



COSME Programme

Call for Proposals

European Incubation Network(s) for Creativity-Driven Innovation

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) play a crucial role in reaching the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy¹. Whereas they are considered as crucial engines for growth and job creation, their competitiveness is affected by a limited exploitation of international opportunities and innovation prospects in the Single Market and beyond.

In this context, the Programme for the competitiveness of enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (2014-2020)², hereinafter referred to as "COSME", aims to promote growth and to strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of enterprises in the European Union.

The Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises³ (hereinafter referred to as "EASME" or the "Agency") is entrusted by the European Commission with the implementation, *inter alia*, of parts of the COSME programme.

In this respect, this call for proposals, managed by EASME, implements parts of the COSME Work Programme 2017, adopted on 8 November 2016⁴ and last amended on 6 July 2017⁵.

1.2. Policy Context

1.2.1. *General policy context*

The Commission Communication "Europe's next leaders: the Start-up and Scale-up Initiative"⁶. The Communication recognises the potential of start-ups that in general combine fast growth, reliance on product and process innovation, attention to new technological developments and extensive use of new business models. **The Communication stresses the need to support start-ups and promote adequate framework conditions and the right environment to ensure their scaling-up.**

In this context and in line with the priorities of the Commission, with the actions proposed under COSME 2017 work programme, the Commission aims at better exploiting and enhancing synergies which promote the fusion of cutting-edge technologies and innovation into the fashion and design and high-end industries, tourism and cultural and creative industries (CCIs) through concrete actions which supports SMEs and start-ups in these industry sectors.

¹ COM (2010)2020 final of 3 March 2010 "Europe 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth".

² Regulation (EU) No 1287/2013 of 11 December 2013 (Official Journal of the European Union L 347/33 of 20.12.2013).

³ EASME was set up by Commission Implementing Decision 2013/771/EU of 17 December 2013 establishing the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and repealing Decisions 2004/20/EC and 2007/372/EC (Official Journal of the European Union L 341/73 of 18.12.2013).

⁴ Commission Implementing Decision C(2016)7033 final of 8.11.2016 on the adoption of the work programme for 2017 and the financing for the implementation of the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises.

⁵ Commission Implementing Decision C(2017)4563 of 6 July 2017 amending Commission Implementing Decision C(2017)1042 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2017 and the financing for the implementation of the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises.

⁶ COM(2016) 733 final

Cultural and Creative Industries are knowledge and innovation-intensive industries that trigger spill-overs and synergies with other sectors such as tourism. CCIs are one of the most vibrant sectors of the EU economy: they employ over 12 million people and generate a turnover of approximately EUR 1.500 billion.

1.2.2. *Specific policy context*

In this context whereby cultural and creative industries (CCIs) contribute significantly to growth and jobs in the EU, and that they represent over 3 million companies employing 12 million people, with turnover of € 1.5 billion, supporting innovative start-ups and SMEs operating in the FashionTech and tourism sectors is essential. This is where the action proposed by this call for proposals is inscribed and aims at supporting Europe's fashion and design industry and tourism industry in a more effective way by enhancing the fusion of creativity, art and design with cutting-edge technologies and the innovative-driven potential and solutions that technology, science and other relevant expertise offers.

CCIs also contribute to the development of new, innovative solutions to the challenges that companies and societies face. The increasing complexity of modern goods and services and their intertwining nature require inputs of highly-specialised knowledge. Combination of diverse skills and knowledge sources can be a source of competitive advantage for new business ventures and a driver of innovation.

Today innovation is as much about novel solutions that technology and design can provide as it is about understanding needs of society and ensuring wide participation in the process of innovation. In this context, creativity is seen a catalyst of an efficient conversion of scientific and technological knowledge into innovative products, services, and processes.

It appears that there is a need to accelerate and widen the exchange of skills of artists and creative people with entrepreneurs and technologists, thus creating a common language and understanding. The challenge is however that people and companies from different disciplines do not naturally cooperate with each other: although companies in creative industries are often very open to collaboration, they lack resources and interdisciplinary skills necessary to organise such collaborations. This is where **incubators, accelerators and other business support organisations can play a key role: they are equipped with adequate skills and infrastructure.**

Moreover, **the fusion of creativity with cutting-edge technologies creates disruption often in traditional industries (such as fashion and tourism) and leads to development of new business models and innovative concepts.**

'**FashionTech**' is a clear example of such fusion. In this area, new products, services and solutions are being developed to address new consumer and societal needs (e.g. smart clothing for various applications, wearable devices and trackers or applications of new technologies to improve manufacturing and design processes or boost retail experiences).

This is also true for **tourism**, as exemplified by "Welcome City Lab" the incubator set up in 2013 and dedicated to tourism innovation in Paris,⁷ France Tourisme Lab ("réseau français des incubateurs et accélérateurs touristiques") set up in 2017 with the support of the French Ministry responsible for tourism⁸ or the start-up accelerator set up by Walt Disney Corporation⁹.

⁷ Welcome City Lab, created <http://www.welcomecitylab.com/>

⁸ <http://www.entreprises.gouv.fr/tourisme/france-tourisme-lab>

Recognising the importance of tourism which employs 12 million people, the European Union is supporting innovation in this sector by complementing the action of the Member States, in **particular to enhance its competitiveness (Article 195 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). This objective was clearly** underlined in the European Commission's Communication of 30 June 2010.¹⁰

The actions proposed by the Commission under COSME 2017 work programme contribute to strengthen the competitiveness of the EU tourism sector and increase its contribution to economic growth and jobs in the EU through exploiting synergies between tourism and cultural and creative industries (CCIs)

The renewed efforts to develop synergies between CCIs and tourism are one of the objectives of COSME support for Business to Business (B2B) matchmaking events for tourism operators.¹¹ They are also pursued through grants for the promotion and development of transnational thematic tourism products linked to Cultural and Creative Industries.¹² Other examples of support for CCIs-tourism synergies are given in the "Guide on EU funding for the tourism sector (2014-2020)".¹³

Business incubators and accelerators in particular play a key role in supporting the growth process of start-ups and SMEs. Studies show that the survival rate for incubated companies, after three years, is close to 90%, which is more than 20% higher than other companies. This is even more important for creative industries: the barriers to growth known to all entrepreneurs are often amplified in case of creative businesses. Moreover value chains of certain emerging industries are still scattered: it is therefore important to bring together and link relevant actors which support start-ups and SMEs from across the EU to maximise the innovation potential and build much needed connections and collaborations.

In this specific policy context **building connections and collaborations between European Business incubation and accelerators that can play a key role in supporting the growth process of start-ups and SMEs in the industry sectors of fashion and design and tourism is essential.**

2. OBJECTIVE(S) – THEME(S) – ACTIVITIES – OUTPUTS

2.1. General and Specific Objectives

Within the general and specific context explained above, the main objective of the action is to support the creation, business development and scaling-up of companies in the fashion and the tourism sectors through incubators and accelerators integrating creativity, art and design skills from

⁹ <https://disneyaccelerator.com/>

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/policy-overview_en

¹¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/tender/9570/supporting-internationalisation-eu-tourism-operators-promotion-trans-european-tourist>

¹² Diversifying and Increasing the Visibility of Europe`s Transnational Tourism Offer – Supporting the Promotion and Development of Transnational Thematic Tourism Products Linked to Cultural and Creative Industries (GRO/SME/17/C/094). <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/cos-tourcci-2017-3-03-supporting-promotion-and-development-transnational-thematic-tourism-products>

¹³ <https://bookshop.europa.eu/en/guide-on-eu-funding-for-the-tourism-sector-2014-2020--pbET0116499/> (available in all EU official languages).

CCIs (Cultural and Creative Industries) with cutting-edge technology, science and other relevant expertise.

The specific objectives of the action:

- Supporting 1-2 trans-national network(s) of business incubators and accelerators with a focus on SMEs and start-ups in CCIs sector;
- Facilitating and reinforcing cross-sectoral collaboration amongst incubators, accelerators, labs as well as other relevant actors across EU countries and COSME participating countries focusing on themes and priorities identified below, and taking into account the relevant value chains;
- Developing and putting in place support mechanisms to enable growth of innovative companies and development of new business models, products and services.
- Supporting a number of innovative start-ups and SMEs for a period necessary for them to grow and scale-up their business activities through the development and testing of new business models, products and services.

The action will also contribute to achieving the following general objectives:

- The creation and growth of creative and innovative enterprises across the EU.
- Facilitating access to finance for different stages of innovative companies' growth.
- Promoting entrepreneurship, facilitating access to new markets.

2.2. Themes and priorities

The present call for proposals aims to support one or two trans-national network(s) of business incubators and accelerators with a focus on providing business support to SMEs and start-ups in the fashion and the tourism sectors integrating creativity, art and design skills from CCIs (Cultural and Creative Industries) with cutting-edge technology, science and other relevant expertise.

This call for proposals is divided in two Lots listed below. One Lot is to support trans-national network(s) of business incubators and accelerators providing business support to the fusion of FashionTech projects. The other Lot is to support trans-national network(s) of business incubators and accelerators providing business support to tourism projects focussing on CCIs driven innovation.

Lot 1 will support a project in the area of FashionTech (intersection of fashion and technology), in particular related to:

- products and materials;
- design and production;
- retail and marketing.

Lot 2 will support a project in the area of Tourism focusing on CCI driven innovation across:

- the entire value chain or some of its segments (accommodation, ticketing, travel management, visitor experience, exploitation of big data...)

- some or all specific sectors such as leisure or business travellers and cultural tourism.
- some or all specific source markets (intra-EU, inter-continental such as China in order to build on the 2018 EU-China Tourism year momentum, ...).

2.3. Description of the eligible activities

The present call for proposals will support the following type of activities to be carried out per Lot to achieve the objective of the call.

LOT 1 is to support the fusion of FashionTech projects, LOT 2 is to support tourism projects focussing on CCIs driven innovation. A **project proposal** (*a transnational network*) **can ONLY cover one of the two LOTS**.

For Lot 1 FashionTech : support to trans-national network(s) of business incubators and accelerators which provide business support to SMEs and start-ups focusing on the fusion of FashionTech.

- A. Facilitating and reinforcing cross-sectoral collaboration amongst transnational network (s) and relevant organisations (incubators, accelerators, labs, universities, research centres and other relevant business support organisations) may be done in particular through:
- Mapping the relevant initiatives and actors, opportunities and challenges for the sectors;
 - Organising networking activities, workshops, study visits, events to enable learning, exchange of knowledge and good practice, including on leveraging public funds and private investment.
 - Organising networking, match-making, hackathons and/or any other relevant events bringing together designers, technology providers, start-ups, SMEs, scientists, artists, etc.
 - Setting-up a dedicated internet platform;
 - Involving other actors covering different parts of the relevant value chain, including universities, research and technology centres, materials producers, big brands, etc.;
 - Developing and testing more long-term support models that would help innovative companies grow;
 - Establishing cooperation with the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN)¹⁴.
- B. Providing business support to a number of innovative start-ups and SMEs to scale-up their activities, this may be done in particular through:
- Organising collaborative workshops, mentoring, individual and group coaching, exchanges of entrepreneurs and other forms of support in various areas (such as finance and accounting, marketing, intellectual property management), competition for the most successful business idea, etc.

¹⁴ The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) provides advice and support services for business innovation. The EEN has 17 sector groups which combine international business expertise with local knowledge, including fashion and textile, tourism and cultural heritage, and creative industries sector groups. More information <http://een.ec.europa.eu/>

- Facilitating technical support (e.g. providing physical space, means and resources);
- supporting proofs of concept and prototypes of new products and services;
- Facilitating contacts with investors and business opportunities;
- Organising events to promote the selected start-ups and SMEs.

The list of activities included in sections A and B is not exhaustive. The applicant consortium constituted in a Network(s) of incubators/accelerators can propose other type of relevant innovative activities to provide business support business to SMEs and start ups in the fields covered by the Call.

The proposal will describe how the action will reach a balanced geographical spread of the supported companies and other actors involved, including actors covering different parts of the value chain.

To increase the impact of the action on regional development, proposals must demonstrate the existence of a supportive environment e.g. by explaining the links between the proposed project and the objectives of the regional development programmes, including as defined in the smart specialisation strategies. The networks shall feed into the cross-regional development of joint actions and investment projects in common priority areas in the context of the Thematic Smart Specialisation Platform on industrial modernisation (depending on the existence of a relevant thematic platform)¹⁵.

C. Kick-off meeting

The applicant must foresee, in the budget proposal of the project, the participation of 3 representatives of the project's consortium, and at least the representative of the coordinating consortium, at the kick-off and the network coordinators' meetings in Brussels, organised by EASME, at the beginning and mid-term of the implementation period (2 meetings).

For Lot 2 Tourism : support to trans-national network(s) of business incubators and accelerators which provide business support to SMEs and start-ups in the tourism sector focussing on CCIs driven innovation projects.

- A. Facilitating and reinforcing cross-sectoral collaboration amongst relevant organisations may be done in particular through:
- Mapping the relevant initiatives and actors;
 - Organising a limited number of networking activities, workshops, study visits, events to enable learning, exchange of knowledge and good practice, including on leveraging public funds and private investment.

¹⁵ See here for the list of thematic platforms <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/industrial-modernisation>

- Establishing cooperation with the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN).¹⁶
- B. Supporting a number of innovative start-ups and SMEs through the creation of an EU incubator (either in a single location or consisted by a network of local incubators). This support may come in particular through:
- Organising collaborative workshops, mentoring, individual and group coaching, exchanges of entrepreneurs and other forms of support in various areas (such as finance and accounting, marketing, intellectual property management), competition for the most successful business idea, etc.
 - Facilitating technical support (e.g. providing physical space, means and resources);
 - supporting proofs of concept and prototypes of new products and services;
 - Facilitating contacts with investors and business opportunities;
 - Organising events to promote the selected start-ups and SMEs.

The list of activities included in sections A and B is not exhaustive; the applicant consortium constituted in a Network(s) of incubators/accelerators can propose other type of relevant innovative activities to provide business support business to SMEs and start ups in the fields covered by the Call.

The proposal will describe how the action will reach a balanced geographical spread of the supported companies and other actors involved.

To increase the impact of the action on regional development, proposals must demonstrate the existence of a supportive environment e.g. by explaining the links between the proposed project and the objectives of the regional development programmes, including as defined in the smart specialisation strategies. The networks shall feed into the cross-regional development of joint actions and investment projects in common priority areas in the context of the Thematic Smart Specialisation Platform on industrial modernisation (depending on the existence of a relevant thematic platform)¹⁷.

C. Kick-off meeting

The applicant must foresee, in the budget proposal of the project, the participation of 3 representatives of the project's consortium, and at least the representative of the coordinating consortium, at the kick-off and the network coordinators' meetings in Brussels, organised by EASME, at the beginning and mid-term of the implementation period (2 meetings).

¹⁶ The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) provides advice and support services for business innovation. The EEN has 17 sector groups which combine international business expertise with local knowledge, including fashion and textile, tourism and cultural heritage, and creative industries sector groups. More information <http://een.ec.europa.eu/>

¹⁷ See here for the list of thematic platforms <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/industrial-modernisation>

2.4. Expected results and deliverables

2.4.1 Expected results

- Creation and growth of a number of innovative start-up businesses.
- Increasing the competitiveness of SMEs by combining creative and technology skills leading
- The development of new business models, products and services.
- Increasing trans-national links and cooperation between incubators and boosting exchange of good practice.
- Boosting innovation through knowledge transfer and cross-sectoral collaboration.
- Developing new forms of business support relevant for young, creative businesses which promote collaboration between artists and creative people with entrepreneurs and technologists._

2.4.2 Deliverables

- Reports on collaboration activities developed under the project.
- Detailed reports on the type of business support provided to start-ups and SMEs.
- Mapping and showcasing of good practice and examples.
- Reports on the creation and growth and scaling up of start-ups and companies of a number of innovative start-up businesses.
- Reports on the development of new products, prototypes, solutions, etc.

2.5. Indicators:

- Number of start-ups and/or SMEs supported;
- Number of start-ups converted to scale-ups;
- Number of new business models developed and tested and showcase and good practice developed;
- Number of new products/services/solutions developed;
- Number of prototypes/proofs of concept developed;
- Quality and visibility of the support models developed and good practices identified;
- Number of promotional events organised: networking activities, workshops, match-making activities, events etc.

Projects must report on these indicators.

Moreover, specific outcome indicators have to be defined for each project proposal, depending on the concrete results/outcomes foreseen for the specific project. Therefore applicants may also propose further performance indicators to be integrated into their monitoring plan, which will be discussed and adjusted to each Lot activities upon discussion with EASME and the Commission services at the beginning of the project.

3. TIMETABLE

3.1 Planning

Stages	Dates
a) Deadline for submitting applications	(19/10/2017) 17:00 h (CET) Brussels time
b) Evaluation period*	November/December 2017)
c) Information to applicants*	(December 2017-January 2018)
d) Signature of grant agreements*	(January-March 2018)
e) Starting date of the action*	(April-June 2018)
f) Kick-off meeting *	(June 2018)

* indicative

4. BUDGET AVAILABLE AND FUNDING OF PROJECTS

The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of projects is estimated at EUR 2.600.000 split as following:

Lot 1: EUR 1.600.000.

Lot 2: EUR 1.000.000.

EASME expects to fund **two** proposals, one in Lot 1 and one in Lot 2.

The maximum grant per project will be EUR M 1.6 per project for Lot 1, and EUR M 1 for Lot.

The grant is limited to a maximum reimbursement rate of **75% of eligible costs**.

EASME reserves the right to readjust the estimated budget between Lots. If there are no sufficient proposals passing the overall and individual thresholds of the award criteria in Lot 1 or Lot 2, the budget allocated can be used to fund proposals in reserve lists in Lot 1 or Lot 2. EASME also reserves the right to readjust the estimated budget between Lot 1 and 2.

EASME reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.

5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements must be complied with:

- Applications must be submitted no later than the deadline for submitting applications referred to in section 3;
- Applications must be submitted in writing, using the electronic system specified in section 16;
- Applications must be drafted in one of the EU official languages.

Failure to comply with those requirements will lead to the rejection of the application.

Incomplete applications may be considered inadmissible. This refers to the requested administrative data, the proposal description and requested grant amount, and any supporting documents specified in this call for proposals.

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

6.1. Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants must be fully or partly public or private bodies; private bodies must be properly constituted and registered under national law.

Applicants must be legal entities forming a Consortium (a network) of business incubators, accelerators and business support organisations which provide business support to SMEs and start-ups.

This is a non-exhaustive list of types of entities that can apply:

- non-profit organisations (private or public);
- business incubators, accelerators, labs, universities or educational institutions, research centres and other relevant business support organisations which provide business support to SMEs and start-ups.)
- public authorities (national, regional, local);
- profit making entities.

Linked third parties, i.e. legal entities having a legal or capital link with applicants, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, may take part in the action **as applicants** in order to declare eligible costs.

Only applications from legal entities established in the following countries are eligible:

- EU Member States;
- countries participating in the COSME programme pursuant to Article 6 of the COSME Regulation¹⁸.

¹⁸ The following groups of countries are eligible for participation in COSME according to Article 6 COSME Regulation:

- a. European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries which are members of the European Economic Area (EEA), in accordance with the conditions laid down in the EEA Agreement, and other European countries when agreements and procedures so allow;

For British applicants: Please be aware that eligibility criteria must be complied with for the entire duration of the grant. If the United Kingdom withdraws from the EU during the grant period without concluding an agreement with the EU ensuring in particular that British applicants continue to be eligible, you will cease to receive EU funding (while continuing, where possible, to participate) or be required to leave the project on the basis of Article 34.3.1(b) of the grant agreement.

6.2. Eligible consortia

The consortium is the network submitting the application.

Proposals must be presented by consortia forming trans-national network(s) of business incubators, accelerators and business support organisations providing business support to SMEs and start-ups.

Consortia must be composed of at least **four legal entities from at least three different EU Member States and/or COSME participating countries**, as listed under section 6.1

6.3 Implementation period

The maximum duration of projects is 36 months.

The minimum project duration is 24 month.

Applications for projects scheduled to run for a shorter or longer period than that specified in this call for proposals will not be accepted.

7. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

7.1. Exclusion

The authorising officer shall exclude an applicant from participating in call for proposals procedures where:

- (a) the applicant is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, where its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, where it is in an arrangement with creditors, where its business activities are suspended, or where it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under national laws or regulations;
- (b) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the law of the country in which it is established, with those of the country in which the authorising officer is located or those of the country of the performance of the contract;

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- b. acceding countries, candidate countries and potential candidates in accordance with the general principles and general terms and conditions for the participation of those countries in the Union's programmes established in the respective Framework Agreements and Association Council Decisions, or similar arrangements;
 - c. countries falling within the scope of the European neighbourhood policies, when agreements and procedures so allow and in accordance with the general principles and general terms and conditions for the participation of those countries in the Union's programmes established in the respective Framework Agreements, Protocols to Association Agreements and Association Council Decisions.

The updated list of eligible third countries is available on the following webpage: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/cosme/index_en.htm. Proposals from applicants in Article 6 countries may be selected provided that, on the date of award, agreements have been signed setting out the arrangements for the participation of those countries in the programme.

- (c) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:
- (i) fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of selection criteria or in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision;
 - (ii) entering into agreement with other applicants with the aim of distorting competition;
 - (iii) violating intellectual property rights;
 - (iv) attempting to influence the decision-making process of the Agency during the award procedure;
 - (v) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the award procedure;
- (d) it has been established by a final judgment that the applicant is guilty of any of the following:
- (i) fraud, within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995;
 - (ii) corruption, as defined in Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997, and in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA, as well as corruption as defined in the law of the country where the contracting authority is located, the country in which the applicant is established or the country of the performance of the contract;
 - (iii) participation in a criminal organisation, as defined in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA;
 - (iv) money laundering or terrorist financing, as defined in Article 1 of Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council;
 - (v) terrorist-related offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA, respectively, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Decision;
 - (vi) child labour or other forms of trafficking in human beings as defined in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- (e) the applicant has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision financed by the Union's budget, which has led to its early termination or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties, or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors;
- (f) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the applicant has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95.
- (g) for the situations of grave professional misconduct, fraud, corruption, other criminal offences, significant deficiencies in the performance of the contract or irregularity, the applicant is subject to:
- (i) facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by the Court of Auditors, OLAF or internal audit, or any other check, audit or control performed under

the responsibility of an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body;

- (ii) non-final administrative decisions which may include disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics;
- (iii) decisions of the ECB, the EIB, the European Investment Fund or international organisations;
- (iv) decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of the Union's competition rules or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law.
- (v) decisions of exclusion by an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body.

7.2. Remedial measures

If an applicant declares one of the situations of exclusion listed above (see section 7.4), it should indicate the measures it has taken to remedy the exclusion situation, thus demonstrating its reliability. This may include e.g. technical, organisational and personnel measures to prevent further occurrence, compensation of damage or payment of fines. The relevant documentary evidence which illustrates the remedial measures taken must be provided in annex to the declaration. This does not apply for situations referred in point (d) of section 7.1.

7.3. Rejection from the call for proposals

The authorising officer shall not award a grant to an applicant who:

- a. is in an exclusion situation established in accordance with section 7.1;
- b. has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information;
- c. was previously involved in the preparation of calls for proposal documents where this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise.

The same exclusion criteria apply to linked third parties.

Administrative and financial penalties may be imposed on applicants, linked third parties where applicable, who are guilty of misrepresentation.

7.4. Supporting documents

Applicants must provide a **declaration on their honour** certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to in Articles 106(1) and 107 FR, by filling in the relevant form attached to the application form accompanying this call for proposals.

8. SELECTION CRITERIA

8.1 Financial capacity

Applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out or the year for which the grant is awarded and to participate in its funding. The applicants' financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following supporting documents:

a) Low value grants (\leq EUR 60 000):

- a declaration on their honour.

b) Grants \geq EUR 60 000:

- a declaration on their honour and,

EITHER

- the profit and loss account, the balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts were closed;
- for newly created entities, the business plan might replace the above documents.

OR

- the table provided for in the application form, filled in with the relevant statutory accounting figures, in order to calculate the ratios as detailed in the form.

c) Grants for an action \geq EUR 750 000, in addition:

- an **audit report** produced by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last financial year available.

In the event of an application grouping several applicants (consortium), the above thresholds apply to each applicants.

The above-listed documents will have to be provided at later stage, via the electronic submission tool and only upon request of EASME.

On the basis of the documents submitted, if the authorising officer considers that financial capacity is not satisfactory, he may:

- request further information;
- propose a grant agreement without pre-financing;
- propose a grant agreement with a pre-financing paid in instalments;
- propose a grant agreement with a pre-financing covered by a bank guarantee (see section 12.4 below);
- where applicable, require the joint and several financial liability of all the co-beneficiaries;
- reject the application.

8.2 Operational capacity

Applicants must have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed action.

For that purpose, the Consortia (the network of incubators/accelerators) must assign to the project at least three highly qualified experts primarily responsible for managing and implementing the proposed action with at least three years of experience each in running business networks activities,

business incubators, accelerators and/or business support organisations which provide business support to SMEs and start-ups.

In this respect, applicants have to submit the following supporting documents:

- The curricula vitae (CV) must be submitted with the application. Preferably in European CV format (<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu>) or description of the profile of the main persons primarily responsible for managing and implementing the different activities of the action. The CV should be accompanied, where appropriate, (like in the field of research and education) by a list of relevant publications/projects managed);
- Each of the partner organisation part of the Consortium must submit a declaration on their honour accompanying the proposal as an annex whereby they confirm their involvement in supporting the enhancement of collaboration, networking and learning in innovation and providing or channelling specialised and customised businesses support services to stimulate innovation activities within the formed network of incubators/accelerators and to the supported SMEs and start-ups;
- a list of previous projects and activities performed and connected to the policy field of the call for proposals or to the actions to be carried out;
- a description of the facilities and the technical equipment, tools or facilities and patents at the disposal of the applicant in relation to the proposal.
- a summary table indicating the persons that will make up the core team responsible for the project with their qualifications and competences.

9. AWARD CRITERIA

Eligible applications will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Max. score</i>
<p>Relevance of the actions in view of the objectives of the call (<i>meeting objectives of the call; appropriate results; appropriate partnership: competences and European dimension</i>)</p> <p><i>What is the importance of the proposed action in relation to EU policies and priorities identified in the call?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent are the actions proposed by the applicant strategically chosen to meet the objectives of this call?</i></p> <p><i>How relevant is the project proposed in view of the objectives of the call?</i></p> <p><i>How well does the project fit with the expectations/needs of the identified target group?</i></p> <p><i>How strategically chosen are the project partners (relevance of the partners to the project)?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent do the proposed activities, composition of the partnership and the selected target group(s) demonstrate a European added value?</i></p> <p><i>Is there any complementarity between the proposed project and other actions being taken at European level?</i></p>	30

<p>Quality of the proposed actions (<i>clear and feasible description of actions; appropriate allocation of resources, including management</i>)</p> <p><i>How clear, coherent and ambitious is the work plan?</i></p> <p><i>How appropriate, practical and innovative are the activities proposed (including the internal plan of action/work packages)?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent is the work plan clearly defined in terms of schedule, milestones and deliverables?</i></p> <p><i>Is there a logical link between identified needs, specific objectives, proposed actions and expected results? Is this link well described and justified?</i></p> <p><i>How suitable is the contribution of each partner to the activities proposed?</i></p> <p><i>Is the level of effort (hours and budget) appropriate, per work package, per task and per partner considering their skills and responsibilities?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent can the methodology and management set up be effective and ensure the high quality of the action proposed?</i></p>	25
<p>Impact on target audience (<i>appropriate impact indicators; dissemination; project continuation</i>)</p> <p><i>Is the proposal suggesting clear, realistic and practical impact indicators? To what extent does the project contribute to creating a real, measurable impact on the sectors concerned?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent is the project likely to have a tangible impact on the target groups?</i></p> <p><i>How effective, innovative and convincing are the promotional and communication activities? Does the proposal contain a comprehensive communication strategy?</i></p> <p><i>Are the expected multiplying effects reasonable? To what extent does the proposal include elements of follow-up and transferability (including lessons learnt and good practices) at EU level?</i></p> <p><i>Are concrete measures planned in order to ensure that the project can be continued after the termination of EU funding?</i></p>	30
<p>Cost-effectiveness (<i>coherence, detail and clarity between actions proposed and budgeted resources</i>)</p> <p><i>To what extent the detailed budget is coherent with the work plan of the proposal?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent is the budget clear and detailed, as well as effective, to implement the action? Does the breakdown of the budget, category by category, offer a way of ensuring that the amount of the grant awarded is reasonable in relation to the expected results?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent is the proposed expenditure necessary for the implementation</i></p>	15

<i>of the project?</i>	
<i>Do the expected results stand in a reasonable relationship to the amount of the grant? Does the budget seem justified when compared to the expected impact?</i>	
TOTAL	<i>100</i>

Within each Lot, projects will be selected by order of merit within the indicative budget allocated to the Lot concerned, according to their overall score based on the evaluation of the award criteria. In order to be considered for funding, proposals will need to have passed an **overall threshold of 70% in terms of total score**. In addition, **thresholds of 50% will be applied to each individual award criterion** described above in order to ensure a consistent minimum quality for all award criteria.

10. LEGAL COMMITMENTS

In the event of a grant awarded by EASME, a grant agreement drawn up in euro and detailing the conditions and level of funding, will be sent to the applicant, as well as the information on the procedure to formalise the agreement of the parties.

Please note that the grant agreement will be signed electronically via the participating portal. Please note that the award of a grant does not establish an entitlement for subsequent years.

The authorising officer may draw a reserve list of proposals that have passed the above thresholds. In the event that the original budget of the action is increased or that selected proposal(s) fail to conclude the grant agreement, a grant may be awarded to proposals from the reserve list, following their order on the ranking list in accordance with the scores obtained.

11. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PROCEDURES

Unsuccessful applicants may request the review of the admissibility and eligibility procedure and the evaluation procedure with regard to their proposal as specified in section V of the Guide for applicants.

12. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

12.1 General principles

a) Non-cumulative award

An action may only receive one grant from the EU budget.

In no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget. To ensure this, applicants shall indicate the sources and amounts of Union funding received or applied

for the same action or part of the action or for its functioning during the same financial year as well as any other funding received or applied for the same action.¹⁹

b) Non-retroactivity

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed.

A grant may be awarded for an action which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the action before the grant agreement is signed.

In such cases, costs eligible for financing may not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application

c) Co-financing

Co-financing means that the resources which are necessary to carry out the action may not be entirely provided by the EU grant. It may take the form of:

- the beneficiary's own resources;
- income generated by the action;
- financial contributions from third parties.

Co-financing may also take the form of in-kind contributions from third parties, i.e. non-financial resources made available free of charge by third parties to the beneficiary or to the consortium. The corresponding costs are not eligible.

d) Balanced budget

The estimated budget of the action is to be attached to the application form. It must have revenue and expenditure in balance.

The budget must be drawn up in euros.

Applicants which foresee that costs will not be incurred in euros, are invited to use the exchange rate published on the Info-euro website available at: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/infoeuro/infoeuro_en.cfm.

e) Implementation contracts/subcontracting

Where the implementation of the action requires the award of procurement contracts (implementation contracts), the beneficiary must award the contract to the bid offering best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interests and retain the documentation for the event of an audit.

In the event of procurement exceeding EUR 60 000, the beneficiary must abide by special rules as referred in the grant agreement annexed to the call. Moreover the beneficiary is expected to clearly document the tendering procedure and retain the documentation for the event of an audit.

¹⁹ Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC (Official Journal of the European Union L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 65).

Entities acting in their capacity of contracting authorities in the meaning of Directive 2014/24/EU²⁰ or contracting entities in the meaning of Directive 2014/25/EU²¹) shall abide by the applicable national public procurement rules. The beneficiary is expected to clearly document the tendering procedure and retain the documentation for the event of an audit.

Sub-contracting, i.e. the externalisation of specific tasks or activities which form part of the action as described in the proposal must satisfy the conditions applicable to any implementation contract (as specified above) and in addition to them the following conditions:

- it may only cover the implementation of a limited part of the action;
- it must be justified having regard to the nature of the action and what is necessary for its implementation;
- it must be clearly stated in the proposal.

f) Financial support to third parties.

Applications may not envisage provision of financial support to third parties.

12.2 Funding forms

Grants are calculated on the basis of a detailed estimated budget indicating clearly the costs that are eligible for EU funding. The grant amount may neither exceed the eligible costs nor the amount requested. Amounts are indicated in euros.

➤ **Maximum EU contribution requested**

The EU contribution is limited to a maximum reimbursement rate of eligible costs indicated in section 4. Consequently, part of the total eligible expenses entered in the estimative budget must be financed from sources other than the EU grant (see section 12.1c).

➤ **Eligible costs**

'**Eligible costs**' shall meet all the following criteria:

- ✓ they are incurred by the beneficiary;
- ✓ they are incurred during the duration of the action, with the exception of costs relating to final reports and audit certificates;

The period of eligibility of costs will start as specified in the grant agreement. If a beneficiary can demonstrate the need to start the action before the agreement is signed, expenditure may be authorised before the grant is awarded. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application (see section 12.1 b).

²⁰ Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC (Official Journal of the European Union L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 65).

²¹ Directive 2014/25/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors and repealing Directive 2004/17/EC (Official Journal of the European Union L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 243).

- ✓ they are indicated in the estimated budget of the action;
- ✓ they are necessary for the implementation of the action which is the subject of the grant;
- ✓ they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
- ✓ they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- ✓ they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

The beneficiary's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the costs and revenue declared in respect of the action/project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

In addition for **unit costs**:

- ✓ the number of actual units must comply with the following conditions:
 - the units must be actually used or produced during the duration of the action;
 - the units must be necessary for implementing the action or produced by it, and
 - the number of units must be identifiable and verifiable, in particular supported by records and documentation.

Further details are included in the model grant agreement.

Eligible direct costs

The eligible direct costs for the action are those costs which, with due regard for the conditions of eligibility set out above, are identifiable as specific costs directly linked to the performance of the action and which can therefore be booked to it directly, such as :

A. Direct personnel costs

Types of eligible personnel costs

A.1 Personnel costs are eligible if they are related to personnel working for the beneficiary under an employment contract (or equivalent appointing act) and assigned to the action ('**costs for employees (or equivalent)**'). They must be limited to salaries (including during parental leave), social security contributions, taxes and other costs included in the **remuneration**, if they arise from national law or the employment contract (or equivalent appointing act).

They may also include **additional remuneration** for personnel assigned to the action (including payments on the basis of supplementary contracts regardless of their nature), if:

- (a) it is part of the beneficiary's usual remuneration practices and is paid in a consistent manner whenever the same kind of work or expertise is required;
- (b) the criteria used to calculate the supplementary payments are objective and generally applied by the beneficiary, regardless of the source of funding used.

A.2 The costs for natural persons working under a direct contract with the beneficiary other than an employment contract or **seconded by a third party against payment** are eligible personnel costs, if:

- (a) the person works under conditions similar to those of an employee (in particular regarding the way the work is organised, the tasks that are performed and the premises where they are performed);
- (b) the result of the work carried out belongs to the beneficiary, and
- (c) the costs are not significantly different from those for personnel performing similar tasks under an employment contract with the beneficiary.

The costs of the personnel of **national administrations** are eligible to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the project concerned were not undertaken;

A.3 Costs of owners of beneficiaries that are small and medium-sized enterprises (**‘SME owners’**), who are working on the action and who do not receive a salary are eligible personnel costs, if they correspond to the amount per unit set out in Annex 2a of the model grant agreement multiplied by the number of actual hours worked on the action.

A.4 Costs of ‘beneficiaries that are natural persons’ not receiving a salary are eligible personnel costs, if they correspond to the amount per unit set out in Annex 2a of the model grant agreement multiplied by the number of actual hours worked on the action.

Further details of the calculation of personal costs included in the model grant agreement

B. Direct costs of subcontracting (including related duties, taxes and charges, such as non-deductible value added tax (VAT) paid by beneficiaries that are not public bodies acting as public authority) are eligible if the conditions set out in the grant agreement are met.

C. Direct costs of providing financial support to third parties are not eligible.

D Other direct costs

D.1 Travel costs and related subsistence allowances (including related duties, taxes and charges, such as non-deductible value added tax (VAT) paid by beneficiaries that are not public bodies acting as public authority) are eligible if they are in line with the beneficiary’s usual practices on travel.

D.2 The depreciation costs of equipment, infrastructure or other assets (new or second-hand) as recorded in the beneficiary’s accounts are eligible, if they were purchased in accordance with the conditions set out in the grant agreement and written off in accordance with international accounting standards and the beneficiary’s usual accounting practices.

The **costs of renting or leasing** equipment, infrastructure or other assets (including related duties, taxes and charges, such as non-deductible value added tax (VAT) paid by beneficiaries that are not public bodies acting as public authority) are also eligible, if they do not exceed the depreciation costs of similar equipment, infrastructure or assets and do not include any financing fees.

The only portion of the costs that will be taken into account is that which corresponds to the duration of the action and rate of actual use for the purposes of the action.

D.3 Costs of other goods and services (including related duties, taxes and charges, such as non-deductible value added tax (VAT) paid by beneficiaries that are not public bodies acting as public

authority) are eligible, if they are purchased specifically for the action and in accordance with the conditions set out in the grant agreement.

Such goods and services include, for instance, consumables and supplies, dissemination, protection of results, certificates on the financial statements (if they are required by the Agreement), translations and publications.

E. Eligible indirect costs (overheads)

Indirect costs are costs that are not directly linked to the action implementation and therefore cannot be attributed directly to it.

Indirect costs are eligible if they are declared on the basis of the flat-rate of 7% of the eligible direct costs

Indirect costs may not include costs entered under another budget heading.

Applicants's attention is drawn to the fact that in the case of beneficiaries receiving an operating grant²² financed by the EU or Euratom budget, they cannot declare indirect costs for the period covered by the operating grant, unless they can demonstrate that the operating grant does not cover any costs of the action.

➤ **Ineligible costs**

- (a) costs related to return on capital;
- (b) debt and debt service charges;
- (c) provisions for future losses or debts ;
- (d) interest owed;
- (e) doubtful debts;
- (f) currency exchange losses;
- (g) bank costs charged by the beneficiary's bank for transfers from the Agency;
- (h) excessive or reckless expenditure;
- (i) deductible VAT;
- (j) costs incurred during suspension of the implementation of the action;
- (k) in-kind contributions provided by third parties;
- (l) costs declared under another EU or Euratom grant (including grants awarded by a Member State and financed by the EU or Euratom budget and grants awarded by bodies other than the Agency for the purpose of implementing the EU or Euratom budget); in particular, indirect costs if the beneficiary is already receiving an operating grant financed by the EU or Euratom budget in the same period,; unless they can demonstrate that the operating grant does not cover any costs of the action.
- (m) costs for staff of a national (or local) administration, for activities that are part of the administration's normal activities (i.e. not undertaken only because of the grant);

²² For the definition, see Article 121(1)(b) of Regulation 2015/1929 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 (OJ L 218, 26.10.2012, p.1): '**operating grant**' means direct financial contribution, by way of donation, from the budget in order to finance the functioning of a body which pursues an aim of general EU interest or has an objective forming part of and supporting an EU policy.

- (n) costs (especially travel and subsistence costs) for staff or representatives of EU institutions, bodies or agencies[;][.]

Further details are included in the model grant agreement.

➤ **Calculation of the final grant amount**

The final amount of the grant to be awarded to the beneficiary is established after completion of the action, upon approval of the request for payment containing the following documents:

- a final report providing details of the implementation and results of the action;
- the final financial statement must detail all eligible costs (actual costs, unit costs and flat-rate costs);
- a certificate on the financial statements of the action for each beneficiary or linked third party, if
 - it requests an EU contribution of EUR 325 000 or more as reimbursement of actual costs and
 - the maximum EU contribution indicated, for that beneficiary or linked third party in the estimated budget (see Annex 2) as reimbursement of actual costs is EUR 750 000 or more.

In the event of non-execution or clearly inadequate execution of an activity planned in the work programme annexed to the grant agreement, the final grant will be reduced accordingly.

EU grants may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the action. **Profit shall be defined as a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs incurred by the beneficiary**, when the request is made for payment of the balance. In this respect, where a profit is made, the EASME shall be entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the Union contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary to carry out the action.

12.3 Payment arrangements:

Pre-financing payment

A pre-financing payment corresponding to 50% of the grant amount will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30 days of the date when the last of the two parties signs the agreement, provided all requested guarantees have been received.

Interim payment

One (1) interim payment shall be paid to the beneficiary. Interim payment is intended to cover the beneficiary's expenditure on the basis of a request for payment when the action has been partly carried out. For the purpose of determining the amount due as interim payment, the reimbursement rate to be applied to the eligible costs approved by EASME shall be rate indicated in section 4.]

The total amount of pre-financing and interim payment shall not exceed 90 % of the maximum grant amount.]

Final payment

EASME will establish the amount of the final payment to be made to the beneficiary on the basis of the calculation of the final grant amount (see section 12.2 above). If the total of earlier payments is

higher than the final grant amount, the beneficiary will be required to reimburse the amount paid in excess by EASME through a recovery order.

12.4 Pre-financing guarantee

In the event that the applicant's financial capacity is not satisfactory, a pre-financing guarantee for up to the same amount as the pre-financing may be requested in order to limit the financial risks linked to the pre-financing payment.

The financial guarantee, in euro, shall be provided by an approved bank or financial institution established in one of the Member State of the European Union. When the beneficiary is established in a third country, the authorising officer may agree that a bank or financial institution established in that third country may provide the guarantee if he considers that the bank or financial institution offers equivalent security and characteristics as those offered by a bank or financial institution established in a Member State. Amounts blocked in bank accounts shall not be accepted as financial guarantees.

The guarantee may be replaced by a joint and several guarantee by a third party or by a joint guarantee of the beneficiaries of an action who are parties to the same grant agreement

The guarantee shall be released as the pre-financing is gradually cleared against interim payments or payments of balances to the beneficiary, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the grant agreement.

13. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Beneficiaries will be requested to submit the following reports:

- 2 technical progress reports, not linked to a request for payment, half way before the interim periodic report and half way before the final report. This is to measure progress of the action between the interim periodic technical report linked to a payment and between the final report.
- 1 interim periodic technical and financial report, linked to a request for interim payment, covering the first half of the project implementation;
- 1 final technical and financial report, linked to the request for the payment of the balance, covering the second half of the project implementation.

The technical progress reports, not linked to a payment request, will be linked to the length of the project. For example for a standard project duration of 36 months, the forecast timetable is as follows:

- one technical progress report (1) covering months 1 to 9;
- one interim periodic technical and financial report, linked to a request for interim payment, covering months 1 to 18;
- one technical progress report (2) covering months 19 to 27;
- one final technical and financial report, linked to the request for the payment of the balance covering months 19 to 36.

Further details are included in the model grant agreement.

14. PUBLICITY

14.1 By the beneficiaries

Beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the European Union's contribution in all publications or in conjunction with activities for which the grant is used.

In this respect, beneficiaries are required to give prominence to the name and emblem of the European Commission on all their publications, posters, programmes and other products realised under the co-financed project.

To do this they must use the text, the emblem and the disclaimer in accordance with the details provided in the grant agreement.

If this requirement is not fully complied with, the beneficiary's grant may be reduced in accordance with the provisions of the grant agreement.

In addition to the text and logo relevant to the EU programme, the authorising officer will provide beneficiaries with a disclaimer stating that the EU is not responsible for the views displayed in the publications and/or in conjunction with the activities for which the grant is used.

14.2 By EASME

With the exception of scholarships paid to natural persons and other direct support paid to natural persons in most need, all information relating to grants awarded in the course of a financial year shall be published on an internet site of the European Union institutions no later than the 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the grants were awarded.

EASME will publish the following information:

- name of the beneficiary
- address of the beneficiary when the latter is a legal person, region when the beneficiary is a natural person, as defined on NUTS 2 level²³ if he/she is domiciled within EU or equivalent if domiciled outside EU,
- subject of the grant,
- amount awarded.

Upon a reasoned and duly substantiated request by the beneficiary, the publication shall be waived if such disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of individuals concerned as protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union or harm the commercial interests of the beneficiaries.

15. DATA PROTECTION

The reply to any call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001²⁴ on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community

²³ Commission Regulation (EC) No 105/2007 of 1 February 2007 amending the annexes to Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistics (NUTS) (Official Journal of the European Union L 39 of 10.02.2007).

²⁴ Official Journal of the European Union L 8/1 of 12.01.2001.

institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the specifications of the call for proposals will be processed solely for that purpose by the Head of Unit A.1 of the EASME. Details concerning the processing of personal data are available on the privacy statement at: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/support/legal_notice/h2020-ssps-grants_en.pdf.

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in Article 106(1) and 107 of the Financial Regulation 966/2012²⁵ (for more information see the Privacy Statement on: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/explained/management/protecting/privacy_statement_edes_en.pdf).

16. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals must be submitted in accordance with the requirements of section 5 and by the deadline specified under section 3.

➤ **Electronic submission**

Applicants are requested to go to <http://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/cosme-eu-programme-competitiveness-enterprises-and-small-and-medium-sized-enterprises-smes> and follow the procedure for submitting an application.

No modification to the application is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed. However, if there is a need to clarify certain aspects or for the correction of clerical mistakes, the EASME may contact the applicant for this purpose during the evaluation process.

Applicants will be informed in writing about the results of the selection process.

➤ **Contacts**

EASME is available to answer questions relating to the content of the present call for proposals. All questions must be sent by e-mail to:

[**EASME-COSME-Incubation-Networks-2017@ec.europa.eu**](mailto:EASME-COSME-Incubation-Networks-2017@ec.europa.eu)

Answers will be published at <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/cosme> . (Refer to this specific call under "Open calls for proposals").

17. ANNEXES:

Annexes (available via the link under section 16):

1. Guide for applicants
2. Application form (Description of the action template and Estimated Budget template)
3. Model Grant agreement (*multi-beneficiary grant agreement template*)

²⁵ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32012R0966>.