME or a BSO) to purchase a suitable accident and health insurance (or a comprehensive travel insurance) that should cover them during the exchange abroad.



Outgoing participants should not travel to the hosting country before their workplan is approved. Exception applies in the case of Ukrainian participants who should travel from the location specified in the application form.





Hosting entrepreneurs shall not start a new relationship before the previous exchange has been evaluated.

MONITORING OF THE EXCHANGE



Once the exchange starts, the matched couples will be virtually monitored by the designated consortium. The monitoring is expected to take place **between 7 and 10 days** from the beginning of the exchange (for the exchanges lasting one month) and **between 30 and 40 days** from the beginning of the exchange (for the exchanges lasting two months). This will help ensure that the exchange is running smoothly.



PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

For **hosting participants**, the payment will be done within the 15 days after the exchange summary report is accepted by the designated consortium.

Outgoing participants shall receive the lump sum equivalent to the first month of exchange at least 15 days before the start date to ensure sufficient time to purchase the flight tickets and insurance and book accommodation. As the transfer of funds will be executed by an EU-based entity, this will be a non-SEPA transfer and it might take some time for the funds to arrive in the account of the outgoing participant. In order to avoid delays, we encourage the participants to submit the Letter of Commitment at least 25 days before the exchange starts in order to ensure sufficient time.

For those exchanges that are planned to last for two months, there will be a second payment (equivalent to the second month of exchange), to be paid to the outgoing participant during the second month of exchange once the monitoring report with no warning remarks is signed by both parties.

Reporting

In order to be able to evaluate the success of the exchange and to make the payment to the hosting participant, the following supporting documentation is required:

- Evidence to proof the exchange and its duration. One of the following shall be provided: boarding passes, train tickets, gas receipts, or stamps on the passport indicating the travelling date or the date of entry into the country.
- Pictures and videos of the different activities that took place during the exchange.
- The signed monitoring report prepared by the designated consortium.
- Final report describing the activities/work performed, the skills/knowledge acquired, and the concrete and measurable outcomes reached. See Table 3 "Achieved results" to find the template.

The participants have two weeks to submit this information to the designated consortium who will check the supporting documentation and evaluate the final report. Once the final report is accepted, the hosting participant will receive the lump sums withing 15 days.

The consortium might request the participants to provide additional details or to clarify some points as necessary.



CHANGES IN THE DURATION OF THE EXCHANGE

Only participating BSOs can make changes in the duration of their stay. The duration can be extended from one month to two months or reduced from two months to one month.

The request to modify the length of the stay shall be submitted by email to the designated consortium before the end of the first month of exchange and the letter of commitment will need to be resigned accordingly.

INFORMATION AND CONTACT

Please refer to the project website (section opportunities) to find all the information about the mobility scheme and retrieve the templates of Table 1, 2, and 3 in word version.

For general queries, feel free to contact us: eu4bcc@eurochambres.eu.

If you have already registered to the mobility scheme and a consortium contact has been assigned to you, please contact your appointed contact person, as he or she will be able to clarify any specific question about your application.



MONTHLY FINANCIAL SUPPORT PER COUNTRY OF STAY

(*) Please select the column based on your type of application (BSO or SME)

Country of stay	Amount (€) per month for <u>BSOs</u>	Amount (€) per month for <u>SMEs</u>
Austria	1,640	1,700
Belgium	1,570	1,630
Bulgaria	1,300	1,360
Croatia	1,460	1,520
Cyprus	1,520	1,580
Czech Republic	1,350	1,410
Denmark	1,840	1,900
Estonia	1410	1,470
Finland	1,690	1,750
France	1,640	1,700
Germany	1,570	1,630
Greece	1,520	1,580
Hungary	1,410	1,470
Ireland	1,740	1,800
Italy	1,640	1,700
Latvia	1,350	1,410
Lithuania	1,300	1,360
Luxembourg	1,570	1,630
Malta	1,460	1,520
The Netherlands	1,570	1,630
Poland	1,350	1,410
Portugal	1,520	1,580
Romania	1,300	1,360
Slovakia	1,350	1,410
Slovenia	1,460	1,520
Spain	1,570	1,630
Sweden	1,690	1,750



MOBILITY SCHEME TEMPLATE OF THE LETTER OF COMMITMENT

This letter of commitment is signed in the framework of the activities implemented by Eurochambres, the association of European chambers of commerce of industry AISBL in favour of the country's participating in the Eastern Partnership Initiative. It is in this context that EU4Business: Connecting Companies (EU4BCC) project aims to support sustainable economic development and job creation in the EaP by helping SMEs or Business Support Organisations (BSO) to grow – especially by promoting trade, encouraging inward investment and fostering business links with companies in the EU. One of the tools to achieve this aim is the EU4BCC MOBILITY SCHEME which will be implemented by the EU4BCC sectoral consortia.

1.	TYPE OF EXCHANGE	
	EaP BSO and EU BSO	
2.	OUTGOING PARTICIPANT	
Re	stered address:	
Na	or of activity:	
3.	PERSON TRAVELLING TO THE EU	
Pos Pro Off Aco	tion in the organisation: sessional email: Ses	
4.	HOSTING PARTICIPANT	
	e of the BSO/SME hosting the person travelling to the EU:stered address	
Sec Na Pos	or of activity: wine bio-/organic food creative industries textile tourism other authorized representative: tion/Function: account details of the BSO/SME:	er
5.	DEPARTMENT WHICH WILL SUPERVISE THE EXCHANGE	
Na	artment:e and surname of the supervisor:	
6.	DURATION OF THE EXCHANGE AND FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF MOBILITY SCHEME	
Pla	ntion of the stay abroad: 1 month 2 months (only applicable for exchanges between BSOs) Planned end date: ncial contribution of the participants:	

⁸ The name of the bank account holder should match the name of the traveler.



Outgoing participant	9		euro		
Hosting participant:	☐ 350 euro (1 month)		700 euro	(2 months)

The financial contribution of the EU4BCC project is a lump sum which will depend on the following criteria:

- Country of destination
- Type of exchange
- Duration of the exchange see the guidelines

EU4BCC sectoral consortia will be in charge of making the payment to the participants of the exchange, both outgoing and hosting participants.

In case of cancelation of the mobility scheme before the starting date, the full reimbursement of the entire financial contribution would be claimed from the outgoing participant while hosting participants won't be able to claim the monthly lump sum(s).

In case of early termination of the mobility scheme, the full reimbursement of the entire financial contribution could be claimed from the outgoing participant while hosting participants won't be able to claim the monthly lump sum(s).

In cases of *force majeure* ¹⁰ the reimbursement will not be claimed.

7. OBLIGATIONS OF EACH PARTY INVOLVED IN THE EXCHANGE

By signing this letter of commitment,

- the parties acknowledge that
 - o the mobility scheme guidelines and the objectives and expected results of the exchange (table 1 or 2) are part of this letter of commitment.
 - o the letter of commitment is legally binding.
- the parties confirm that they have read the guidelines and jointly undertake to
 - o Follow the activities described in the objectives and expected results of the exchange to the best of their capacity.
 - Submit a final report together with the requested supporting documentation at the end of the exchange.
 - o Communicate with the designated sectoral consortium in case of any problem or change from the initial planning.
 - Notify immediately to the designated consortium any early termination providing the necessary justifications.
- The person travelling to the EU undertakes to:
 - o Respect the duration of the exchange
 - o Abide to the rules and regulations of the hosting participant, its working hours, code of conduct and confidentiality.
- The hosting participant undertakes to:
 - o Assign tasks and responsibilities to the outgoing participant to match his/her knowledge, skills, competences, and objectives.
 - o Provide the necessary equipment and support to reach the objectives set in the objectives and expected results of the exchange (table 1 or 2).

8. PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

The personal information provided by the person travelling to the EU is protected by the laws of his country.

⁹ Please refer to the guidelines – page 11, financial support per country of stay. For exchanges intended to last for two months, multiply the amount shown on the table times 2.

¹⁰ The term force majeure covers any unforeseeable events, not within the control of either party to this contract and which by the exercise of due diligence neither party is able to overcome such as acts of God, strikes, lock-outs or other industrial disturbances, acts of the public enemy, wars whether declared or not, blockades, insurrections, riots, epidemics, landslides, earthquakes, storms, lightning, floods, washouts, civil disturbances, explosion.



9. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

This letter of commitment shall be accompanied by a soft copy of the legal entity (only applicable for SME exchanges).

The outgoing participant: Read and approved	The hosting participant: Read and approved
I agree with the above mentioned stay abroad and the principles that concern me.	I agree with the above mentioned stay abroad and the principles that concern me.
Place and date:	Place and date:
EU4BCC sectoral consortium leader: Read and approved	
Name of the authorized representative: Place and date:	



EU4BCC MOBILITY SCHEME

Choose the right table, table 1 for SMEs, table 2 for BSOs

TABLE 1: OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS FOR EXCHANGE BETWEEN SMES (TO BE SUBMITTED TOGETHER WITH THE LETTER OF COMMITMENT)

Objectives of the outgoing SME: In blue some examples of concrete objectives. Please try to insert at least one concrete and quantifiable objective	 Examples below: Increase export Create new business opportunities Innovation (in terms of process, in terms of sustainability, in terms of materials, etc.) Learn about foreign markets Build strong business relations with the host organisation Knowledge and intelligence about new methods Product development Participation in trade fairs and conferences Increasing the network of contacts
Objectives of the hosting SME: In blue some examples of concrete objectives. Please try to insert at least one concrete and quantifiable objective Description of the work project: [Insert a general descriptio	 Examples below: New partner / supplier abroad Cross-border cooperation Joint venture / licensing / subcontracting / expand the business abroad Green deal action plan / energy savings / reduction of carbon consumption
Weekly activity plan to reach the objectives:	Examples below: Week 1 Get to know the hosting SME, the employees and working methodology. Understand the production process, the market, the typology of the customers, etc. Week 2 Week 3 Week 4



Expected concrete outcomes:

In blue some examples of concrete outcomes. Please try to insert at least one concrete and quantifiable outcome of the exchange.

Examples below:

- Sign a commercial contract
- Joint participation in contracts
- Joint participation in events
- Established a supplier / purchaser relationship
-



TABLE 2: OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS FOR EXCHANGE BETWEEN BSOS (TO BE SUBMITTED TOGETHER WITH THE LETTER OF COMMITMENT)

Objectives of the outgoing BSO: In blue some examples of concrete objectives. Please try to insert at least one concrete and quantifiable objective	 Examples below: Exchange of best practices Development of a new service for SMEs/start-up: Development of a new database for the organisation (useful to deliver further services to SMES / start-ups, etc.) Develop an internal knowledge database Development of a plan for matchmaking SMEs between countries Innovation (in terms of services / processes, etc.) Sustainability action plan Digitalisation action plan
Objectives of the hosting BSO: In blue some examples of concrete objectives. Please try to insert at least one concrete and quantifiable objective	 New partner abroad Cross-border cooperation Expand the membership Innovation (in terms of services / process, etc.) Sustainability action plan Digitalisation action plan Green deal action plan / energy saving / carbon reduction action plan
Description of the work project: [Insert a general desc	ription of the work plan]
Description of the work project: [Insert a general descri	Examples below: Week 1 Get to know the hosting BSO, the employees working methodology. Understand the market, the scope of services, et Week 2 Week 3

who intend to have a two months' exchange]

Week 5

Week 6



	Week 7
	Week 8
Expected concrete outcomes:	 Examples below: Sign a memorandum of understanding Develop a common project (i.e. for the organisation of a matchmaking event for SMEs/Start-ups, study visit, online academy) Sustainability action plan Digitalisation action plan Green deal action plan / energy saving / carbon reduction action plan 1 new online service launched (for SMEs / start-ups) Develop a cooperation in a new funding scheme



TABLE 3: ACHIEVED RESULTS (TO BE SUBMITTED AT THE END OF THE EXCHANGE)

Objectives of the outgoing participant:	[Please copy/paste from the "OBJECTIVES OF THE EXCHANGE AND EXPECTED RESULT" table submitted before the exchange]
Objectives of the hosting participant:	[Please copy/paste from the "OBJECTIVES OF THE EXCHANGE AND EXPECTED RESULT" table submitted before the exchange]
Description of the exchange: [Insert a general description of the exchange:	otion of the exchange]
Weekly activities developed:	Week 1
	Week 2
	Week 3
	Week 4
	[From week 5 to week 8 only to be filled by the BSOs who had a two months' exchange]
	Week 5
	Week 6
	Week 7
	Week 8