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ANNEX

ANNEX

to the

Commission Implementing Decision

**on the financing of the programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small
and Medium-sized Enterprises and the adoption of the work programme for 2020**

ANNEX

Work programme for 2020 for the implementation of the programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized Enterprises (COSME)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises -COSME ("Programme") is the Union's programme to strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of enterprises, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to encourage an entrepreneurial culture and to promote the creation and growth of SMEs.

With a EUR 2,3 billion budget for the period 2014-2020, COSME is executed through an annual work programme and through support measures that will help achieve its objectives. The work programme for 2020 is the last to be implemented in this seven-years period, with a total budget of more than EUR 400 million .

On the basis of the objectives given in the Regulation (EU) No 1287/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing a Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME) (2014-2020), this work programme contains the actions to be financed and the budget breakdown for the year 2020 as follows:

- for grants (implemented under direct management) (point 2): EUR 102,850,000
- for procurement (implemented under direct management) (point 3): EUR 38,514,300
- for actions implemented under indirect management (point 4): EUR 2,091,600.
- for financial instruments (point 5): EUR 262,610,000.
- for other actions (point 6): EUR 200,000

The actions to be implemented under the 2020 work programme will contribute to achieving the four specific objectives established in the COSME legal base:

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

The 2020 work programme, unlike the previous ones, structures according to the means of financing. The usual structure by specific objectives is contained in annex II at the end of this document.

The programme includes recurring actions to provide better access to markets such as the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), the EU Japan Centre for industrial cooperation or the co-financing of public procurement of innovation consortia. At the same time, it promotes a new

action on supporting European SMEs to participate in public procurement outside the Union that reinforces measures aimed at facilitating the access to public procurement of SMEs.

To improve the framework conditions for enterprises, the programme continues to promote the development of clusters and the tourism sector with measures aimed at digital transformation. The work programme also has a new action aimed at the creation of strategic alliances for the uptake of advanced technologies by SMEs.

The call for proposals of the social economy region missions is a follow-up of the project of previous years to promote entrepreneurship.

Work started previously will continue in 2020 with actions such as the Single Digital Gateway or the services offered by the international Intellectual Property SME Helpdesks. An additional helpdesk would extend the activity to India.

The work programme will also promote smart tourism solutions in cities with a new action through the European Capital of Smart Tourism.

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs has contributed to promote entrepreneurship and business culture over these years, and the 2019 budget was increased to cover the final period. This work programme therefore only includes a contract for a Support Office that coordinates and supports the action.

Under **indirect management**, two sectorial actions regarding the chemical legislation finder and the nanomaterial observatory will be continued.

Finally, the **financial instruments** continue supporting SMEs and start-ups to access both equity and debt funding. Moreover, the digitalisation pilot will be an additional implementation option for the Loan Guarantee Facility.

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

This Work Programme is the last one of the current financing period. As such, it is taking advantage of the lessons learnt in the previous years: it proposes financing strategic actions while at the same time trying out new actions that could be followed up under the new Single Market Programme.

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

The Commission will draw up an annual monitoring report on the efficiency and effectiveness of supported activities, using a set of indicators set out in Regulation (EU) No 1287/2013 and in this work programme.

2. GRANTS

The global budgetary envelope reserved for grants under this work programme is EUR 102, 850, 000

2.1 Access to Markets: EUR74,100,000

2.2 Framework Conditions for Enterprises: EUR 27,250,000

2.3 Entrepreneurship: EUR1,500,000

2.1 Grants access to market

2.1.1 GRO/SME/20/B/01- Enterprise Europe Network

2.1.2. GRO/SME/20/B/03- EU-Japan Centre for industrial cooperation

2.1.3. GRO/SME/20/B/04- Supporting European SMEs to participate in public procurement outside the EU

2.1.4. GRO/SME/20/B/05- Co-financing of public procurement of innovation consortia

2.1.5. GRO/SME/20/B/06- Creating links for the facilitation of public procurement of innovation

2.1.6. GRO/SME/20/B/07- Training for SMEs-friendly policies in Central Purchasing Bodies

2.2 Grants frameworks conditions for enterprises

2.2.1. GRO/SME/20/C/02- Clusters Go International

2.2.2. GRO/SME/20/C/03- Cluster Internationalisation programme for SMEs in the Defence & Security sector

2.2.3. GRO/SME/20/C/04- European Cluster Excellence Programme with ClusterXchange scheme connecting ecosystems and cities

2.2.4. GRO/SME/20/C/07- Innovation uptake and digitalisation in the tourism sector

2.2.5. GRO/SME/20/C/09- Strategic Alliances for the uptake of advanced technologies by SMEs

2.2.6 GRO/SME/20/C/10- Business Planet

2.3 Grants entrepreneurship

2.3.1. GRO/SME/20/D/02- European Social Economy Missions

2.1. ACCESS TO MARKETS

2.1.1. *Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) grants*

Type of applicants targeted

Organisations of the EEN who have signed a framework partnership agreement are to sign specific grant agreements for the last operational period 2020-2021. Additionally, a grant without call for proposals with the government (or its representative) of the country that will hold the Union Council Presidency (Germany in 2nd half 2020), will cover part of the tasks related to the organization of the EEN annual conference without an open call for proposals under Article 195(c) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 (the Financial Regulation).

Description of the activities

Total amount of the action: EUR 54,500,000

Rate of co-financing: max. 60% for EEN grants; max. 90% for the annual conference grant

Description of activities:

The Enterprise Europe Network provides business support services – in particular for SMEs – by offering information, advisory services, feedback and partnering services, innovation, technology and knowledge transfer services. The Network provides services encouraging the participation of SMEs in the COSME and Horizon 2020 programme as well as internationalisation services beyond the Single Market and informs SMEs on funding opportunities under the European Structural and Investment Funds. The Network helps SMEs with regards to access to finance and helps them to become more resource and environmentally efficient including through eco-innovation. At the same time, the Network is a sounding board and a link between the Commission and the SME community in the implementation of the Think Small First principle and the Small Business Act.

Expected results of the action:

- Increased number of SMEs linked with other entities across Europe for business cooperation, technology and knowledge transfer and technology and innovation partnerships across borders
- Better visibility of the EEN by promoting success stories
- Increased number of companies reporting a successful outcome on their business of advisory support services provided by the Network
- Higher rate of European SMEs exporting within the Single Market and outside the Union
- Higher rate of European SMEs participating in Union programmes
- Better understanding of European SMEs of Union legislation and of opportunities offered by Union programmes and Union access to finance
- Better knowledge in Union institutions of SMEs opinions, difficulties and expectations.

Implementation

Implemented by EASME.

Additional information

Specific objective:

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

It aims to:

- Help Union SMEs finding international business, technology and research partners in the Union, COSME participating countries and third countries;
- Develop and provide a balanced integrated service range to SMEs to become active in the Single Market and beyond (e.g. regarding Union legislation and programmes, Union funding, intellectual property rights), linking up with regional actors and policies to ensure regional integration of the network's services;
- Increase competitiveness of SMEs by internationalisation and innovation support services;
- Contribute to the Start-up Initiative by providing advisory services to help scale-ups develop their activities outside their own country;
- Contribute to the SMEs feedback function to obtain SMEs opinion on Union policy options;
- Strengthen support for SMEs interested in participating in Horizon 2020 and corresponding calls for proposals, in particular encourage SMEs to participate to the European Innovation Council (EIC) Pilot actions; promote and facilitate SME's participation in the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) and its entrepreneurial skills programmes;
- Develop a long term relationship and provide integrated services to the beneficiaries of the EIC Pilot and possible those who got a Seal of Excellence; further enhance cooperation with Horizon 2020 national contact points to help increasing participation of SMEs in Horizon 2020 actions;
- Provide support to enable SMEs to turn the climate resource efficiency and renewable energy challenge into opportunities, including providing information, assistance in participation in European-funded projects, and partnering and advice on resource efficient practices (contributing to the Climate Action, Green Action Plan, Eco-innovation Action Plan, Sustainable Development Goals);
- Improve SME's awareness on access to finance including alternative sources of financing;
- Improve SME's awareness about other Union initiatives such as the Your Europe portal and the forthcoming Single Digital Gateway and connected assistance services;
- Ensure visibility, recognition and local awareness about the Network;
- Ensure follow-up and coordinate implementation of the priority actions defined in the Annual Guidance Note to the Network.

Amount allocated to each action:

The requested budget is EUR 54,350,000 for EEN Grants and EUR 150,000 for the EEN annual conference (ad hoc grant Art. 195(c)). The budget requested in the COSME work programme 2020 will be mainly used to cover part of the fourth and last operational period 2020-2021. Applicant organisations have to be established in Union Member States or in

countries participating in COSME under Article 6 of Regulation (EU) No 1287/2013; they are legal entities, fully or partly public or private bodies; corporate bodies must be properly constituted and registered under the law.

Indicative implementation timetable:

Signature Grant agreements for EEN members: Q1 2020.

Grant - ad hoc grant Art. 190 RAP – Annual Conference: Q2 2020.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

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

2.1.2. EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation

Type of applicants targeted

Action grant directly awarded according to Article 195 of the Financial Regulation and Article 4 of the Council Decision 92/278/EEC¹.

The Centre is a joint venture established in 1987, funded and managed by both the European Commission (DG GROW) and the Japanese Government (METI). It has its head office in Tokyo and an office in Brussels.

Description of the activities

Total amount of the action: EUR 5,600,000 for 24 months.

Rate of co-financing: 90%.

Description of activities:

The Centre activities are the following:

Training and business culture	Japanese business culture	2-week 'Get Ready for Japan' scheme in Tokyo https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/get-ready-for-japan-training-programme
	Cross cultural aspects	Half-a-day cross-cultural workshops in the Union to introduce European companies to the basic principles of Japanese business culture. Done in cooperation with local members of EEN https://www.eu-japan.eu/tags/cross-cultural-workshop
	Manufacturing expertise	5-day World Class Manufacturing training mission in Japan https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/world-class-manufacturing
		Lean management in Europe with in-depth one-day visits to world class European plants https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/lean-visits-europe
	Industrial internship in Japan	One-year Vulcanus programme in Japan https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/vulcanus-europe (companies) https://www.eu-japan.eu/ja/VIE-outline (students)
Industrial internship in Europe	One-year Vulcanus programme in Europe https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/host-european-trainee-japan (companies) https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/vulcanus-japan (students)	

Business services	Learning how to benefit from the EU-Japan EPA	The EPA Helpdesk supports and guides Union SMEs in their search for relevant information. https://www.eu-japan.eu/epa-helpdesk
	Opportunities in Japanese public procurement	The Tax & Public Procurement Helpdesk provides a wide range of services in the areas of public procurement and tax issues in Japan https://www.eu-japan.eu/government-procurement
	Technology transfer and IP	The EU-Japan Technology Transfer Helpdesk supports Union and Japanese companies and individuals in their steps to search for and acquire technologies. http://www.eu-jp-tthelpdesk.eu/
	Business partners in Japan	The Centre is the contact point in Japan of the Enterprise Europe Network. https://www.een-japan.eu/
	Temporary office in Japan	"Step in Japan" is a support initiative for SMEs, offered free of charge. https://www.eu-japan.eu/logistical-support-step-japan
	Professional business plan	"Keys to Japan" offers a personalized market entry business plan https://www.eu-japan.eu/market-entry-business-plan-support-keys-japan
	Cluster cooperation	The Cluster Support Helpdesk can identify potential cooperation partners in Japan. https://www.eu-japan.eu/high-tech-cluster-support Cluster support 3-5 days missions are organised every year in Japan for

¹ Council Decision 92/278/EEC of 18 May 1992 confirming the consolidation of the EC-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation (OJ L 144, 26.5.1992, p. 19).

		Union Clusters and SMEs in biotech, ICT and nanotech. Include market-specific business seminars, one-on-one meetings at a targeted trade fair. https://www.eu-japan.eu/business-missions-japan
Intelligence and policy	Intelligence on markets and opportunities in Japan	The Union business in Japan project offers information and reports on a wide range of Japanese business sectors https://www.eubusinessinjapan.eu/
	EU and Japan policies	The Centre's seminars and workshops both in Europe and Japan cover a wide range of issues including climate change, environment, energy, industry, SMEs, food safety... https://www.eu-japan.eu/policy-seminars
	Fellowships for experts	“Minerva” is a 6-month in-house fellowship scheme in Japan, designed to support research and policy analysis of EU-Japan economic and industrial issues. https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/minerva-fellowship-programme
	EU-Japan business dialogue	EU-Japan Business Round Table (BRT) fosters communication between the Japanese and European industries, and submits recommendations to the Japanese and European authorities https://www.eu-japan-brt.eu/
Innovation cooperation	Scientific partners in Japan	The Centre is the National Contact Point in Japan for the Union programme “Horizon 2020” to promote research cooperation and support participation from Japanese organisations to Horizon 2020. https://www.ncp-japan.jp/
	Space cooperation	Space Japan focus on certain cooperation sectors such as Earth Observation https://www.eu-japan.eu/spacejapan
	Satellite navigation	Global Navigation Satellite systems (GNSS) https://japan.gnss.asia/
Communication	Newsletters	The Centre produces 5 newsletters https://www.eu-japan.eu/newsletter https://www.eu-japan.eu/news
	Social networks	Twitter: @EUJapanCentre Philippe de Taxis du Poët, General Manager: @PhilippePoet Facebook: EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation Linkedin : EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation Youtube : EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation
Activities in preparation		
In preparation	Region2region cooperation	<i>Regional cooperation platform to promote EU-Japan regional cooperation (clusters, regions, prefectures). Call launched to set up a regional cooperation helpdesk by the end of 2019.</i>
	Co-financing of industry projects	<i>Information on operational follow up of the MoU signed between the European Investment Bank and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) signed in October 2018</i>
	Group of EU Member States TPOs	<i>Organise regular meetings of the Member States Trade Promotion Organization present in Japan for sharing information – First meeting in March 2019</i>
	EU-Japan business partnership in third countries	<i>European and Japanese business trend to operate jointly in third countries, from South East Asia, to Africa, Latin America, and Union neighbouring countries.</i>
Expected results of the action:		

Improved information and services to SMEs.

Implementation

Implemented by EASME.

Additional information

Specific objective:

Promote all forms of industrial, trade and investment cooperation between the Union and Japan, facilitate SMEs market access both ways and look for business opportunities.

Indicative implementation timetable:

From 1st April 2020 until 31st March 2022.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

- Utilisation of the EPA by European SMEs, and access of European businesses in particular SMEs into the Japanese market;
- Intelligence on the challenges and opportunities in Japan;
- Cooperation with the Member States Trade Promotion Organisations and the Japanese stakeholders; mobilisation of the relevant Union programmes and instruments;
- Number of seminars organised and attendance; Number of enquiries addressed to the Centre and satisfactory replies provided; Number of participants in Vulcanus and their level of competence.

2.1.3. *Supporting European SMEs to participate in public procurement outside EU*

Type of applicants targeted

Consortia of business intermediaries, clusters or other business network organizations, business support organizations, trade promotion bodies, etc.

Description of the activities

Total amount of the action: EUR 2,000,000

Rate of co-financing: Maximum rate of co-financing : 75 %.

The maximum co-financing amount - EUR 400,000 per project.

Description of activities:

Improving SMEs' access to public procurement is an important objective for the European Commission. Inside the Union, the SMEs' weight in above threshold procurement is still low when compared with their contribution to Gross Domestic Product (only 45% compared to 58%). The participation of SMEs in procurement across borders is even lower.

Public procurement offers major business opportunities to SMEs. In the Union, public procurement represents around EUR 2000 billion per year. When adding the opportunities outside the Union, the potential for growth is even higher. The World Trade Organisation Secretariat estimates the Government Procurement Agreement opportunities amount to US\$ 1.7 trillion annually.

The participation of SMEs in public procurement is a win-win situation. It helps SMEs to grow and scale-up, it improves their reputation, and helps them to obtain more business in the private sector. For public authorities, it increases the number of offers the public buyers get, ultimately increasing the chances to obtain the best value for money.

This action will be implemented through a call for proposals. The projects shall take into consideration several aspects: the identification of the SMEs capacities to operate in an international environment, the sector specificities, and the knowledge and expertise related to certain non-Union partner countries, the knowledge about procurement markets. Therefore, this action will give flexibility to the organisations submitting the proposal to tailor their services to the needs of SMEs while achieving the objectives set in this action. The action could cover several measures such as awareness raising about opportunities existing outside the Union (tenders alerts and guides on what is specific to the respective country on public procurement), training and advisory services to SMEs, business- to-procurers events, partner-finding support, consortia building, etc. In the implementation of this action, the selected consortia should look for synergies with other projects/initiatives developed under COSME or other Union Programmes.

The projects will have two stages:

1. A preparatory phase, where each project will be requested to develop an internationalisation strategy and its implementation roadmap, based on the targeted Member States and third countries, and
2. The implementation phase, to apply the internationalisation strategy.

In order to achieve the objectives of the action and to have, potentially, economies of scale, the grantees should cover at least three Member States and COSME participating countries. They should target at least two non-Union partner countries with which the Union has signed a trade agreement including a public procurement or are member of the Government

Procurement Agreement of the World Trade Organisation.

Expected results of the action:

The current action is designed to ultimately help SMEs to participate in public procurement outside the Union through co-financing actions of intermediate organisations supporting SMEs' internationalisation and participation in public procurement. As a result, these organisations should develop their capacities to help SMEs in this respect, offer more targeted and better support. This measure should complement the efforts done by the EEN in this field and serve as a basis for a better understanding of the SMEs' concrete needs and developing more precise tools.

Implementation

Implemented by EASME through a Call for proposals.

Additional information

Specific objectives:

The objective pursued is to improve SMEs' access to public procurement in the non-Union countries with which the Union signed an agreement covering public procurement (for example, the Government Procurement Agreement of the World Trade Organisation, Stabilisation and Association Agreements, Free Trade Agreements, etc.).

Public procurement contributes to the growth and the global competitiveness of SMEs. The European Union has invested significant resources in negotiating these agreements in order for Union companies to be able to take advantage of the opportunities outside the Union. This action will focus particularly on the public procurement area and falls under the second specific objective of the COSME programme: access to markets.

Indicative implementation timetable:

- Call for proposal: Q1 2020.
- Signature of grant agreement: Q3 2020.
- Total duration of the grant agreement: Up to 36 months.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

1. Number of business intermediary organisations, clusters and other types of organisations from different COSME participating countries having benefited from the support actions (at least 3 per project).
2. Number of SMEs reached by these actions (per project, at least 300 SMEs from 3 Member States).
3. Number of information materials (webinars, interviews with successful companies, etc.) about non-Union countries (at least 3 per project).
4. Number of "meeting the procurers" events (at least 2 meetings organised per project).
5. Number of partner-matching actions (at least 2 per project).
6. Number of submissions of offers under international procurement procedures during the project.
7. Increase in the percentage of the turnover from international bids won and employment of the SMEs that directly or indirectly benefited from the project.

2.1.4. Co-financing of public procurement of innovation consortia

Type of applicants targeted

Consortia of public buyers/procurers.

Description of the activities

Total amount of the action: EUR 10,000,000

Rate of co-financing:

- 90% of collaborative actions (linked to the preparation, execution and follow-up of the public tender) and
- 25% (possibly 30% depending on the feedback of the first call for proposals) of the actual purchase of innovative solutions.

Description of activities:

To continue developing public procurement of innovation (PPI) consortia and increase the impact of previous actions, it is proposed to continue the co-financing programme under COSME started in 2018 for consortia of public buyers.

SMEs already represent around 55% of the public procurement expenditure. Nevertheless, this proportion can be significantly increased if public buyers take steps to ease the access of SMEs. One of the areas with the highest potential is innovation procurement, where SMEs enjoy a privileged position as innovation suppliers. Experience in the area under previous co-financing programmes shows that SMEs are much more likely to be involved as suppliers of innovation than as suppliers of conventional products and services.

Recently, in its Guidance on innovation procurement² the Commission highlighted the benefits of public procurement of innovation, in particular on SMEs and start-ups and the scaling-up of activities. This Guidance provides practical information and examples. It complements the previous Communication Europe's next leaders: the start-up and scale-up initiative, where procurement was also mentioned as a key instrument for supporting SMEs and Start-ups. As a result, a new call for proposals in the field of PPI will further increase in significant proportions the access of SMEs to the public procurement market. This call is also likely to increase the visibility and awareness of the advantages of procuring innovation for an ever-greater number of public buyers.

This action fulfils a gap in COSME, as it is one of the very few targeting demand-side in the context of a generally supply-oriented programme. It is closely linked to another action proposed under COSME with the same general objective, called the "innovation broker".

In this context, a second call for proposals for setting up consortia of public buyers from at least two Member States would be launched. Public buyers from participating countries could also participate in the consortia. The call will be targeting priority areas like health, clean energy, smart city or intelligent transport. At the same time, such an approach gives the possibility to take into account the lessons learnt from the previous call to feed them into this call.

The actions should typically last for 3 to 4 years.

The co-financing would cover the following phases of PPI:

- Assessment of their needs by public buyers;
- Capacity Building and coordination between buyers (e.g. training, exchanges,

² C(2018)3051 adopted on 15.05.2018

secondment of personnel);

- Market consultation (supporting the process of dialogue with potential contractors to assess the state-of-the-art and technological limitations for potential innovative solutions);
- Specification development (supporting contracting authorities to articulate their needs in a way that ensures the best response from potential contractors);
- Definition and implementation of award criteria;
- Co-financing of purchasing costs;
- Communication to the outside on the achievements of the projects.

Expected results of the action:

From a policy point of view, it is a necessary step to continue demonstrating the viability of PPI, which is still marginal in the Union, for public buyers.

This action is to provide an impulse to the purchase of innovative solutions in the Union and spreading of good procurement practices with a growing number of buyers. The dissemination of information on how to procure innovation or the lessons learnt in the process was very broad. The key requirements of the call enabling this achievement should be the setting up of a dedicated website and the participation in specific fora of public buyers.

Implementation

Implemented by EASME.

Additional information

Specific objective:

Ease access to procurement market. Create a business-friendly environment by reducing the administrative burden on SMEs (improving conditions for businesses).

Indicative implementation timetable:

- Launch of the call: Q1 – 2020.
- Award: Q3 – 2020.
- Signature of the agreement: Q1 – 2021.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

- Number of companies involved in the joint market consultation(s) carried out;
- Number of buyers involved in a joint commitment to purchase;
- Number of joint specifications developed;
- Number of suppliers involved in the procurement (at consultation stage, at award stage, etc.) and out of which proportion of SMEs;
- Number of countries of suppliers involved in the procurement at the different stages;
- Direct procurement amount;
- Indirect procurement amount (after the end of the action, but still linked to the action);
- Contribution of procured solutions to the public policy objectives, to be measured by indicators proposed by the applicant and validated by EASME and the Commission.
- Relevant sustainability indicator(s) (depending on the nature of the innovation e.g. CO2 emissions).

2.1.5. *Creating Links for the Facilitation of Public Procurement of Innovation*

Type of applicants targeted

Private and/or public entities involved in promoting innovation and/or supporting SMEs and/or Start-ups and/or supplying innovation solutions.

Description of the activities

Total amount of the action: EUR 1,500,000

Rate of co-financing: 90%.

Description of activities:

This action aims at further demonstrating the relevance and effectiveness of the cooperation model between various stakeholders supporting through public procurement the promotion of innovation and the support to economic operators, in particular SMEs and Start-ups. It is a second experimentation of this cooperation model under the COSME programme.

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

The purpose will be to:

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

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

The facilitator would engage with large buyers and/or aggregators of public procurement to identify a small number of needs (problems). Subsequently, the facilitator would engage the "sources of innovation" (i.e. start-ups, innovative SMEs) through its network and ask them to provide solutions for the identified need. A small number of those solutions would receive funding to develop their competitive ideas that the enterprises could pitch to the buyers for potential procurement at a later stage. The action would involve parties coming potentially from any Union Member State (and participating countries). There is also a clear focus on the promotion of SMEs and start-up companies, who could become involved through projects to provide innovation through this programme.

Expected results of the action:

The Facilitator would broker a small number of public procurements of innovative products

or services and demonstrate the effectiveness of this model of cooperation. The output of the projects should allow further analysis of experience and future optimisation of the process and better inclusion of SMEs and start-ups. The results would also be useful for further development of the business model of operation for such Facilitators. The Facilitator will not be procuring the actual goods or services.

Implementation

Implemented by EASME.

Additional information

Specific objective:

Ease access to procurement markets.

Create a business-friendly environment by reducing the administrative burden on SMEs (improving conditions for businesses).

Indicative implementation timetable:

Launch of the call: Q1 – 2020.

Award: Q3 – 2020.

Signature of the agreement: Q1 – 2021.

Duration: 36 months

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

- Number of public buyers engaging in the network;
- Number of private sellers engaging in the network;
- Number of established contacts / relationships between public buyers and SMEs/start-ups;
- Number of identified innovative products or services suitable to meet the identified needs of the public buyers;
- Number of good practices identified and recommendations formulated in view of a simplification of the PPI;
- Number of identified possible additional funding opportunities for innovative products or services.

2.1.6. *Training for SME-Friendly policies in Central Purchasing Bodies*

Type of applicants targeted

Consortium including an established Central Purchasing Body operating at national level and a university to build programmes to have personnel better trained on Public Procurement within Central Purchasing Bodies (CPBs).

Description of the activities

Total amount of the action: EUR 500,000

Rate of co-financing: 90%

Description of activities:

Public buyers have a major role to play to ensure access of SMEs to public procurement and to help SMEs grow their business. Central Purchasing Bodies (CPBs) are among the largest buyers at national level since they launch and manage large calls used by all relevant public authorities to procure certain goods or services. By aggregating demand, CPBs may reduce SMEs access to PP markets and therefore it is essential that CPBs buying practices allow for SMEs access to public procurement markets.

The objective of the activities is to contribute to the professionalization of staff working for large public buyers (called central purchasing bodies, CPBs) covering in particular SMEs' access to public procurement (PP) markets and increase their knowledge of public procurement.

After 2 training sessions – a very successful pilot followed by a new call for proposals, respectively funded under the COSME work programme for 2017 (GRO/SME/17/B/06) and 2019 - a third call for proposals would be launched to increase the impact of the action. Public buyers from participating countries could also participate in the action.

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

The action foresees funding for one or two universities and an established CPB operating at national level, possibly located in a city well connected with countries that have systemic problems in public procurement.

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

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

Target participants of the programme would be, in particular, staff from newly established CPBs. Where CPBs do not exist, or there are no candidates from these bodies, staff working in policy and regulatory bodies relevant for public procurement would be eligible.

Expected results of the action:

The expected results of the programme will include:

Approximately 35 staff from across Member States (or participating countries) to have completed the programme and increased their knowledge and understanding of procurement.

The establishment of a pan-European network of highly skilled public procurement officials that have taken part in the programme.

The development of knowledge-sharing initiatives in their own Member State (or participating country) to further professionalise CPB personnel.

Implementation

Implemented by EASME.

Additional information

Specific objective:

Ease access of SMEs to procurement market.

Create a business-friendly environment by reducing the administrative burden on SMEs (improving conditions for businesses).

In particular, this proposal contributes in the following way:

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

Indicative implementation timetable:

Launch of the call: Q2 – 2020.

Award: Q3 – 2020.

Signature of the agreement: Q4 – 2020.

Duration: 14 months.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the actions:

- Number participants in the training courses, per country, per year.
- Number of Priority Countries included in the training course.
- Number of knowledge sharing initiatives developed at CPB level by beneficiaries.
- Satisfaction Level of the participants, survey.
- Knowledge of public procurement increase in participants.

2.2. FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS FOR ENTERPRISES

2.2.1. *Clusters Go International*

Type of applicants targeted

Cluster organisations from COSME countries.

Description of the activities

Total amount of the action: EUR 6,600,000

Rate of co-financing: 90 %

Description of activities:

The measure is a continuation of the on-going cluster internationalisation programme for the benefit of SMEs and envisages the Clusters Go International actions as follows:

The objective is to support both preparatory and implementation actions for the establishment and development of new 'European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for Going International' (ESCP-4i).

First, the Partnerships shall develop a joint 'European' strategic vision with a global perspective and common goals towards specific third markets. They shall contribute to better support European SMEs in global competition. They shall develop a joint international strategy and a roadmap for its implementation, and sign cooperation agreements between the Partnership and international business and/or intermediaries. The funded activities could include:

- Support services for the identification and partnership building of strategic partners across Europe, notably building upon the Smart Specialisation Strategies of the participating regions,
- The development of a legal representation,
- The preparation of surveys among SME members to assess their needs and interest in cooperation with third countries,
- The preparation of a joint branding and marketing strategy and a roadmap for cooperation.

Then, the Partnerships shall engage in the implementation, testing and further development of their joint international strategy and roadmap that will have to result in concrete activities supporting cooperation with strategic partners in third countries.

The supported actions could include tailored analysis and fact-finding missions or assistance for opening of a joint office abroad, operational actions involving the cluster SMEs such as the organisation of international matchmaking missions as well as follow-up actions promoting business cooperation and for learning and monitoring activities.

Partnerships will have to develop and sign business agreements (or equivalent formal cooperation documents) to develop joint collaborative project between the Partnership SME members and business and other relevant stakeholders from third countries, eventually leading to increase exports, investment opportunities and international ventures generating employment for European businesses.

Eligible consortia shall be composed of independent legal entities all representing a cluster organisation or a business network organisation. Each cluster organisation or business network organisation shall demonstrate its involvement in supporting the enhancement of collaboration, networking and learning in innovation clusters and providing or channelling

specialised and customised business support services to stimulate innovation activities, especially in SMEs, in compliance with the coverage of innovation clusters given in the section 1.2 (e), 1.3 (s) and Annex I in the “EU Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation” and is (or planned to be) registered on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform. Cluster members such as SMEs and technology centres, where appropriate, shall be involved in the development of this action.

Eligible consortia must be composed of at least three legal entities established in three different COSME participating countries, among which at least two Union Members States.

Applicant consortia funded under the previous 'Cluster Go International' calls COS-CLUSTER-2014-3-03, COS-CLUSINT-2016-03-01, COS-CLUSINT-2017-03-6, and GRO/SME/19/C/03 are not eligible for this call.

Partnerships in the defence and security sector applying for the separate call titled “Clusters Go International in the Defence & Security sector” to be published in 2020 are not eligible for this call.

Expected results of the action:

The Cluster Internationalisation Programme for SMEs shall contribute to accelerate the development of more world-class clusters in all COSME participating countries by facilitating cluster internationalisation in a more strategic manner at Union level to better support European SMEs in global competition.

This programme will encourage European cluster consortia to work concretely together, notably across sectoral boundaries, to exploit synergies and develop a joint ‘European’ strategic vision with a global perspective and common goals towards specific third markets.

This will contribute to increase the number of "European Strategic Cluster Partnerships – Going International" established in Europe and help more SMEs access third markets and generate growth from international activities.

This action would support overall 12 Partnerships.

The expected duration of the agreement is 36 months. The consortia can propose a longer duration when it is justified by their needs to achieve the objectives.

Implementation

Implemented by EASME

Additional information

Specific objective:

To intensify cluster and business network collaboration across borders and possibly also across sectoral boundaries.

To promote the pan-European Strategic Cluster Partnerships to go international and lead international cluster cooperation in areas of strategic interest towards third countries beyond Europe.

To support SMEs in global competition.

By strategically reinforcing cluster and business network cooperation and supporting the shaping of pan-European cluster consortia at European level, the action will help SMEs to internationalise and take a leading position globally.

This programme will focus on the promotion of cluster internationalisation where interested

consortia will have the opportunity to develop a joint international strategy and support SME internationalisation beyond Europe, including in emerging thematic areas.

Indicative implementation timetable:

Publication of the call: Q3 2020

Award: Q4 2020

Signature of grant agreement: Q1 2021

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

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

2.2.2. *Cluster Internationalisation Programme for SMEs in the Defence & Security sector*

Type of applicants targeted

Cluster organisations

Description of the activities

Total amount of the action: EUR 900,000

Rate of co-financing: 90%.

Description of activities:

The measure is a continuation of the cluster internationalisation programme for SMEs in the Defence & Security sector, launched under the COSME 2017 WP (ref. GRO/SME/17/C/12). It envisages to support the first implementation, testing and further development of up to two European Strategic Cluster Partnerships – Going International' (ESCP-4is) in the Defence and Security sector (dual-use technologies).

The Partnerships shall demonstrate that they have an operational partnership with a well-defined internationalisation strategy ready to be implemented. This measure is expected to develop concrete activities supporting cooperation with strategic partners in third countries. This measure could include further preparatory actions such as tailored analysis and fact-finding missions or assistance for opening a joint office abroad, operation actions involving the cluster SMEs such as the organisation of international matchmaking missions as well as follow-up actions promoting business cooperation and for learning and monitoring activities.

Eligible consortia shall be composed of independent legal entities all representing a cluster organisation or a business network organisation. Each cluster organisation or business network organisation will have to demonstrate that it is involved in supporting the enhancement of collaboration, networking and learning in innovation clusters and providing or channelling specialised and customised business support services to stimulate innovation activities, especially in SMEs, in compliance with the coverage of innovation clusters given in the section 1.2 (e), 1.3 (s) and Annex I in the “EU Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation”³ and is (or planned to be) registered on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform⁴. Cluster members such as SMEs and technology centres, where appropriate, shall be involved in the development of this action.

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

Applicant consortia funded under strand 2 of the previous 'Cluster Go International' calls COS-CLUSTER-2014-3-03 and COS-CLUSINT-2016-03-01 are not eligible for this call.

³2014/C 198/01, See at:

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627(01)&from=EN)

with further information available at

http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/modernisation/rdi_framework_en.pdf

and http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/legislation/horizontal.html

amending the Community Framework (2006/C 323/01) see at:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2006:323:0001:0026:en:PDF>

⁴ See at: www.clustercollaboration.eu

Expected results of the action:

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

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

This will contribute to increase the number of "European Strategic Cluster Partnerships – Going International" established in Europe and help more SMEs access third markets and generate growth from international activities. It is expected that overall, 2 Partnerships will be supported through this action.

This should generate a least 4 cooperation agreements / Memoranda of Understanding between the European Strategic Cluster Partnerships (ESCP-4i) and international partners and 8 business partnership agreements to develop collaborative projects between European SMEs involved in ESCP-4i and business stakeholders from third countries.

Implementation

Implemented by EASME

Additional information**Specific objective:**

The main objectives of the programme are:

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

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

This programme will focus on the promotion of cluster internationalisation where interested consortia will have the opportunity to develop a joint international strategy and support SME internationalisation beyond Europe. The aim will be to support European defence-related clusters to intensify collaboration across borders with other non-defence industrial clusters and to develop and implement joint strategies in areas of dual use technologies, products and services towards non-Union countries.

Indicative implementation timetable:

- Publication of the call: Q1 2020
- Award: Q4 2020
- Signature of the grant agreement: Q4 2020

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

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

2.2.3. European Cluster Excellence Programme with ClusterXchange scheme connecting ecosystems and cities

Type of applicants targeted

The type of applicants targeted are cluster organisations or business network organisations that manage joint activities, facilitate networking and provide or channel specialised and customised business support services to specialised groups of SMEs. The ClusterXchange scheme will indirectly benefit SMEs, scaling-up support organisations (including technology centres, research institutes, fab labs, (digital) innovation hubs, creative hubs, resource-efficiency service providers, incubators and accelerators) and staff from public authorities at both regional and city/administration levels and innovation agencies.

Description of the activities

Total amount of the action: EUR 6,000,000

Rate of co-financing:

- 75% for costs of the cluster partnerships and management costs of the ClusterXchange scheme.
- 100% for the financial support to third parties (i.e. visiting cluster managers, representatives of scaling-up support organisations and SMEs active in clusters) participating in the ClusterXchange scheme.

Description of activities:

The action will support the development of inter-regional sectoral and cross-sectoral cluster cooperation projects and partnerships across Europe. It will foster cluster excellence capacity-building, the professionalisation of specialised and customised SME support and strengthen ties between European ecosystems and cities. It will allow cluster organisations to undertake, amongst others, the following tasks:

1. Enhancing cluster manager's skills towards added-value SME support services;
2. Supporting the development of a comprehensive cluster strategy for the individual clusters, including activities to strengthen interregional collaboration and partnership development across Union value-chains;
3. Organising twinning, collaboration, networking and learning activities and cooperation projects. The activities can cover, amongst others, efforts to boost internationalisation, market research, foresight and trends analyses, mapping of joint activities, technology/knowledge transfer, to make a better use of industrial data and Artificial Intelligence and promote SME's uptake of innovation, digitalisation, creativity and resource-efficient and carbon neutral solutions. It can thus include, for instance workshops, study trips and training and education activities for cluster organisations teaming up in European cluster partnerships and for scaling-up support organisations, SMEs and public authorities and innovation agencies of their cluster;
4. supporting the implementing of the ClusterXchange mobility scheme (mandatory). This shall cover promotion, recruitment, matching and follow-up of short-term visits or exchanges as well as payment of the lump sum contribution to participants.

The participation in the ClusterXchange mobility scheme will be open to all Union cluster organisations, SMEs, scaling-up support organisations and public authorities and innovation agencies that are active in an Union cluster – beyond the direct beneficiaries and their members. This scheme will offer the possibility for participants to spend a minimum of three

working days and up to a maximum of a month in a cluster. It will cover the stays with a lump sum contribution, defined by the European Commission and in continuation of the financial grid and rules of the pilot phase. Priority will go to SMEs that should benefit in half of the matches. Some aspects of the ClusterXchange scheme may be adjusted following feedback.

Cluster managers skills and cluster development, notably in innovation, digitisation and decarbonisation will have a particular emphasis for their relevance for regional smart specialisation strategies. ClusterXchange builds upon the European Cluster Excellence Initiative launched in 2009 to create more world-class clusters across the Union. It is also linked to the efforts to encourage more strategic partnering and SME internationalisation between regions and cities across Europe's ecosystems, such as under the Smart Specialisation Platform for Industrial Modernisation and Interreg Europe within the Union and the European Cluster Collaboration Platform.

Expected results of the action:

The expected results of this action are to set-up of around 12-14 European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for cluster excellence (ESCP-4x) to raise the competitiveness of European clusters and to contribute to the implementation of smart specialisation strategies. The action also aims to help improve the quality, durability and impact of the around 2.3 billion investments planned for cluster support and business networks under the current European Regional Development Fund.

The support to cluster excellence management shall deliver strategic analysis and follow-up actions to unlock the potential for cluster innovation and growth in the framework of the European value chains and emerging trends in industry such as digitisation, circular economy, talent development, upskilling, and the identified priorities of SMEs within the cluster (through surveys and workshops and other means). Moreover, the introduction of the ClusterXchange scheme is expected to make an important contribution to the linking of cluster stakeholders across Europe's ecosystems and cities by expecting to support over 1000 short-term mobility exchange of SMEs, cluster managers, staff from scaling-up support organisations like technology centres active, public organisations and innovation agencies active in clusters.

This action responds to the high interest in the previous call for proposal of the European Cluster Excellence Programme that implemented for the first time the ClusterXchange scheme. The European Cluster Collaboration Platform (GRO/SME/18/C/03) will act as the support office and will provide the IT tool and promotional activities to facilitate the work of cluster partnerships.

Implementation

Implemented by EASME.

Additional information

Specific objective:

This action aims to strengthen cluster management excellence and to facilitate exchanges and strategic partnering between clusters and specialised eco-systems and cities across Europe through the ClusterXchange mobility scheme. Clusters can associate SMEs to exploit innovation and growth potential. As high quality cluster management and strategic connections between clusters are key element of successful world-class clusters, the programme aims to foster SME competitiveness and assist companies to access global

markets successfully.

The measure shall enhance collaboration, networking and learning. It shall improve the quality of specialised and customised business support services provided or channelled to SMEs by helping cluster organisations and their members to learn from each other, explore and take up new solutions and develop strategic plans for a better cooperation at European and international level. Moreover, it shall address training and business needs along the value-chain, that requires SME and cluster managers' skills to adapt to trends, challenges and opportunities that come along with industrial change.

Amount allocated to each action:

The maximum amount is EUR 500,000 per grant action. The expected number of grants would be around 12-14. The total budget for this measure is EUR 6,000,000.

Indicative implementation timetable:

- Publication of the call for proposal: Q4 2020.
- Award: Q1 2021.
- Signature of the grant agreements: Q2 2021.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

1. Number of activities undertaken to improve support services by cluster organisations for supporting the growth and competitiveness of their SME members (e.g. training, benchmarking, etc.).
2. Number of cluster development plans, strategies, implementation roadmaps and new or enhanced mission statements and vision statements for the cluster.
3. Number of analyses, mappings, trends and foresight studies, surveys and workshops undertaken.
4. Number of cooperation agreements, joint projects, business agreements, memoranda of understanding and inter-regional partnerships resulting from interactions with other businesses, investors, SME intermediaries, scaling-up support organisations and regional authorities.
5. Number of SMEs cluster organisations, staff from scaling-up support organisations, public authorities and innovation agencies registered and participating (i.e. relationships achieved) in the ClusterXchange scheme, number of countries covered and quality of exchanges measured by feedback questionnaires to participants.

2.2.4. Innovation uptake and digitalisation in the tourism sector

Type of applicants targeted

Consortia of organisations of the relevant tourism industry stakeholders, clusters, innovation hubs, incubators, accelerators, as well as public authorities and public bodies at regional or national level in charge of tourism, digital transformation or innovation.

Description of the activities

Total amount of the action: EUR 8,000,000

Rate of co-financing: Maximum rate of co-financing: 75%

Description of activities:

This action is to support the digital transformation of tourism entrepreneurs, particularly SMEs and start-ups, and boost innovation along the tourism value chain through the integration of tourism businesses and stakeholders in transnational and inter-regional innovation ecosystems as well as territorial partnerships and cooperation.

The action will provide support to tourism SMEs and start-ups through among others, capacity building, training, coaching, technical assistance, prototyping, business matchmaking, financial advice, awareness raising.

Expected results of the action:

Expected results include: i) enhanced transnational cooperation between existing and newly created technology and innovation providers in support of tourism businesses; ii) enhanced competitiveness of tourism SMEs through better uptake of innovation and digitalisation; iii) new business models in tourism building on digitalisation and new technologies (i.a. artificial intelligence, blockchain technology, open and big data); iv) enhanced cooperation along the tourism value chain for innovation; v) smarter use of available financial support for digitalisation and innovation by tourism SMEs resulting in enhanced investment and innovative power.

Implementation

Implemented by EASME.

Additional information

Indicative implementation timetable and payment timetable:

Publication of the call: Q2 2020.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

- Number of countries participating in transnational cooperation projects;
- Number of SMEs directly supported in transnational cooperation projects;
- Number and sub-sectorial coverage of companies directly supported in transnational cooperation projects;
- The variety of support actions organised.

2.2.5. *Strategic alliances for the uptake of advanced technologies by SMEs*

Type of applicants targeted

Consortium with representatives of industry (including SMEs, clusters, business/sector intermediaries), research community, and technology providers related to the prioritised strategic value chains.

Description of the activities

Total amount of the action: EUR 5 000 000.

Rate of co-financing: 90%.

Description of activities:

Advanced technologies - such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Advanced and Virtual Reality, industrial data, Internet of Things, cybersecurity, bio-based material, edge computing or blockchain, are transforming our societies and a range of industries from healthcare, food, robotics, automotive, to transport and tourism. They enable all kinds of innovations for a competitive, but also clean, sustainable, zero-emissions industry. Advanced tech is also transforming the way we regulate, ensure compliance, market surveillance and law enforcement.

European SMEs are lagging behind in embracing advanced technologies, while at the same time they need to maintain and enhance their competitiveness, upskill their workforce, increase their cybersecurity or protect personal data.

The lack of progress of Union SMEs in those domains and the need to support them in the adoption of advanced technologies are emphasised by:

- the Commission's AI strategy and coordinated action plan,
- the renewed industrial strategy,
- the initiative on the Critical Industrial Applications of AI,
- the strategic forum on Important Projects of Common European Interest,
- the Digital Transformation Monitor,
- the ongoing pilots on data analytics in specific industrial sectors and the Digital Cities Challenge.

The objective of this action is to (1) build strategic alliances for the uptake by SMEs of advanced technologies in different strategic value chains; (2) identify appropriate industrial policy measures at Union, national and regional/local level; and (3) organise large scale promotion activities to support the adoption of advanced technologies by SMEs in particular sectors of the economy.

This action will build on the outcome of the "Critical Industrial Applications of AI" and the reports of the High Level Group on AI. It will be implemented in close synergy with the "Digital/Intelligent Cities Challenge", a major initiative that helps 41 cities to develop thriving ecosystems for smart sustainable growth and the European Cluster Collaboration Partnerships, as well as the European AI Alliance. It will be developed in collaboration with relevant services, notably DG CNECT, REGIO, ENER, COMM.

About 25% of the action will be dedicated for communication and SMEs outreach activities.

Expected results of the action:

The action shall urge industry, governments, business, academia and citizens to build strategic alliances to seize the potential of advanced technologies. It shall offer evidence-based tools, support, advice and best practices. It shall support SMEs to achieve tangible progress in industrial modernisation, boosting their business growth and creating high-value jobs.

The action shall accelerate innovation, industrial modernisation, innovative business models and upskilling of the workforce among European SMEs.

It shall also contribute to the design and efficient implementation of smarter industrial policies and a modern Single Market in the 21st century.

It will contribute to shaping an ambitious vision for a modern Union industrial policy among all stakeholders, to accelerate the implementation of the industrial modernisation strategy and will stimulate strategic investments in smart infrastructures for SMEs.

Implementation

Implemented by EASME via a call for proposals to select SME alliance for two strategic value chains.

Additional information

Specific objective:

This measure addresses the objective of the programme to improve the Business environment for enterprises, including by fostering the competitiveness of enterprises and sectors.

More specifically, this action aims to mobilise a large number of SMEs through strategic alliances and support a large number of events and activities across the Union, focusing e.g. on:

- Applied technological solutions and best practices related to advanced technologies for SMEs in key sectors and implementing the recommendations of the Critical Industrial Applications of SMEs and the strategic industrial value chains;
- Promotion of advanced technologies to SMEs through the organisation of technology dedicated workshops, matchmaking events, technology challenges for SMEs and start-ups, professional mentoring and advisory services, and communication activities and events in cooperation with Union Presidencies, Member States, the Digital Cities Challenge initiative, sectoral associations, the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), the Network of SME Envoys, Digital Innovations Hubs, Technology centres and Clusters.
- Promotion of practical guidelines to help SMEs ensure compliance with existing regulation (e.g GDPR, the free flow of data, AI ethics guidelines, the Platform to Business (P2B) regulation, cybersecurity, copyright, IPR and standard essential patents (SEPs) etc.).

Indicative implementation timetable:

- Publication of the call for proposals: Q2 2020.
- Award: Q4 2020.
- Signature of the contract: Q4 2020.
- Total duration of the contract: 24 months

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

- Quality, impact and visibility of the deliverables, including reports and websites, soundness of economic analysis underlying these deliverables, and quality and relevance of workshops, matchmaking events, technology challenges for SMEs and start-ups, professional mentoring and advisory services and communication activities.
- Quality, number and impact of SMEs and policy makers participating actively in the activities organised to support the adoption of advanced technologies by SMEs.
- Number of cooperation agreements and partnerships among business, academia and governments to support the adoption of advanced technologies by SMEs.
- Increased level of technological maturity, growth and competitiveness of SMEs.

2.2.6. *Business Planet – preparation and input for TV magazine*

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

It is intended to award a specific grant under the framework partnership agreement 30-CE-0852945/00-79 concluded between the Commission and Euronews.

Description of the activities to be funded by the specific grant directly awarded under a framework partnership

Total amount of the action: EUR 750,000

Rate of co-financing: 95%

Description of activities: Preparation and input for the series “Business Planet” to be shown on Euronews. Euronews, in co-operation with DG GROW, produces a 3-minute TV magazine, in 13 languages. The magazine promotes and informs on SME policy implementation (best practices). This action aims at increasing awareness of Union programmes and initiatives to support SMEs at Union and Member State level.

Implementation

Implemented by DG GROW

Additional information

Grant award: Q2/2020

2.3. **ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

2.3.1. *European Social Economy Missions*

Type of applicants targeted

Regional and local authorities from COSME countries

Description of the activities

Total amount of the action: EUR1,500,000

Rate of co-financing: 90 %.

Description of activities:

The "Social Economy Missions" call for proposals is a follow-up of the ESER 2018/2019 project. It reflects the collected ideas in broader sense. Its objective is to engage a pool of COSME regional and local entities with similar priorities and expertise in the field and boost the inter-regional collaboration in the field of social economy as well as contribute to building a social economy community of practice as key component of a sustainable European economic system.

The partnerships will consist of a number of pre-defined joint inter-regional social economy goals composed of respective regional authorities and social economy stakeholders active and/or experienced in the field of the joint inter-regional social economy goal. Partnerships will ideally seek a broad geographical representation. The final set of the joint inter-regional social economy goals will be a result of a bottom-up approach, following various discussions with social economy stakeholders at regional and local level (in particular those actively involved in the European Social Economy Regions ESER 2018 and 2019 edition). The call will contribute to addressing recommendations of the GECES⁵ report "Social Enterprises and Social Economy Going Forward" (2016), in particular recommendations related to increased visibility, recognition and identity of social economy enterprises. It will also reflect the latest developments and expected future priorities in the field of social economy, including the realisation of principles 1, 4, 5, 17 and 20 of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The project will cover peer-to-peer learning via joint inter-regional workshops.

Expected results of the action:

The Social Economy Missions' results could be three-folded: a) Future targeted collaboration with the European Commission in the field of the social economy mission's priority; b) Future joint inter-regional projects under the new Union programming period 2021-2027 in the field of the joint social economy mission's priority; c) Methodology of the "success story" participating region to be transferred to other participating regions after required adaptation to special conditions in other participating regions

Implementation

Implemented by EASME.

Additional information

⁵ GECES - *Groupe d'experts de la Commission sur l'entrepreneuriat social*

Specific objective:

- Enhancing inter-regional interaction between social economy stakeholders (public and private sector) in the field of social economy missions' priorities;
- Improving collaboration between existing social economy networks at regional and local level in the field of social economy missions' priorities;
- Learning from counties⁶ more advanced in the social economy mission priority;
- Preparing the ground for future structured collaboration in the field of social economy missions' priorities (future joint inter-regional projects under the new Union programming period 2021-2027);
- Preparing the ground for future collaboration with the European Commission in the field of the social economy missions' priorities;
- Preparing the ground for possible replication of functional model applied in the consortium leader's county;
- Contributing to a gradual Social Economy community building.

Indicative implementation timetable:

- Publication of the call: Q2 2020.
- Deadline for submitting applications: Q3 2020.
- Evaluation period: Q4 2020.
- Information to applicants: Q1 2021.
- Signature of grant agreements: Q2 2021.
- Starting date of the action: Q2 2021.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

- Number, geographical and typology variety of stakeholders having participated in a targeted workshop;
- Number of proposed recommendations;
- Number of new inter-regional partnerships initiated during the social economy missions.

⁶ For the purpose of this call, "county" refers to a unit representing an administrative division of respective country, i.e. region, city, municipality etc.

3. PROCUREMENT

The global budgetary envelope reserved for procurement contracts is EUR 38, 514, 300

(Access to Finance): EUR 1,625,000

(Access to Markets): EUR 16,180,000

(Framework Conditions For Enterprises): EUR 19 ,809 ,300

(Entrepreneurship): EUR 900,000

3.1 Procurement access to Finance

3.1.1 GRO/SME/20/A/03- Financial instruments - accompanying actions

3.2 Procurement Access to Markets

3.2.1. GRO/SME/20/B/02- Enterprise Europe Network animation

3.2.2. GRO/SME/20/B/08- Single Digital Gateway

3.2.3. GRO/SME/20/B/09- Your Europe (3 actions including SOLVIT)

3.2.4. GRO/SME/20/B/10- International Intellectual Property SME helpdesks

3.3 Procurement frameworks conditions for enterprises

3.3.1. GRO/SME/20/C/01- SME Policy

3.3.2. GRO/SME/20/C/10- Implementation of the Action Plan “Construction 2020”- European Construction Observatory year 4

3.3.4. GRO/SME/20/C/05- Boosting Competitiveness and Innovation Capacity of SMEs through creative partnerships and the use of new technologies- Worth Partnership II

3.3.5. GRO/SME/20/C/06- Fostering smart tourism solutions in Union cities through the European Capital of Smart Tourism

3.3.6. GRO/SME/20/C/08- Competitiveness of tourism industry- implementation of policy

3.3.7 GRO/SME/20/C/11- Better Regulation: engaging SMEs and stakeholders

3.4 Procurement entrepreneurship

3.4.1 GRO/SME/20/D/01- Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs

3.1. ACCESS TO FINANCE

3.1.1. *Financial Instruments – Accompanying actions*

General description

Survey on SMEs' access to finance (SAFE):

Timely information on the financial situation of SMEs is necessary for evidence based policymaking. Taking into account our obligation to limit the burden that data collection places on SMEs, the Commission and the ECB designed a joint survey on the financial situation of SMEs. The survey provides evidence on changes in the financial situation, financing needs and access to external financing of SMEs in the Union and compares it with that of large enterprises.

The Commission survey rounds are now conducted once a year. Previous Commission rounds of the survey were conducted in 2009, 2011 and each year starting from 2013.

Survey provides comparable results across Union Member States and other participating countries. The results allow for comparison with Union average for structural analysis and comparison with previous years for trend analysis.

Disseminating information to SMEs about access to Union sources of financing:

The Commission will continue updating and promoting the single web portal on Union finance, to be accessed through Your Europe Business.

Providing guidance for SMEs on how to benefit from distributed-ledger technologies ("blockchain") solutions:

Innovation in financial technologies ("FinTech") open new opportunities for SMEs to access finance and to become better integrated in the digital economy. Following up on the success of the Crowdfunding Guide, the Commission will raise awareness on financial technologies that evolved since then, primarily distributed-ledger technologies that enable SMEs to participate in the token economy and make best use of FinTech when raising finance.

Communication activities:

Difficulties in accessing finance are one of the main reasons of obstructing growth of SMEs. There are multiple structural and cyclical causes for this. Information asymmetries between the supply and demand of funds play a major role. The Commission promotes the use of Union financial instruments and other sources of Union finance through communication activities (case studies, events, infographics and other publications) via a variety of channels (websites, audio-visual and social media).

Studies:

Studies will be carried out on SME financing in order to support policy making. In particular, an assessment will be carried out on the implementation of the Article. 431 of the Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁷ on the obligation for banks to provide feedback to SME loan applications.

Workshops:

⁷ Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on prudential requirements for credit institutions and investment firms and amending Regulation (EU) No 648/2012 (OJ L 176, 27.6.2013, p. 1).

Workshops with SMEs, FinTech/alternative finance representatives, banks and other financial institutions will be organised to monitor the market situation and to facilitate SMEs' access to finance. The workshops will be organised on an ad-hoc basis depending on interest/needs expressed by stakeholders, SME financing trends and political priorities.

Implementation

Implemented by DG GROW and by EASME.

Additional information:

Specific objective:

Survey on SMEs' access to finance (SAFE):

- To collect timely information on the financial situation of SMEs;
- To increase availability and quality of data on SMEs access to finance for policy-making purposes, particularly concerning the start-up and growth of SMEs;
- To limit the statistical burden imposed on enterprises by the data collection requirements imposed by the Commission and the European Central Bank (ECB) and by conducting only one comprehensive survey.

Disseminating information to SMEs about access to Union sources of financing:

- To inform SMEs how they can access Union financing from various Union financial instruments on a single web portal, through Your Europe Business.

SME Guide on Blockchain:

- To educate SMEs on innovation in FinTech and the opportunities these create to access finance in a digital environment;
- To identify good practices and to disseminate them further; and
- To foster the integration of enterprises in the real economy into the digital token economy.

Communication and promotional activities:

- To promote the use of guarantees, venture capital and alternative sources of finances for SMEs;
- To inform SMEs and the general public about the benefits of the COSME financial instruments and the next SME financial instruments under InvestEU to ensure a smooth transition;
- To contribute to the Union campaigns (EU Open for Business and #InvestEU).

Studies:

- To support policy making initiatives;
- To monitor the recent developments of SMEs' access to finance in Europe;
- To monitor the implementation of the Article 431 of the Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 on the obligation for banks to provide feedback to SME loan applications.

Workshops:

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

Expected results:

- Improved understanding of SME access to finance issues and developments;
- Limited statistical burden on the SMEs and efficient use of resources for the statistical purposes;
- Input for the evidence-based policy making and identification of the needs to adjust policies on SME access to finance;
- The full report and descriptive statistics results of the survey are published at <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/safe>;
- Easier access by SMEs to relevant information about Union sources of finance;
- Positive feedback from participants on quality, relevance and added value of activities.

Budget:

IMPLEMENTATION MODE	TITLE	BUDGET (EUR)
Specific contract under a framework contract	Survey on SMEs' access to finance	700,000
Specific contract under a framework contract	Disseminating information to SMEs about access to Union sources of financing	300,000
Specific contract under a framework contract or call for tender	SME Guide on Blockchain	100,000
Specific contract under a framework contract or call for tender	Study on the implementation of Article 431 of Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 on banks' feedback to SME loan applications	200,000
Reimbursement experts / purchase orders	Workshops	100,000
Specific contracts under framework contracts or direct contracts	Communication and promotional activities	225,000

TOTAL		1,625,000
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Indicative implementation timetable:

12 months from Q1 to Q4 2020.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

Survey on SMEs' access to finance (SAFE):

- Timely execution of the survey;
- Geographical and thematic coverage of the survey.

Disseminating information to SMEs about access to Union sources of financing:

- Improved web metrics regarding access to the single web portal.

SME Guide on Blockchain:

- Improved awareness and uptake of SME-focussed blockchain solutions.

Communication activities:

- Timely preparation and coordination of all activities and material at the required level of quality;
- Feedback from speakers, participants and other stakeholders;
- Media coverage.

Studies:

- Timely carry-out of the studies;
- Positive feedback from the stakeholders on quality, relevance and added-value of studies.

Workshops:

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

3.2. ACCESS TO MARKETS

3.2.1. *Enterprise Europe Network animation tasks*

General description

This action supports the EEN animation tasks including hosting, maintaining and development of the IT tools and databases. It also supports the communication activities, training and governance and the organisation of working groups, steering groups, events, including the organisation of the EEN annual conference.

Overall budget of EUR 3,150,000 implemented using a variety of contracts or specific contracts using framework contracts.

Implementation

Implemented by EASME.

Additional information

Specific objective:

The specific objectives of the Network animation tasks include:

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

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

The Annual Network Conference 2020 will be organised for about 800 participants in the country holding the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union. The action includes all practical aspects for the conference (consisting of national meetings, opening session, parallel workshops, closing session, exhibition areas, catering).

Expected results:

- Reliable and performant IT tools are available to the EEN members to help them implement their activities;
- The visibility of the EEN is increased as a result of the communication activities;
- The annual conference and training activities help EEN staff to increase the skills, knowledge and efficiency.

Budget: EUR 3,150,000

The share of budget of the various tasks implemented by using of a variety of contracts or framework contracts will be determined at a later stage.

Indicative implementation timetable:

Specific contracts using diverse framework contracts (IT, communication, rooms,...): Q1-Q4 2020.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

For the animation contracts:

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

For the annual conference:

- Satisfaction of participants;
- Number of participants.

3.2.2. Access to the Single market: single digital gateway

General description

The single digital gateway (Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁸) aims to reduce the administrative burden that Union citizens and businesses, in particular SMEs, face when they expand their activities in other Member States. It will provide a single point of access to the information necessary when using their single market rights, providing access to Union and national rules, online procedures, and assistance services in a non-discriminatory way (if a procedure is available for the nationals of the Member State, it should also be accessible to users from other Member States). Member States are also required to create online access to the most important and most often used procedures as listed in the Regulation.

The single digital gateway is part of the Single Market Strategy and the E-government Action Plan. It is a top priority for SME stakeholders. The development work started in 2019 and will continue until the end of 2020.

Implementation

The single digital gateway consists of :

1. IT development (conducted by DIGIT).
2. Translation (service-level agreement with the Translation Centre in Luxembourg).
3. Communications campaign (procurement contract).

Additional information

Specific objective of the programme covered by the action:

Based on the work done in 2018 and 2019, the 2020 actions aim to (1) complete the IT development of the gateway, (2) provide the web site translations for the Member States, and (3) conduct the communications campaign for the gateway.

Expected results:

The objectives of this project are threefold:

1. After the testing of the beta version, the launch of the final version is scheduled for Q4 2020. This requires completion of the software development work.
2. Translation of the relevant Member States' web information into English (if not done by themselves) which will be launched in Q1 2020.
3. A campaign to inform citizens and businesses about the launch of the gateway which will take place in Q3 2020.

Budget requested: EUR 5,780,000

⁸ Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 October 2018 establishing a single digital gateway to provide access to information, to procedures and to assistance and problem-solving services and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012 (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 1).

1. EUR 900, 000 for the development of the gateway.
2. EUR 2, 000, 000 for the translations of Member States' web information.
3. EUR 2,880, 000 for the communications campaign.

Indicative implementation timetable:

1. Development of the gateway: Q1 2020.
2. Translation of Member State Web sites: Q1 2020.
3. Communications campaign: Q3 2020.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

The indicators for this action are:

1. Successful completion, launch and running of the final version of the single digital gateway
2. Successful translation of the required number of national web pages.
3. Successful communications campaign that informs citizens and businesses about the launch of the single digital gateway.

3.2.3. Adaptations of the Your Europe portal and Your Europe Support Tool (YEST) in view of the up-coming single digital gateway

General description

Existing framework contracts and/or low value contracts and/or negotiated procedure.
Include acquiring services for editorial work, online content management and promotion.

Implementation

Action 1: Adaptations of the Your Europe portal and YEST

Implemented by GROW

Action 2: Your Europe Business

Implemented by EASME.

Action 3: SOLVIT

Implemented by EASME.

Additional information

Specific objective:

Action 1: Adaptations of the Your Europe portal and YEST

Regulation (EU) No 2018/1724 aims to reduce the administrative burden that Union citizens and businesses, in particular SMEs, face when they expand their activities in other Member States. It is now in force; its implementation will require the development of a series of IT tools covered under actions of the COSME Work programme (both 2019 and 2020). This action aims to ensure that the Your Europe portal as a whole and YEST, its content management system, can correctly integrate several of these tools, such as the search engine, the assistance finder, the feedback tool, statistics tool, from an IT and usability point of view.

Research and tests are required for user-friendly integration of the gateway's tools, creating a seamless user journey for the portal's visitors.

The Regulation requires the Commission to "ensure that the gateway [...] can be easily found through search engines" (Article 23); work is required to integrate tools supporting efforts for search engine optimisation into YEST, Your Europe's content management system.

In order to support part of the gateway infrastructure (including the repository of links used by the gateway's search tool) and to ensure the stability of the Your Europe portal, the backbone of the new single digital gateway, YEST also requires to be upgraded to the latest technology available. In this context, the system's IT management of Your Europe Business and Your Europe Citizens, now partially separate, should be fully integrated to achieve all potential synergies and efficiencies.

Action 2: Your Europe Business

The Your Europe Business portal acts as an enabler for European companies to carry out business across the Union's Single Market. This action aims to get Your Europe Business's

content ready for its enhanced role in the future single digital gateway (see Action 1), and ensure its visibility via promotion. As the portal providing all Union content to the gateway and hosting the user interface, further work is needed to enhance the quality of the portal and to match the needs of micro-businesses and SME's in terms of information and assistance linked to operations across borders in the Single Market. Your Europe links up with national business portals covering country-specific rules and provides access to business support, assistance and problem-solving services (such as Enterprise Europe Network, Your Europe Advice, SOLVIT, see Action 3).

Action 3: SOLVIT

The SOLVIT Action Plan adopted under the compliance package on 2 May 2017 foresees actions to enhance the capacity of national SOLVIT centres to support businesses operating in the Single Market.

The action concerns advanced training for staff in the national SOLVIT centres, focusing on specific legal issues of particular importance for the business community. It aims to improve market access for SMEs within the Union, by helping them to deal with difficulties they encounter with public authorities in the Member States when attempting to or operating across borders. The trainings will be based on the trainings organised in 2018 and 2019.

The action covers the preparation, execution and evaluation of a specific training programme for SOLVIT centres in legal areas of particular relevance for SMEs operating in the Single Market. The training programme in 2020 should take in account the lessons learned from the first two trainings organised in 2018 and the subsequent trainings which should be organised in 2019. Participants in the training programme could be certified “fit for business” through an optional competency test. The training programme will be evaluated in view of potential further actions on the basis of the satisfaction level of the participants (see also indicators).

Expected results:

Action 1: Adaptations of the Your Europe portal and YEST

- Upgraded IT infrastructure to support integration in Your Europe and YEST of the gateway's requirements.
- A seamless user-journey across information, access to assistance services and online procedures.

Action 2: Your Europe Business

- Companies will get quality online information on doing business in the Single Market adapted to their needs and expectations.
- Synergies with other services, such as the Points of Single Contact, the Enterprise Europe Network and SOLVIT, are exploited in the best possible way to improve the overall service offer to businesses.
- The target audience finds the portal more easily.
- The number and loyalty of visitors will further increase.

Action 3: SOLVIT

- Reinforcing SOLVIT as an early problem solving tool for SMEs to facilitate their market access within the Union;
- Improving the quality of the service SOLVIT centres offer to SMEs and resolving more

effectively problems they face with Member States' public administrations when attempting to or operating across borders;

- Providing tailored support to Member States by strengthening their administrative capacity in legal areas particularly important for SMEs and enhancing the effectiveness of their SOLVIT centres.

Budget: EUR 1,250,000

- Action 1: Adaptations of the Your Europe portal and YEST: EUR 500,000.
- Action 2: Your Europe Business: EUR 600,000.
- Action 3: SOLVIT: EUR 150,000.

Indicative implementation timetable:

Action 1: Adaptations of the Your Europe portal and YEST

Specific contract(s) under a framework contract: Q1-Q4 2020.

Action 2: Your Europe Business:

Specific contract(s) under a framework contract: Q1-Q4 2020.

Action 3: SOLVIT

- Specific contract(s) under a framework contract.
- Publication of the call: Q1 2020.
- Award: Q2 2020.
- Signature of the contract agreement: Q2 2020.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

Action 1: Adaptations of the Your Europe portal and YEST

- Successful integration of single digital gateway tools on Your Europe.

Action 2: Your Europe Business:

- Number of visits: increase by 10%
- User satisfaction: above 90%

Action 3: SOLVIT

- Number of participants to the legal training per SOLVIT centre, per year (target: after two trainings, at least one person per SOLVIT centre has participated in the training).
- Satisfaction level of the participants, survey (target: 75% of the participants fully satisfied or satisfied with the training).

3.2.4. *International Intellectual property SME Helpdesks*

General description

The three contracts of the international (Intellectual property) IP SME Helpdesk is a continuation of similar services provided via grant agreements (GRO/SME/18/B/06). An additional contract will further geographically extend these services to India.

The international IP SME Helpdesks offer first-line advice and support to European SMEs wishing to operate in or influenced by markets outside of the European Union. These services offer practical business advice from experienced professionals (lawyers, business executives, IP investigators) in person, on-line, and through workshops, e-learning materials, and training. The services cover countries and regions, with focus on high-growth markets and where there are particular IP problems of importance to European SMEs or where investors to Europe come from. The services are provided both 'on the ground' to European SMEs already 'in country' and 'at home' in Europe, so that the relevant information on IP in the regions can be delivered where it is of most use.

The services are offered in co-ordination with and in direct response to requests from European SMEs and their representatives (e.g. sectoral, regional, local associations of SMEs, chambers of commerce). Services are co-ordinated also with relevant Union Member States SME support administrations, with Union and MS trade representations and with Union funded projects supporting SME internationalisation. The Helpdesks offer services allow to pool expertise to be available to any European SME. Such economies of scale also enable to customise the training or advice to specific sectors or business models. The service also allow avoiding duplication of technical contacts with the relevant countries' administrations to 'signpost' SMEs.

Implementation

Implemented by EASME

Additional information

Specific objective:

By offering expert quality first line advice to individual business queries, e-learning tools, in-person workshops and awareness raising, it helps SMEs respond practically to such challenges as:

- How European SMEs should design business relations with partners from markets outside of the Union to protect valuable IP of European enterprises (e.g. when doing business in the Union with external partners, developing the markets outside of the Union for own products, when following outside of the Union a company to which they have traditionally been a supplier or in the context of supply chains involving partners from outside of the Union);
- Counterfeit products entering the European market and other markets affecting the concerned SMEs;
- How to find and constructively work with administrations or service providers to enforce their IP in such situations.

Expected results:

The Helpdesks should contribute to significant capacity building of European SMEs

operating on international markets or affected by them. This should be shown through a proactive approach of SMEs to the issue of protection of intellectual property on international markets.

The Helpdesks should also be highly visible among the Union and national constituencies of SME support services for doing business outside of the Union.

Ultimately it should lead to better business performance of the SMEs that relied on the Helpdesks contributing to higher growth and improved jobs.

Budget: EUR 6,000,000

The overall budget requested is EUR 6 million to first continue the international IP SME Helpdesks (China, Latin America and South-East Asia) for another 2 years i.e. respectively EUR1,6 million for the China, EUR1,7 million for the Latin America and EUR1,7 million for the South East Asia Helpdesk) and second, to extend the activity to India (EUR 1 million).

Indicative implementation timetable and payment timetable:

The duration of the contract is 24 months, starting on 07/09/2020 (South-East Asia), 11/09/2020 (China), 20/09/2020 (Latin America). A new open call for tender will be organised to select a candidate for a non-renewable contract of 24 months, starting from September /November 2020 for India.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

1. Number of inquiries from Union SMEs answered.
2. SME satisfaction and feedback on quality.
3. Number and quality of training and awareness events, including virtual events organised together with a number of SMEs and business support organisations' participants.
4. Number of visits and hits on the website and SME user satisfaction of the website.
5. Number and quality of guides, factsheets, e-learning modules and other publications targeted at SMEs and business support organisations.
6. Improved performance of beneficiaries in relation to targeted issue.
7. Clients' performance assessment (growth of sales, jobs created/maintained, new products or services developed).

3.3. **FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS FOR ENTERPRISES**

3.3.1. ***SME POLICY (SPR, Start-ups, outreach) – public procurement contracts***

General description

The aim is to support the implementation and monitoring of the SME Policy at European and national level. Different activities will be performed to monitor the situation at European and national level, take stock of the progress achieved, identify new actions and priorities, promote the exchange of good practices and outreach SMEs and relevant stakeholders.

The work would consist of technical assistance/evaluation/communication services and would include in particular the following contracts:

- Specific contract(s) under a framework contract (study) to provide the **SME Performance Review (SPR) annual reports**. It will include: a) the 2020 annual report giving an overview of the size, structure and importance of European SMEs, outlining the major trends and providing a summary of recent policy developments and b) the country fact sheets to monitor the SME Policy implementation. The reports will be issued in autumn and feed into the preparation for the European Semester Country Reports 2021.
- Specific contract(s) under a framework contract (study/evaluation) to provide **thematic studies under the SME Performance Review**.
- Specific contract(s) under a framework contract (technical assistance) or call for tender to ensure the **SME policy implementation** and to cover the annual SME Assembly (including the European Enterprise Promotion Awards - EEPA), the SME Week and the Single Market Forum (SMF) events. It will also cover the meetings of the SME Envoys network, the SBA National Contact Points (Sherpas to the SME Envoys), the SME Week coordinators, the EEPA Single points of contact and other relevant experts meetings (SPR national experts, late payment directive national experts).
- Specific contract(s) under a framework contract (communication services/IT) to provide **outreach tools** (web-based and audio-visual tools, printed leaflets, social media campaigns, SME definition tool) aim at communicating SME policy to SMEs and stakeholders. It will also cover communication activities linked to the SME Envoys network.
- Contract renewal foreseen for project EASME/COSME/2017/041 entitled “Fostering collaboration through mapping, analysing and interlinking of European Entrepreneurial Regions”.
- Call for tender to ensure the **follow-up of Start-up & Scale-up Initiative –SUI-(including second chance and transfer of business)** by covering the organisation of events, workshops, analysis, platforms, mapping and any other action needed to support the follow-up of the Start-up and Scale-up Initiative adopted in November 2016.

Implementation

- Implemented by EASME: SPR Annual reports (EUR 1,000,000), SME Policy/SME Assembly/SMF (EUR 1,700,000), follow-up SUI (EUR 300,000); contract renewal (EUR 689,300)
- Implemented by DG GROW: SPR studies (EUR 1,100,000), SME Policy/SME Envoy Network (EUR 700,000), Outreach tools (EUR 70,000) and follow-up SUI (EUR 600,000)

- Total EUR 6,159,300 of which EUR 3,689,300 managed by EASME.

Additional information

Specific objective:

- Improving knowledge and understanding of the situation of European SMEs;
- Improving SME Policy implementation at European and national level;
- Increasing involvement of the relevant stakeholders and fostering the exchange of good practices.

Expected results:

- SPR: complementing data from existing Commission monitoring mechanisms and building on the SME-related parts in current European Semester Country Reports; high quality estimation and analysis provides a basis for evidence-based policy making; comparison against the large enterprises sector and benchmarking against the Union average.
- SME policy implementation: increased commitment of MS to implement the SBA and the future SME Strategy through the good functioning of the SME Envoys; relevant SME stakeholders involved actively in the annual SME Assembly and the SMF.
- Outreach tools: increased awareness of Union programmes and initiatives to support SMEs and of the good practices in the area.
- Follow-up of Start-up & Scale-up Initiative: increased awareness of Union programmes and initiatives and of the good practices in the area.

Budget requested: EUR 6,159,300

- SPR Annual reports: EUR 1,000,000
- SME Policy/SME Assembly/SMF: EUR 1,700,000
- Follow-up SUI: EUR 300,000
- Contract renewal EUR 689,300
- SPR studies: EUR 1 100,000
- SME Policy/SME Envoy Network: EUR 700,000
- Outreach tools: EUR 70,000
- Follow-up SUI: EUR 600,000

Indicative implementation timetable:

- Q1 2020 calls
- Q3/4 signature of contracts

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

- SME Performance Review:
 - o The annual report on European SMEs published in due time to inform European Semester work

- A complete set of SBA fact sheets (average length around 15 pages each) published in due time
- Thematic studies published in due time
- SME policy implementation:
 - Number of meetings organised and number of participants
 - Timely dissemination of the results
 - Progress achieved in the implementation of the measures in the 10 key areas of the SME policy
- Outreach tools:
 - Timely production of tools (web-based, audio-visual and/or printed leaflets, social media campaigns)
 - Effective dissemination of tools and use in major events
 - Impact on target public (number of impacts, number of visits for websites etc.)
- Follow-up of Start-up & Scale-up Initiative:
 - Number of participants to the meetings
 - Timely dissemination of the results
 - Effective dissemination of tools and impact on target public

3.3.2. *Implementation of the Action Plan “Construction 2020” – European Construction Observatory year 4*

General description

The Construction Observatory provides sound evidence for policy-making. A renewal of the existing contract is proposed.

Implementation

Implemented by EASME

Additional information

Specific objective:

The implementation of the 2015-2017 COSME Action ENT/SME/14/A/N307A has created a permanent repository of country specific information which has contributed to benchmark performance of the industry in individual countries/and or regions in line with the objectives stated under the Construction 2020 Strategy.

Update of the existing repository of country specific information and continue to provide further evidence for the assessment of competitiveness of the sector (e.g. in terms of productivity gains and market integration) and for progress of the sector in terms of digitalisation, upskilling workforce, recycling or trade across borders.

This action would be a follow up to a 3 years action engaged in 2015. The European Construction Observatory will continue to provide European policy makers and stakeholders with regular analysis and comparative assessments of the market conditions and policy developments related to the competitiveness and sustainability of construction sector in EU-28.

Expected results:

The analysis and evaluations will continue to support the exchange of experience between Member States and stakeholders regarding the definition, implementation, monitoring and assessment of the impact of policy measures related to competitiveness of construction enterprises, in particular for SMEs, and the management of public and private built environment including the engagement with sustainable development objectives.

The main deliverables continue to be:

- Individual country profiles for each Member State of the EU-28 regarding the market conditions and trends as well as national/regional strategies related to the five thematic priorities of Construction 2020;
- Fact sheets on individual national and/or regional policy measures related to the thematic priorities of Construction 2020, identifying the process of implementation and monitoring, the likely socio-economic effects on the various actors in the construction sector and the environmental impacts on society;
- Analytical and trend reports based on the individual country profiles and fact sheets, and other relevant sources, which clearly identify issues and propose policy recommendations with respect to the socio-economic and environmental performance of the construction sector;
- Development and update of dedicated web pages for Europa and the promotion of these

web pages and the observatory activities.

Budget: EUR 400,000

Indicative implementation timetable:

- Signature of the renewal of contract: Q1 2021.
- Start of the services: Q2 2021 (2/05/2021).
- Total duration of the contract: 12 months.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

- Indicator 1: Number and quality of the deliverables
 - o Quality of the developed indicators;
 - o Number and quality of the produced country profiles and policy measures fact sheets;
 - o Quality of the trend reports and semi-annual analytical reports.
- Indicator 2: Utilisation of the website

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

 - o Number of hits of the webpages;
 - o Number of unique visitors;
 - o Number of documents downloaded by type of documents;
 - o Duration of visit, repetition of visitors, geographical coverage.
- Indicator 3: Dissemination and promotion
 - o Coherence and effectiveness of the dissemination strategy;
 - o Quality and completeness of the EUROPA webpages;
 - o Number of the disseminated leaflets.

3.3.3. Better Regulation: Engaging SMEs and Stakeholders on policy design and implementation/strengthening of the Better Regulation Agenda

General description

In its decision COM(2015)215, the Commission stressed the importance of Better regulation to design better rules for better results and to ensure that policies are based on the best available evidence. More effective rules would be better accepted by citizens and businesses. Communication with stakeholders is a pillar of this agenda.

Implementation

Implemented by the Commission Secretariat General.

Additional information

Specific objective:

Specific contract(s) under a framework contract (study) to provide evidence-gathering studies, that will support REFIT actions: A stocktaking of the overall achievements of the Better Regulation Agenda and potential improvements is foreseen. The Annual Burden Survey is a key element of this work.

Specific contract(s) under a framework contract (communication services/IT) to provide IT tools like the Better Regulation portal and the REFIT Scoreboard. Through these tools, transparency is achieved, in particular with the stakeholder consultations. Communication activities are foreseen to engage more actively with SMEs and Stakeholders and to encourage feedback.

Expected results:

Better Regulation will deliver more evidence-based proposals for maximum benefits at minimum costs. Stakeholders and SMEs can provide feedback at all stages, to increase participation and acceptance.

Evidence gathering studies, IT tools and communication activities will support REFIT actions. A stocktaking of the overall achievements of the Better Regulation Agenda and potential improvements will be carried out. The Annual Burden Survey is a key element of this work.

Budget: EUR 850,000

- REFIT/BR studies: EUR 250,000
- IT development Better Regulation Portal EUR 355,000
- Communication services EUR 245,000

Indicative implementation timetable:

- Signature of contracts under existing FWC: Q1-Q4 2020.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

- BR Performance Review:
 - o Annual Burden Survey.

- REFIT Scoreboard.
- Outcomes from stakeholders consultation.
- IT tools:
 - Timely production of tools (web-based, audio-visual and/or printed leaflets, social media campaigns).
 - Effective use and dissemination of tools.
 - Impact on target public (number of impacts, number of visits for websites etc.).
- Communication:
 - Development and maintenance of web-sites.
 - Timely dissemination of communication materials.
 - Effective dissemination and impact on target public.

3.3.4. Boosting competitiveness and innovation capacity of SMEs through creative partnerships and the use of new technologies - Worth Partnership II

General description

This action will contribute to the objective of reinforcing the competitiveness of the European SMEs.

Worth Partnership II will be based on the concept and methodology of Worth Partnership Project financed with COSME 2016 Budget.

Worth Partnership Project aims at creating partnerships between SMEs (e.g. manufacturers, craftsmen, retailers) on the one hand and on the other hand designers and other creative professionals as well as SMEs active in the field of new technologies (including ICT and digital).

The project will be implemented via a trans-national platform (operating off- and on- line), which will be responsible for:

- Selecting, via transparent calls, the participants of the action,
- Organising and validating partnerships,
- Ensuring tailor-made support through the duration of the partnerships,
- Ensuring information and publicity of the action,
- Managing the implementation of the action.

Final beneficiaries are SMEs, in particular small and micro enterprises, which will benefit from a service from a designer (or another creative professional) and a technology expert or company. Such cooperation will allow them to develop new products, processes or services with high value-added to improve their competitive position.

Partnerships may receive financial support in the form of a lump sum.

Implementation

Implemented by EASME

Additional information

Specific objective:

More specifically, the objectives of the Worth Partnership II are:

- Promoting integration of creativity, design and new technologies (including ICT and advanced technologies) in SMEs, leading to innovative, high-added value (and generally more profitable) products, processes and services,
- Promoting cross-Union cooperation between SMEs from more traditional industry sectors and designers and other creative professions.

Worth Partnership II aims to deploy design and other creative skills as well as new technologies (including ICT and digital) in SMEs in more traditional industry sectors (such as the design-based consumer goods industries) with a view to creating innovative, high value-added products and services.

The partnerships will work to create innovative products, services and other solutions with

high-added value. They will receive support to, amongst others, define and create the products or services, define their market positioning, exhibit them at relevant trade fairs or exhibitions and organise Intellectual Property Rights management. Coaching and strategic advice will be provided to the partnerships.

Expected results:

- Creation of approximately 200 trans-national partnerships.
- Increasing design and creative content in products and services leading to strengthening of the competitive position of businesses.
- Creating and reinforcing links between more traditional businesses on the one hand and designers and other creative professionals on the other.

Budget requested: EUR 4,000,000

Indicative implementation:

- Publication of the call for tenders: Q2/Q3 2020
- Signature of the contract: Q1 2021
- Total duration: 48 months

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

- Number of partnerships created.
- Number of new products, services or other solutions presented at relevant fairs and exhibitions.
- Number of SMEs having benefited from the project.

3.3.5. *Fostering smart tourism solutions in EU cities through the European Capital of Smart Tourism*

General description

This initiative is a follow-up of the European Parliament preparatory action “European Capital of Tourism”.

Implementation

Implemented by DG GROW.

Additional information

Specific objective:

- Achieving the Union tourism policy objectives to foster innovative development of tourism (directly by tourism destinations and indirectly by tourism SMEs) which is accessible, sustainable and using digital tools and creative industries to enhance the visitor experience;
- Foster exchange of best practices between cities participating in the competition, including mutual learning and networking, creating opportunities for cooperation and new partnerships;
- Additional visibility for the awarded cities throughout the Union, but also in selected third countries.

Expected results:

- Fostering innovative, smart and inclusive solutions in tourism, by cities as tourism destinations and by tourism SMEs through consolidated exchange of good practices at Union level.
- Implementation of two selection cycles/two Union-wide competitions to select the European Capitals of Smart Tourism holding the title in 2022 (2 cities) and 2023 (2 cities)
- Showcasing exemplary practices by cities as tourism destinations in implementing innovative and intelligent solutions within four categories: 1) sustainability, 2) accessibility, 3) digitalisation, 4) cultural heritage and creativity.
- Union wide visibility and targeted promotional and dissemination activities for the action in general and for the awarded destinations.

The contractor would provide technical assistance/evaluation/communication services to the Commission in managing the **European Capital of Smart Tourism** and would have the following main tasks:

- Implement two Union-wide competitions for the selection of European Capitals of Smart Tourism (2022 and 2023).
- Ensure the secretariat of the action.
- Organise the work of the external panel of experts evaluating applications and the work of

the European Jury.

- Organise events, including the Award Ceremony, exhibitions, and meetings necessary for the implementation of the action.
- Implementing Union-wide dissemination and communication activities, including management of the website of the action and other communications channels (social media, newsletters etc.).
- Designing and implementing promotional activities for the European Capitals of Smart Tourism during the year when they hold the title.
- Implementing activities to foster the exchange of best practices in innovative, smart and inclusive tourism among participating cities.

Budget: EUR 2,000,000

Indicative implementation timetable:

- Service contract
- Publication of the call for tenders: Q2 2020.
- Signature of contract Q4 2020.
- Total duration of the contract: up to 36 months.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

- Number of applications received in each selection cycle/competition.
- Attractiveness and impact of the communication and promotional actions.
- Effectiveness of the communication and dissemination activities (number of clippings in media, number of stakeholders reached, visitors, views etc.).
- Quality of deliverables, including reports, guides, communication materials, website, videos, etc.
- Number and relevance of good practices identified.
- Quality and relevance of evaluation and policy recommendations.
- Participant satisfaction of events through satisfaction surveys.

3.3.6. *Competitiveness of tourism industry – implementation of policy (events, stakeholders' meetings, market intelligence capacity building through ad-hoc analytical or trends reports)*

General description

This action supports the competitiveness of the tourism sector by providing up-to-date qualitative and quantitative market intelligence, analysis of trends and forecasts. It will also contribute to the dialogue and the exchange of good practices at Union level on shared challenges and opportunities of Union tourism.

Implementation

Maintenance of VTO: administrative arrangement with DG GROW services. Ad-hoc studies, study on the outcomes of actions promoting Destination Europe, analytical reports: Call for tenders/framework contracts/expert reimbursement. Implementation by DG GROW or EASME, depending on value and nature of study.

European Tourism Forum 2020: Reimbursement of experts/framework contracts/call for tenders/low value contracts: Implementation by DG GROW. Event co-organised with the Council Presidency; the division of tasks and expenses will administratively not fit the framework contracts (and implementation modalities) run by EASME.

European Tourism Day 2021: Specific contracts under Framework Contract. Implementation by EASME.

Other thematic events, meetings and workshops: Reimbursement of experts/framework contracts/call for tenders/low value contracts. Implementation by DG GROW.

Additional information

Specific objective:

The main actions will include:

1. Maintenance of and provision of additional content for the “Virtual Tourism Observatory” portal to enrich its usefulness as user-friendly tool, in particular for public authorities and SMEs (e.g. updated statistical information, analysis and mapping of policy and legislation relevant for the Union tourism sector, specific reports or analyses).
2. A study assessing the outcome of the actions financed with the aim of promoting Destination Europe in cooperation with the European Travel Commission (ETC). The results will take stock of the impacts of the Union actions in this context and will contribute to policy considerations of potential future actions in this area.
3. Organisation of events to debate with Member States and participating countries, regions, the industry, trade unions, academics and other stakeholders and experts the main challenges and key priorities for the competitiveness and sustainability of the sector. This will include the organisation of the European Tourism Forum 2020 (Presidency event) and the European Tourism Day 2021, but also of other, meetings and/or workshops (incl. Digital Tourism Network, Tourism Satellite Accounts, thematic workshops).

Expected results:

- More consolidated, up-to-date and user-friendly VTO, as a one-stop-shop of

quantitative and qualitative market intelligence.

- More complete Union-aggregated statistics and qualitative market intelligence, studies and reports to guide the sector and to help assess the position of Union tourism in the world tourism market, its contribution to growth, employment and its effects on other economic sectors. Such information will be instrumental for public authorities to design their tourism policies and for businesses to take knowledge-based decisions for their marketing and promotion activities.
- Input to policy considerations of potential future actions in the area of promotion of the Union in long-haul markets
- Regular Union-level dialogue and exchange of views / good practices and ad-hoc exchanges in line with the emerging needs with the public and private stakeholders.

Budget: EUR 500,000

Indicative implementation timetable:

Studies and reports

Contracts of various values and duration	Publication of calls	Q1-Q3 2020
	Signature of contracts	Q3 -Q4 2020

European Tourism Day 2021

Specific contract under a framework contract - duration 12 months	Signature of contract	Q3 2020
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Meetings, workshops, experts

Contracts of various values and durations	Signature of contract	Q1-Q4 2020
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Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

- Quality and user-friendliness of the updated VTO site.
- Quality of deliverables, including reports and websites, soundness of analysis underlying these deliverables, quality and relevance of policy recommendations and good practices identified.
- Participant satisfaction of events / conferences on the basis of satisfactions surveys.
- Number of data/reports/studies (co-)produced and included in the VTO knowledge base.
- Number of events, conferences, workshops, expert meetings organised.
- Number of registered participants per event.

3.3.7. *European Cluster Collaboration Platform*

New service contract or contract renewal of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (Tender specifications EASME/2019/OP/0013).

In case of a satisfactory execution, the contract of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform may be renewed once for a period of 24 additional months, depending on future needs to continue promoting the development of world-class clusters in Europe. Otherwise a call for tenders is foreseen.

Implementation

Implemented by EASME

Additional information

Specific objective:

To promote the development of more world-class clusters in Europe, with a view to fostering the competitiveness, sustainability and resource-efficiency of enterprises, notably SMEs. It aims at intensifying cluster collaboration across regional and sectoral boundaries and facilitating SMEs' access to clusters and internationalisation activities.

The ultimate goal is to better connect clusters and ecosystems across Europe in order to accelerate industrial modernisation and boost entrepreneurship in emerging industries with growth potential. It will facilitate more strategic inter-regional collaboration and internationalisation activities of SMEs as well as the implementation of smart specialisation strategies and cluster policies by linking up and supporting cluster stakeholders across Europe.

Expected results:

The action shall accelerate the development of more world-class clusters in COSME participating countries by establishing a one-stop-shop for cluster collaboration and evidence-based policy-making in Europe. It will reinforce cluster cooperation within and beyond Europe and boost SMEs internationalisation and innovation efforts, including on resource-efficiency, and thus boost their growth and create high-value jobs.

The action shall contribute to the development of better evidence-based cluster policies and cluster initiatives that should assist enterprises, particularly SMEs, in developing new, globally competitive advantages in new industrial value chains that cut across sectors and competences, thereby being well positioned to adjust to industrial change and to reap growth opportunities. It will therefore support policies and actions for the modernisation of industry and the implementation and linking of smart specialisation strategies. Thereby it also aims to help improve the linking-up, quality, durability and impact of the around EUR 2.3 billion investments planned for cluster support and business networks under the current European Regional Development Fund.

The action is expected to significantly raise the extent and level of strategic inter-regional collaboration and facilitate investments across borders. It will not only continue to map and profile more than 500 cluster organisations and their ecosystems across Europe to facilitate networking, but also concretely support the collaboration efforts of cluster organisations and their SMEs within and beyond European Strategic Cluster Partnerships. As cluster organisations can act as effective springboards and transformation and growth accelerators

for SMEs, they can help them to innovate, facilitate access to and strategic positioning in new and global value chains and develop business collaboration with long-term impact.

The action foresees to create concrete opportunities and incentives to engage in strategic inter-regional collaboration, such as through the organisation of international cluster matchmaking events, supporting stronger connections among stakeholders of the Thematic Smart Specialisation Platforms and the testing of support to European SMEs to acquire technical assistance for the development of joint collaborative projects with international partners (Cluster Go International scale-up scheme for SME internationalisation).

The action will further contribute to the long-term sustainable competitiveness of European SMEs by encouraging and widening the uptake and implementation of resource efficiency measures across value chains, including a targeted reach out through cluster organisations.

This action will identify partners for clusters among other EU initiatives such as the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, among others, and promote cooperation between them.

Budget: EUR 5,900,000

Indicative implementation timetable:

- Publication: Q4 2020.
- Signature of the contract (if renewal) Q4 2021.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

1. Quality, impact and visibility of the supported actions on raising cluster collaboration, to be measured by the number of cluster organisations, their businesses – notably SMEs – and cluster policy-makers from different COSME participating countries having benefited from the supported actions; the number of SMEs directly supported; the number of cluster matchmaking meetings, coachings, policy learning events organised and the number of participants; the number and impact of partnership agreements and collaborative projects resulting from the supported action within Europe and beyond as well as through surveys;
2. Quality, impact and visibility of analysis, policy recommendations and good practices identified as well as of the services and events organised to facilitate mutual policy learning, to be measured by the number, coverage and level of regional and national policy makers having actively participated; the number, coverage and level of references to the Platform's work in policy discussions, events and policy documents; the number and scale of follow-up measures for the implementation of smart specialisation strategies, industrial modernisation, internationalisation and resource-efficiency policies, including the mobilisation of European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon2020 and other public and private funds in support of modern cluster policies; as well as through satisfaction surveys;
3. Quality, impact and visibility of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform web sections, to be measured by key performance indicators for its web sections, the use of the consolidated cluster mapping and networking tool, the European Resource Efficiency Self-Assessment Tool for SMEs and other tools, the number of downloads of deliverables and reports on clusters, industrial change, SME internationalisation and resource efficiency, and the number, coverage and level of references to the platform and its work.

3.4. **ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

3.4.1. *Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs*

General description

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is a mobility scheme that allows potential or newly established entrepreneurs to spend a period of time collaborating with an experienced entrepreneur in another participating country. These mobility actions aim to help the entrepreneurs enrich their experiences as well as learn and network with entrepreneurs in other participating countries.

The programme is implemented locally by a network of local contact which are being selected on the bases of call for proposals. The IOs are in charge of recruiting and matching the entrepreneurs and facilitating the mobility actions. They also promote the programme and its benefits at local and national level.

Support activities to ensure coordination and coherence in the programme are needed to ensure smooth implementation of the EYE Programme. A Support Office assists the Commission in the promotion, the coordination of the IOs' network and the day-to-day support. The application and matching of entrepreneurs within the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is performed with a database specifically developed for the programme in DG GROW.

The purpose of this measure is the continuation of the work of the Support Office that will coordinate and support the activities of the Intermediary Organisations (IOs) of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Programme and the further development and maintenance of the database.

Implementation

Implementation of the support office by EASME.

The IT tool database is managed by DG GROW.

Additional information

Specific objective:

The action aims at selecting the programme support office and at further developing and maintaining the IT database.

To ensure the continuity of the service to the Intermediate Organisations, the Support Office must be renewed by May 2021. Any private or public entity active in the field of business support, consulting, public affairs and public relations and with experience and knowledge on Union affairs can participate in the call for tenders.

The support office will be implemented by a 2-year service contract. To further develop and maintain the IT database specific contract(s) will be implemented.

Expected results:

- The initiative expects to have achieved the following results by April 2023:
- 4 Network Meetings Organised;

- 8 Summary evaluation Reports submitted;
- Participation at or organisation of 8 promotion events;
- Creation of 2 promotional video success stories;
- 12 Programme newsletters published.

Budget: EUR 900,000

- Call for tender: Support Office EUR 700,000
- Specific contract(s): IT Tools development and maintenance EUR 200,000.

Indicative implementation timetable:

- Publication of the Call for Tender: Q2 2020
- Communication of results to applicants: Q4 2020
- Signature of the service contract: Q1 2021
- Start of the service contract implementation: Q2 2021

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

1. Number of Intermediary Organisations served
2. Number of Network Meetings organised
3. Number of summary evaluation reports done
4. Number of promotion activities on international level organised
5. Increased number of programme Social media accounts
6. Functioning and updated programme website

4. ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED IN INDIRECT MANAGEMENT

The global budgetary envelope reserved for indirect management under this program is EUR 2,091 ,600

1.1.1. GRO/SME/20/C/12- EU Chemicals Legislation Finder

1.1.2. GRO/SME/20/C/13- European Union Observatory on Nanomaterials (EUON)

4.1. **FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS FOR ENTERPRISES**

4.1.1. *EU Chemical Legislation Finder*

Implementing entity

The action is implemented by the European Chemicals Agency - ECHA (Delegation agreement) and executed by a contractor.

Description

The objective pursued by the 'EU chemical legislation finder' is to improve the business environment for Union companies and SMEs in particular with regard to access to information on regulation applicable to a given chemical substance. The action is delegated to the ECHA Agency, who does the necessary to implement it, including selection of contractors.

The contract covers the build-up and roll out of an IT solution available on the ECHA website (<https://echa.europa.eu>).

Additional information

Specific objective:

Improving the business environment for Union companies and SMEs in particular with regard to access to information on regulation applicable to a given chemical substance.

A given chemical substance can be subject to several Union legislations pursuing different objectives (REACH, biocides, pesticides, cosmetics, fertilisers, drug precursors, etc). This information is however not accessible from one single entry point. This renders the access to information burdensome and costly, in particular for SMEs that have to deal with chemical substances as producers or downstream users. The creation of an EU chemical legislation finder would address this issue.

Considering that compliance with Union legislations is often mandatory in order to sell and distribute substances, this initiative can facilitate access to markets for SMEs.

As part of the project, ECHA will also undertake an externally run review of the EU chemical legislation finder (EUCLEF), to assess whether EUCLEF meets its original objectives, whether the scope of the tool can be further increased and whether its service to companies can be improved.

Expected results:

What are the achievements in terms of policy?

This will contribute to the creation of a better business environment for companies whose access to information will be greatly facilitated. There will be also positive consequences for

Union and national administrations since this tool can also be used to verify to which extent a given substance is already regulated or not. This is thus in line with Better Regulation principles.

What will be the impact on SMEs?

The project will allow SME to reduce regulatory and compliance costs since access to information on a given substance will be possible without the recourse to costly services.

Are there concrete deliverables?

- The operation and maintenance of the first version of the tool as rolled out in Q1 2020 where companies will be able to identify their Union legal obligations for a given substance. This will at no charge for SMEs.
- An additional helpdesk providing users support and advice on concrete questions concerning the pieces of legislation covered by the tool
- Integration of further pieces of legislation not yet covered by the current Delegation Agreement.

When will they be available?

- As of the roll-out of the first version of the portal (Q1 2020);
- Helpdesk and second version of the portal Q4 2020.

Where (internet address) will they be available?

The web service will be available on ECHA's website: <https://echa.europa.eu>

Budget: EUR1,199,000

1-2 procurement action(s).

Indicative implementation timetable:

- Signature of the Delegation Agreement with ECHA: Q4 2019.
- Roll-out of tool/website in Q1 2020 (under 2019 budget).
- Transfer of funds (signature): Q4 2020.
- Operation and maintenance, including change management, user support services for companies and IT support services as well as operation of helpdesk (ongoing): Q1-Q4 2021.
- Integration of further pieces of legislation: Q4 2021.
- Review of EUCLEF: Q4 2021.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

- Number of unique users.
- Number of page views.
- Yearly satisfaction survey.

4.1.2. *European Union Observatory on Nanomaterials (EUON)*

Implementing entity

European Chemicals Agency - ECHA

Description

ECHA operates the EUON based on a Delegation Agreement concluded with the Commission, represented by DG GROW. Every year, a Transfer of funds agreement needs to be signed for the EUON tasks that ECHA needs to complete within 18 months from the transfer of funds (Article 4 of the Delegation Agreement).

Additional information

Specific objective:

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

- Nanotechnology is a recognised Key Enabling Technology (KET) and its applications will be increasingly essential for the competitiveness of a wide range of Union products in the global market. Therefore, it is important to ensure confidence in the application of the technology among users, consumers and the general public. Transparency of information concerning nanomaterials on the market will can improve confidence. This is crucial in order to create an environment favourable to the growth of the nanotechnology field. In turn, the growing use of nanotechnology can unlock potential innovations, thereby contributing to the competitiveness of Union businesses across sectors.
- Furthermore, publicly available information on nanomaterials on the market can help businesses identify market trends across Europe. This will enhance market access for companies, in particular SMEs.
- In addition, the European Union Observatory on Nanomaterials constitutes an industry-friendly alternative (particularly for SMEs) compared to other legislative measures to increase transparency, which would introduce burdensome reporting obligations to industry.

Expected results:

- Increased transparency on the various nanomaterials on the market;
- Increased confidence in the use of nanomaterials in products;
- Increased amount of information available to industry (in particular to SMEs).
- Pursuant to the Delegation Agreement, the work plan for 2020 will be discussed with the involved COM services.

Budget: EUR892,600

- 2-3 procurement actions.
- Note: The financial framework is based partly on the indicative amount identified in Annex I of the Commission Implementing Decision C(2016) 8201 (EUR 600,000 for 2020). An extra EUR 292,000 is requested as a one-time investment separate from future maintenance/development. This additional amount would be used to align the technology of NanoData with the technology used by ECHA and would ensure the maintenance of the NanoData and improve its integration in the EUON, as well as result in significant cost savings in the future. Since the requested budget for 2020 (EUR 892,000) is larger than the indicative amount (EUR 600,000) identified in the Delegation Agreement (Article 5.1.1), the Delegation Agreement will have to be modified accordingly.

Indicative implementation timetable:

- Signature of the Transfer of funds agreement: Q4 2020.
- Full requested sum (EUR 892,600) is provided as pre-financing.
- Tasks need to be completed within 18 months from the transfer of funds.
- A final financial report is expected early 2022 and may lead to the recovery of any unspent part of the 2020 allocation.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

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

5. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS IMPLEMENTED IN DIRECT OR INDIRECT MANAGEMENT

The global budgetary envelope reserved for financial instruments is EUR 262 ,610 ,000

5.1.1 GRO/SME/20/A/01- Financial instruments - Equity Facility for Growth

5.1.2 GRO/SME/20/A/02- Financial instruments - Loan Guarantee Facility (including the SME initiative)

5.1.1. *Financial Instruments – Equity Facility for Growth (EFG)*

Specific financial instrument to be used

Equity investments

Amount allocated

EUR 49,322, 000

Description

The Equity Facility for Growth (EFG) is one of the successor instruments of the High Growth and Innovative SME Facility (GIF) established under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme - CIP (2007 - 2013). It succeeds the GIF2 window set up under GIF to cover expansion stage investments into SMEs. Based on the experience gained under CIP and in line with requirements formulated for financial instruments under Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁹ ("Financial Regulation"), the terms and conditions for the COSME financial instruments were adjusted.

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

The characteristics of the EFG are:

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

⁹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 (OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1).

20% of the total Union investment;

- In the case of multi-stage funds, the COSME EFG and Horizon's Equity Facility for R&I will contribute pro rata to the funding of the risk capital funds based on the fund's investment policy.

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

Pan-European VC Funds-of-Funds programme

An additional implementation mechanism under the EFG in the form of a contribution to the Pan-European VC Funds-of-Funds programme was put in place in 2017.

In addition to the existing continuous call for expression of interest published for the direct investments under the EFG, a separate call for expression of interest was launched by the EIF for the Pan-European VC Funds-of-Funds programme which closed end of January 2017. The selection phase has been finalised end of 2017. Three signatures have occurred, whereby COSME EFG resources contributed towards two of these signed agreements. The remaining signatures are conditional on the completion of the due diligence process and subsequent negotiations. Should this not be the case for any of the remaining selected entities, the budgets currently earmarked for these transactions will be reallocated to the direct fund investments made under the EFG.

Should there be an indication in the course of 2020, that the available budgets for the EFG exceed market demand, the Commission may decide to shift a part of the budget foreseen for the EFG to the LGF for which there is a consistent high market demand.

Relationship with Horizon 2020:

The EFG is part of the single Union equity financial instrument for Union enterprises' growth and research and innovation (R&I), together with the early-stage equity facility under Horizon 2020 (InnovFin Equity). The InnovFin Equity has been revamped in 2017 to combine resources from Horizon 2020, the SME window of European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) and resources from the EIF. This facility targets risk capital funds investing in seed, start-up and early-stage SMEs and small midcaps that are RDI-driven.

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

Relationship with the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI)

In the course of 2016 a new Expansion and Growth Window was established under the EFSI Equity instrument. This window has largely the same investment focus as the EFG. However, the EFG is broader in geographic scope as it can also invest in third countries participating in COSME. As a result, an order of priority has been established whereby the EIF shall endeavour to first absorb investment capacity available under the EFSI Expansion

and Growth Window before making use of EFG resources. A significant number of equity investments have already been made under EFSI¹⁰. Eligible investments into funds operating and investing in third countries will continue to be made under the EFG only.

Latest developments show that the demand for the EFG in the Member States of the Union can be met through the resources of the EFSI equity instrument, COSME EFG resources are therefore available to cover demand from non-Union countries participating in the COSME financial instruments which is relatively low.

Implementation

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

Additional information

Specific objective:

The objective of the action is to provide enhanced access to finance for SMEs in their start-up, growth and transfer phases through an equity financial instrument.

Expected results:

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

It was expected that over the lifetime of the Programme between 362 and 544 firms would receive venture capital investment with overall volume invested ranging from EUR 2.6 to EUR 4.0 billion. Based on current implementation data, the numbers and volumes are foreseen to be lower in the end, due to re-allocation of budget from the EFG towards the COSME Loan Guarantee Facility (LGF) where market demand is very high and cannot be covered by currently available budgetary resources (including the EFSI top-up). The need of risk capital investments for SMEs in their expansion and growth stage and located in the Member States is addressed by the EFSI equity instrument.

Indicative implementation timetable:

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
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¹⁰ The list of these investments is available on this website: http://www.eif.org/what_we_do/efsi/equity-deals.pdf

Delegation Agreement signed with the entrusted entity	Q3 2014
Call for expression of interest for EFG only launched by the entrusted entity	Q3 2014
Updated call for expression of interest covering the EFG and the InnovFin Equity	Q3 2015
First agreements signed with Financial Intermediaries	Q4 2015
Pan-European VC Funds-of-Funds call for expression of interest (launched and closed)	Q4 2016 / Q1 2017
Signatures with VC Funds-of-Funds managers	2018-2019
Indicative total duration (months): The Delegation Agreement shall be valid until the last of the transactions under the Programme is fully completed (at the latest by 2034).	

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

Overall risk capital invested and number of firms being supported: Overall value of risk capital investments ranging from EUR 0,2 billion to EUR 0,3 billion; number of firms receiving risk capital investments ranging from 27 to 40.

The above values have been computed based on the leverage targets of COSME which calls for a leverage of 1:4 - 1:6 for the equity instrument. They refer to investments made during the life-time of risk capital funds in which EFG investments were authorised from the 2020 budget.

On a cumulative basis, the value of risk capital investments ranges from EUR 1,7 billion to EUR 2,5 billion, with the number of firms received risk capital investments ranging from 228 to 341. These values refer to new investments made by funds into SMEs over the usually 5 years' investment period under agreements signed from the cumulative 2014-2020 EFG budget allocation.

5.1.2. *Financial Instruments – Loan Guarantee Facility (LGF) including the SME initiative*

Specific financial instrument to be used

Guarantees

Amount allocated

EUR 213, 288, 000

Description

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

- Counter-guarantees and other risk sharing arrangements for guarantee schemes including, where appropriate, co-guarantees;
- Direct guarantees and other risk sharing arrangements for any other financial intermediaries.

The LGF is the successor of the SME Guarantee Facility established under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme - CIP (2007 - 2013). Based on the experience gained under CIP and in line with requirements formulated for financial instruments under the Financial Regulation the terms and conditions for the COSME financial instruments were adjusted.

The characteristics of the LGF in the form of capped (counter-) guarantees are:

- Guarantees for debt financing (including via subordinated and participating loans, leasing or bank guarantees) which shall reduce the particular difficulties that viable SMEs face in accessing finance either due to their perceived high risk or their lack of sufficient available collateral;
- Up to an amount of EUR 150,000 all types of SMEs (regardless of sector or size) are eligible for financing under the LGF. Above this threshold financial intermediaries must verify that the SME is not RDI driven and therefore is not eligible for financing under the Horizon 2020's SME & small midcaps debt financing window (InnovFin SME Guarantee Facility). As regards the level of the guarantee, the entrusted entity will provide guarantees to financial intermediaries which will cover a portion of the expected losses of a portfolio of newly generated, higher-risk SME transactions.
- The portfolios shall be composed of transactions which the financial intermediary would not have supported in the absence of the guarantee. The range of financial products which can be supported through the guarantees is intended to be broad so as not to discriminate amongst the SME population and to allow financial intermediaries to tailor products according to the specific needs of the market in which they operate.
- Individual guarantee agreements to be signed by the entrusted entity with a financial intermediary will have a maximum duration of 10 years, whereby it shall be permissible that individual financing transactions have maturities exceeding 10 years. Individual financing transactions must have a minimum duration of 12 months.

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

- Guarantees for the mezzanine tranche of securitisation of SME debt finance portfolios, which are coupled with a contractual undertaking by the financial intermediary to build up new SME debt finance portfolios. The amount of this new debt financing shall be calculated in relation to the amount of the guaranteed portfolio risk. This amount and the period of time shall be negotiated individually with each originating institution by the entrusted entity.
- The LGF is demand-driven meaning that the allocation of funding will take place based on the demand expressed by financial intermediaries also taking into account the need for a broad geographical distribution (e.g. through incentives to be provided from the Commission to the entrusted entity).
- As 2020 is the last year of the programming period, the entrusted entity will be tasked with 'optimizing' the budgetary resources available. In practice this shall mean a close review of all existing guarantee agreements in order to establish whether financial intermediaries are on track to reach the maximum portfolio volumes agreed. Should this not be the case, existing contracts may be revised downwards in order to free up budgetary resources so that they can be made available for additional new agreements with other financial intermediaries.

Relationship with Horizon 2020:

- The LGF is part of the single Union debt financial instrument for Union enterprises' growth and research and innovation (R&I), together with the InnovFin SME Guarantee Facility set up under the Horizon 2020 programme. The InnovFin SME Guarantee Facility, which is also entrusted to the EIF for implementation, provides financing to SMEs and small midcaps with significant research, development and innovation (RDI) potential or investments in RDI activities, both with significant technological and financial risk provided that these are eligible under the innovation criteria as set out in the open call for expression of interest published for this facility.
- Financial intermediaries are free to apply either for one or both facilities under COSME and Horizon 2020 in line with their business objectives and possibilities to reach the potential target group of the different facilities.

LGF contribution to the EU SME Initiative:

- The EU SME Initiative was conceived as an anti-crisis measure with budget commitments over 3 years (2014-2016); building on the Union financial instruments that support lending to SMEs (COSME LGF and/or InnovFin SME Guarantee Facility under Horizon 2020). However, in the context of the 2014-2020 MFF review, the Commission proposed a number of legislative changes, including the extension of the duration of the SME Initiative in the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR).
- The SME Initiative is implemented as a "joint instrument", i.e. - a mechanism allowing Member States to allocate European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) under their responsibility to programmes managed directly by the Commission, with disbursement geographically linked to contributions. This mechanism is provided for by the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) governing the implementation of ESIF and the principle of such combination is also contained in the legal basis for COSME and Horizon 2020.
- The SME Initiative is implemented in the form of uncapped portfolio guarantees and/or securitisation operations using funds from COSME and/or Horizon 2020 and ESIF combined with resources from EIB and EIF. Member States are free to decide on the desired implementation mechanism as well as on the central Union financial

instrument with which the pooling of resources shall occur.

- Under both uncapped guarantees and securitisation, ESIF will guarantee the most junior tranche of the portfolio (i.e. the highest risk) and a combination of ESIF, Union (i.e. COSME and/or Horizon 2020) and EIF resources will cover the mezzanine tranche. The senior tranche will be covered by EIB and, if possible, national promotional banks. In the case of securitisation, the senior tranche should achieve high credit rating and could be sold to institutional investors.
- Participation by Member States is entirely voluntary. So far the following countries have decided on pooling resources with Horizon 2020 for uncapped guarantees: Spain, Malta, Bulgaria, Romania, and Finland. Italy opted in 2016 for a combination of resources with COSME under the securitisation option of the SME Initiative. The related call for expression of interest published by the EIF closed on 30 September 2017 and agreements with five Italian banks were signed end of 2017.
- In the course of 2018, the CPR was revised and the duration of the SME Initiative was extended allowing the signature of new operations until the end of 2020. The call for the SME Initiative in Italy was subsequently reopened and further transactions may occur.

Relationship with the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI)11:

- As the resources available under the LGF were not sufficient to satisfy market demand (i.e. total of applications received from Financial Intermediaries by the EIF) for the financing of SMEs, the LGF was enhanced in 2015 temporarily with additional risk-bearing capacity under EFSI so as to avoid disruptions in signing transactions with financial intermediaries.
- This temporary front-loading was converted in 2017 into a permanent top-up of LGF resources with risk-bearing capacity provided under the SME window of EFSI for an amount of EUR 550 million. Following the prolongation of EFSI end of 2017¹², the current top up was further increased to a total of EUR 770 million in January 2019. An additional top-up of EUR 230 million is under preparation to allow catering for the continued strong market demand and for the digitalisation pilot as further detailed below. And a further top-up of EUR 270 million is envisaged to allow the Commission putting in place a measure to facilitate access to finance for SMEs that will be affected by the withdrawal of the UK from the EU without a withdrawal agreement as announced in the Commission Communication on Finalising the preparations for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union of 4 September 2019¹³. Should such measure not materialize because of the UK leaving the Union with a withdrawal agreement, the resources would be made available for COSME LGF transactions in general. Overall, the total amount of top-ups during the period 2017 to 2019 amounts to EUR 1,270 million, which more than doubles the resources that are available under the COSME LGF budget over the period 2014 – 2019.

¹¹ Regulation (EU) 2015/1017 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2015 on the European Fund for Strategic Investments, the European Investment Advisory Hub and the European Investment Project Portal and amending Regulations (EU) No 1291/2013 and (EU) No 1316/2013 — the European Fund for Strategic Investments

¹² Regulation (EU) 2017/2396 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2017 amending Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013 and (EU) 2015/1017 as regards the extension of the duration of the European Fund for Strategic Investments as well as the introduction of technical enhancements for that Fund and the European Investment Advisory Hub

¹³ COM(2019) 394 final

Digitalisation pilot:

The Commission's Single Market Communication¹⁴ of November 2018 highlights the need for industry to adapt to an increasing digitisation of products and services and the way consumers interact. Such adaptation is required across the board by companies of all sizes. However, the digitalisation of companies in Europe varies significantly by geography, sector and type and size of company. While 54% of large companies are highly digitalised, only 17% of SMEs have successfully integrated digital technologies into their businesses. While there are several factors that lead to a low digitisation rate, limited access to finance is one of the elements that negatively affects the possibility for traditional SMEs to digitise. The financial sector is generally reluctant to provide external finance, as the required expenditure for such projects does not necessarily lead to assets, which could serve as collateral for external finance. The digitalisation pilot will be an additional implementation option for the Loan Guarantee Facility.

Implementation

The implementation of the LGF is done through indirect management and is entrusted to the European Investment Fund (EIF). A continuous open call for expression of interest was published by the EIF to which financial intermediaries may apply at any time until 30 September 2020. The call sets out the terms and conditions for the different implementing mechanism under the LGF (capped guarantees, guarantees for securitisation transactions). It may be complemented by calls for those Member States which opt to use the COSME resources for the SME Initiative as set out below.

Additional information

Specific objective:

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

Expected results:

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

It was expected that over the lifetime of the programme between 220,000 and 330,000 SMEs would receive financing for a total value ranging from EUR 14 to 21 billion thanks to the COSME budget. However, the numbers and volumes will be far higher due to some re-allocation of budget from the COSME Equity Facility for Growth (EFG) towards the LFG and the substantial increase of the LGF capacity by the EFSI top-up. Especially thanks to the additional risk-bearing capacity provided by the EFSI top-up, it is expected that the initial foreseen results would more than double over the lifetime of the LGF, leading to an overall financing volume of EUR 32 to 48 billion, benefitting between 490,000 and 740,000 SMEs which would otherwise have struggled to get the financing needed.

Indicative implementation timetable:

¹⁴ The Single Market in a changing world, COM(2018)772 final of 22 November 2018

MILESTONE DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE QUARTER
Delegation Agreement signed with the entrusted entity	Q3 2014
Call for expression of interest launched by the entrusted entity	Q3 2014
First agreements signed with Financial Intermediaries	Q4 2014
First agreements signed benefitting from EFSI support	Q3 2015
Call for expression of interest launched for the SME Initiative in Italy	Q3 2016
Agreements signed with Financial Intermediaries under the SME Initiative Italy (securitisation option)	Q4 2017
Indicative total duration (months): The Delegation Agreement shall be valid until the last of the transactions under the programme is fully completed (latest by 2034).	

Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the action:

Volume of financing made available and number of firms benefiting from financing: Value of financing mobilised ranging from EUR 4,3 billion to EUR 6,4 billion; number of firms receiving financing which benefits from COSME guarantee ranging from 65 000 to 98 000.

The above values have been computed based on the leverage targets of COSME which calls for a leverage of 1:20 - 1:30 for the debt instrument. They refer to new SME loan portfolios built during the whole availability period (usually two to three years) of individual transactions with financial intermediaries authorised from the 2020 budget.

On a cumulative basis, the value of financing mobilised ranges from EUR 22,1 billion to EUR 33,2 billion, with the number of firms receiving financing backed by the COSME LGF ranging from 340 000 to 510 000. These values refer to new SME loan portfolios built during the 2-3 years availability period of individual transactions authorised from the cumulative 2014-2020 budget allocated towards the COSME LGF (excluding the additional EFSI top-up).

6. OTHER ACTIONS OR EXPENDITURE

The global budgetary envelope reserved for other actions is EUR 200,000

(Framework Conditions): EUR 200,000

6.1.1 GRO/SME/20/C/14- SME Policy (SME Performance Review Country Reports)

6.1.1.1 *SME POLICY (SPR, Start-ups, outreach) – Administrative arrangement*

General description of the contracts envisaged

Administrative arrangement with JRC to provide indicators for the SME Performance Review country reports

Implementation

Implemented by DG GROW

Additional information

Specific objective:

Objective C) Framework Conditions for Enterprises.

Expected results:

Improved knowledge and understanding of the situation of SMEs in a given country to feed the SME-related parts in current European Semester Country Reports.

Indicative implementation timetable:

Signature of agreement: Q1 2020.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators:

Indicators to be used for the SPR country reports provided in time to publish as planned the SPR country fact sheets.

ANNEX I: OVERVIEW TABLE

REFERENCE	TITLE	BUDGET
2.GRANTS		
2.1. Access Markets		
2.1.1.	Enterprise Europe Network (grants)	54,500,000
2.1.2.	EU-Japan centre for industrial cooperation.	5,600,000
2.1.3.	Supporting European SMEs to participate in public procurement outside EU	2,000,000
2.1.4.	Co-financing of public procurement of innovation consortia	10,000,000
2.1.5.	Creating links for the facilitation of public procurement of innovation	1,500,000
2.1.6.	Training for SME-Friendly policies in Central Purchasing Bodies	500,000
2.2. Framework Conditions for Enterprises		
2.2.1.	Clusters Go International	6,600,000
2.2.2.	Cluster Internationalisation programme for SMEs in the Defence & Security sector	900,000
2.2.3.	European Cluster Excellence Programme with ClusterXchange scheme connecting ecosystems and cities	6,000,000
2.2.4.	Innovation uptake and digitalisation in the tourism sector	8,000,000
2.2.5.	Strategic alliances for the uptake of advanced technologies by SMEs	5,000,000
2.2.6.	Business Planet – preparation and input for TV magazine	750,000
2.3. Entrepreneurship		
2.3.1	European Social Economy Regions Missions	1,500,000
	Subtotal	102,850,000
3.PROCUREMENT		
3.1. Access to finance		
3.1.1.	Accompanying Actions	1,625,000
3.2. Access Markets		
3.2.1.	Enterprise Europe Network (procurement)	3,150,000
3.2.2.	Single Digital Gateway	5,780,000
3.2.3.	Adaptations of the Your Europe: includes 3 actions: (1) Adaptations of the Your Europe portal and YEST in view of the up-coming single digital gateway.(2) Your Europe Business and (3)SOLVIT.	1,250,000
3.2.4.	International Intellectual Property SME Helpdesks	6,000,000
3.3. Framework Conditions for Enterprises		
3.3.1.	SME POLICY (SPR, Start-ups, outreach) – public procurement contracts	6,159,300
3.3.2.	Implementation of the Action Plan “Construction 2020” – European Construction Observatory year 4	400,000
3.3.3.	Better Regulation: REFIT platform	850,000
3.3.4.	Boosting competitiveness and innovation capacity of SMEs through creative partnerships and the use of new technologies - Worth Partnership II	4,000,000
3.3.5.	Fostering smart tourism solutions in EU cities through the European Capital of Smart Tourism	2,000,000
3.3.6.	Competitiveness of tourism industry – implementation of policy (events, stakeholders' meetings, market intelligence capacity building through ad-hoc analytical or trends reports)	500,000
3.3.7	European Cluster Collaboration Platform	5,900,000
3.4. Entrepreneurship		
3.4.1.	Erasmus for young entrepreneurs	900,000
	Subtotal	38,514,300
4. ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED IN INDIRECT MANAGEMENT		
4.1. Framework Conditions for Enterprises		
4.1.1.	EU Chemicals Legislation Finder	1,199,000
4.1.2.	European Union Observatory on Nanomaterials (EUON)	892,600
	Subtotal	2,091,600
5. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT		
5.1.Access to Finance		
5.1.1.	Equity Facility for growth	49,322,000
5.1.2.	Loan Guarantee Facility including the SME Initiative	213,288,000

		<i>Subtotal</i>	262,610,000
6. OTHER ACTIONS			
6.1.1.	SPR- Administrative Arrangement		200,000
		<i>Subtotal</i>	200,000
TOTAL programme			406,265,900

ANNEX II: OVERVIEW TABLE by objective

REFERENCE	TITLE	BUDGET
ACCESS TO FINANCE		
5.1.1.	Equity Facility for growth- GRO/SME/20/A/01	49,322,000
5.1.2.	Loan Guarantee Facility including the SME Initiative- GRO/SME/20/A/02	213,288,000
3.1.1.	Accompanying Actions- GRO/SME/20/A/03	1,625,000
	<i>Subtotal</i>	264,235,000
ACCESS MARKETS		
2.1.1.	Enterprise Europe Network (grants)- GRO/SME/20/B/01	54,500,000
2.1.2.	EU-Japan centre for industrial cooperation- GRO/SME/20/B/03	5,600,000
2.1.3.	Supporting European SMEs to participate in public procurement outside EU- GRO/SME/20/B/04	2,000,000
2.1.4.	Co-financing of public procurement of innovation consortia- GRO/SME/20/B/05	10,000,000
2.1.5.	Creating links for the facilitation of public procurement of innovation- GRO/SME/20/B/06	1,500,000
2.1.6.	Training for SME-Friendly policies in Central Purchasing Bodies	500,000
3.2.1.	Enterprise Europe Network (procurement)- GRO/SME/20/B/02	3,150,000
3.2.2.	Single Digital Gateway- GRO/SME/20/B/08	5,780,000
3.2.3.	Adaptations of the Your Europe: includes 3 actions: (1) Adaptations of the Your Europe portal and YEST in view of the up-coming single digital gateway.(2) Your Europe Business and (3)SOLVIT- GRO/SME/20/B/09	1,250,000
3.2.4.	International Intellectual Property SME Helpdesks- GRO/SME/20/B/10	6,000,000
	<i>Subtotal</i>	90,280,000
FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS FOR ENTERPRISES		
2.2.1.	Clusters Go International- GRO/SME/20/C/02	6,600,000
2.2.2.	Cluster Internationalisation programme for SMEs in the Defence & Security sector- GRO/SME/20/C/03	900,000
2.2.3.	European Cluster Excellence Programme with ClusterXchange scheme connecting ecosystems and cities- GRO/SME/20/C/04	6,000,000
2.2.4.	Innovation uptake and digitalisation in the tourism sector- GRO/SME/20/C/07	8,000,000
2.2.5.	Strategic alliances for the uptake of advanced technologies by SMEs- GRO/SME/20/C/09	5,000,000
2.2.6.	Business Planet – preparation and input for TV magazine	750,000
3.3.1.	SME POLICY (SPR, Start-ups, outreach) – public procurement contracts- GRO/SME/20/C/01	6,159,300
3.3.2.	Implementation of the Action Plan “Construction 2020” – European Construction Observatory year 4- GRO/SME/20/C/10	400,000
3.3.3.	Better Regulation: REFIT platform- GRO/SME/20/C/11	850,000
3.3.4.	Boosting competitiveness and innovation capacity of SMEs through creative partnerships and the use of new technologies - Worth Partnership II- GRO/SME/20/C/05	4,000,000
3.3.5.	Fostering smart tourism solutions in EU cities through the European Capital of Smart Tourism- GRO/SME/20/C/06	2,000,000
3.3.6.	Competitiveness of tourism industry – implementation of policy (events, stakeholders' meetings, market intelligence capacity building through ad-hoc analytical or trends reports)- GRO/SME/20/C/08	500,000
3.3.7.	European Cluster Collaboration Platform	5,900,000
4.1.1.	EU Chemicals Legislation Finder- GRO/SME/20/C/12	1,199,000
4.1.2.	European Union Observatory on Nanomaterials (EUON)- GRO/SME/20/C/13	892,600
6.1.1.	SPR- Administrative Arrangement	200,000
	<i>Subtotal</i>	49,350,900
ENTREPRENEURSHIP		
2.3.1	European Social Economy Regions Missions- GRO/SME/20/D/01	1,500,000

3.4.1.	Erasmus for young entrepreneurs- GRO/SME/20/D/02	900,000
	Subtotal	2,400,000
	Subtotal of objectives b,c,d	142,030,900
	TOTAL programme	406,265,900

ANNEX III: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND SELECTION AND AWARD CRITERIA

Eligibility criteria

Applicant organisations must be established:

- in Union Member States;
- or in countries participating in the COSME programme under Article 6 of Regulation (EU) No 1287/2013.

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

Selection and award criteria

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

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

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

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

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