**EU4BUSINESS: CONNECTING COMPANIES**

**EXTERNAL ACTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Reference ENI/2019/411-865**

*Project ID 1042*

*SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODELS AND SHARING CULTURAL-TOURISM EXCELLENCES*

**Call for the selection of SMEs and BSOs in the tourism sector for participation in the actions planned in the project “*Sustainable business models and sharing cultural-tourism excellences*”**

Publication date: **07.02.2022**

Deadline for application: **18.02.2022**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **An initiative of the European Union** |

***1 – The project “Sustainable business models and sharing cultural-tourism excellences”***

The project “Sustainable business models and sharing cultural-tourism excellences” is funded by European Program “EU4Business - Connecting Companies” (EU4BCC) through Eurochambres - the Association of European Chambers of Commerce. EUBCC aims to foster the development of trade relations and business opportunities between member countries of the European Union and the Eastern Partnership (EaP: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine).

The project is carried out by a partnership composed of:

* Chamber of commerce of Basilicata - Italy
* Croatian Chamber of Economy/Split County - Croatia
* ANTRIM – National inbound tourism association of Moldova - Moldova
* ASK – National confederation of entrepreneurs organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan - Azerbaijan

***2 – The objectives of the project***

The overall objective of the project, namely to raise awareness of the market opportunities offered by sustainable, slow and responsible tourism in rural and cultural destinations, will be achieved through a variety of activities such as:

* the organisation of 2 "Study visits", each lasting 3 days, in Croatia and Moldova where 20 organisations (BSO - Business Support Organisations and SMEs) from the 4 project partnership countries will be able to participate;
* the promotion of cooperation contracts and trade agreements between BSOs and SMEs from the 4 project partnership countries;
* the design and testing of training and consulting services on sustainable tourism, the circular economy applied to the tourism industry and environmental certifications;
* the analysis of the potential market of cultural and rural tourism with particular reference to the segments of tourists who choose the holiday resort based on the level of sustainability of the destination.

***3 – Who can participate***

The project foresees that a total of 25 BSOs and SMEs can participate in the planned activities, thus divided between the participating partner countries:

* 6 from Azerbaijan
* 6 from Croatia
* 7 from Italy
* 6 from Moldova.

Of these 25:

* 6 must be SMEs run by young people up to the age of 35 (2 each from Italy and Croatia, 1 from Azerbaijan and Moldova);
* 6 must be women-led SMEs (2 each from Italy and Croatia, 1 from Azerbaijan and Moldova);
* 8 must be rural SMEs (2 from each country)

The same SME can have all three characteristics mentioned above (e.g. being based in a rural area and being led by a woman under 35 years of age).

BSO - Business Support Organizations means chambers of commerce, trade associations, professional associations (e.g. tourist guides), public and private consortia, associations and tourist promotion agencies, DMO (Destination Management Organizations), bodies that manage places of tourist interest, local action groups, cultural associations, research organisations, etc.

The SME category includes micro, small and medium-sized enterprises that do not exceed the limits of employees, turnover and balance sheet required by EU Recommendation 2003/3611. They shall:

* be based in one of the Partnership States (Azerbaijan, Croatia, Italy and Moldova)
* operate in the tourism sector in a broad sense (hotels, holiday homes, b&b, campsites, travel agencies, tour operators, restaurants, tourist guides, tourist information offices, incoming agencies, arts and crafts enterprises, etc.)
* have at least one person (owner, family member, employee) available to participate in all activities planned by the project, with an expected commitment of 10-12 days until 30 April 2022.

Moreover, the SMEs that apply must not have been declared bankrupt or have insolvency procedures in progress, they must not be in liquidation or be an undertaking in difficulty within the meaning of Commission Regulation no. 651/2014 art. 2.18

By applying, the SME declares that it is not in any of the conditions described above and undertakes to maintain them until the end of the project.

***Specific requirements for each country***

* ITALY: the candidate SMEs
  + must be registered in the Business Register of the Chamber of Commerce of competence and up-to-date with the Chamber of Commerce fee payment;
  + are not subject to fines under art. 9, paragraph 2 of Legislative Decree no. 231/2001;
  + have not received support from other public sources for a similar purpose.
* CROATIA: the candidate SMEs
  + must be a paying member of the Croatian Chamber of Economy, under the Law on Croatian Chamber of Economy;
  + are not financially blocked at the moment of application to the call;
  + haven’t received support from other public sources for a similar purpose.
* MOLDOVA: the candidate SMEs:
  + are registered as an enterprise in the State Register;
  + are embers of our Association (ANTRIM);
  + are financially active at the moment of application to the call;
* AZERBAIJAN: the candidate SMEs:
  + must be a member of National Confederation of Entrepreneurs Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
  + are not financially blocked at the moment of application to the call;
  + haven’t received support from other public sources for a similar purpose.

***4 – Benefits for the participants***

Selected BSOs and SMEs will be able to:

1. participate in the two "Study visits" lasting 3 days each to be held, presumably, at the beginning of March in Moldova (Chisinau) and in the second decade of April in Croatia (Split); the maximum number of BSOs and SMEs participating in study visits is 20
2. take part in both online groups and B2B meetings organised by the partners to promote the development of proposals for collaboration contracts and trade agreements between BSO and SMEs from the 4 project partnership countries (Azerbaijan, Croatia, Italy, Moldova);
3. take part in the meetings (in presence or online) organised by Eurochambres in Brussels;
4. participate in the testing phase of training and consulting services on sustainable tourism, the circular economy applied to the tourism industry and environmental certifications;
5. benefit exclusively from the information, promotional and commercial materials developed during the project (market analysis, marketing plans, facts sheets, etc.).

There are no charges to be paid by BSO and SMEs. For them, the costs of food, travel and accommodation will be covered by the project.

In the event of a resurgence of the Covid-19 epidemic, the planned activities will be carried out online.

***5 – How to apply***

BSOS and SMEs must submit the application attached to this call to the following e-mail addresses

* Azerbaijan: Shebnem Nuriyeva: shnuriyeva@ask.org.az
* Croatia: Natasa Busic; nbusic@hgk.hr
* Italy: Saverio Primavera: asset@basilicata.camcom.it
* Moldova: tic@antrim.md

Applications may be submitted from 7.2.2022 to 18.02.2022. Where several applications are submitted by the same organization, only the last application submitted shall be taken into consideration. The recipient shall not assume any liability for failure to receive the application.

***6 – Evaluation and selection of applications***

The evaluation and selection process, which will be completed within 10 days of the closing of the call, will be managed by each of the partners for applications from their country.

The evaluation consists of two steps:

* verification of the eligibility requirements provided for by art. 3;
* verification if the BSO/SME has characteristics consistent with the objectives of the project (interest in participating in the actions, staff speaking English, openness to international trade, interest in sustainable tourism, location in areas with a vocation for cultural or natural tourism, etc.)

Scores are awarded to the following questions:

* question 13: up to a maximum of 3 points depending on the type of activity carried out, giving priority to the more strictly tourist activities;
* question 15: 1 point if the answer is YES;
* questions 16 and 17: 1 point if the answer is YES;
* question 18: up to 3 points depending on the level of knowledge of English;
* questions 19 and 20: up to 3 points depending on the type of relations they have;
* question 22: up to 4 points;
* question 24: up to 3 points depending on the reasons given.

In the evaluation phase, to ensure the presence of both BSO and SMEs, preference will be given to SMEs in the case of a number of eligible applications being higher than the available positions.

Once the evaluation process is completed, a list of admitted organisations will be drawn up, taking into account the constraints referred to in art. 3, and a reserve list to draw on in case of the resignation of one of the organizations admitted.

In the event of a tied score, the committee will follow the chronological order of the applications.

The ranking list will be published on the partner’s institutional website, namely:

* Italy: [www.basilicata.camcom.it](http://www.basilicata.camcom.it)
* Croatia: [www.hgk.hr](http://www.hgk.hr)
* Moldova: <https://antrim.md/>
* Azerbaijan: [www.ask.org.az](http://www.ask.org.az)

***7 – Agreement with selected BSO and SMEs***

After the evaluation process has been completed and the applicants have been informed whether or not the application has been accepted, the partner will invite the selected companies to sign an agreement in which they undertake to participate in the planned activities.

***8- Processing of personal data***

By submitting the application, BSOs and SMEs declare to have read the attached information for the processing of personal data under Regulation (EU) 2016/679.

**ANNEX: Application form**

|  |
| --- |
| ***SECTION 1 – GENERAL INFORMATION*** |

***You are:***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| BSO |  |
| SME |  |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Name of SME/BSO |
| 1. VAT registration number |
| 1. Website |
| 1. Full address (street/square/c.da - postal code - city) |
| 1. Rural location - YES/NO |
| 1. Contact person |
| 1. E-mail address of contact person |
| 1. Contact person telephone number |
| 1. Position on the holding of the contact person (owner, employee, family member) |
| 1. Age of entrepreneur/legal representative |
| 1. Gender of the entrepreneur (SME)/gender of the legal representative or manager (BSO) |

|  |
| --- |
| ***SECTION 2 – ELIGIBILITY AND ECONOMIC DATA OF BSO/SME*** |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Type of enterprise (SME only):  * MICRO * SMALL * MEDIUM |
| 1. Type of activity |
| 1. N. employees |
| 1. Unconditional availability for a commitment of about 10/12 days  * YES * NO |
| 1. Proximity to cultural sites - If so, which one? |
| 1. Proximity to sites of natural interest - If so, which one? |

|  |
| --- |
| ***SECTION 3 – MOTIVATION AND INTEREST*** |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Knowledge of English:  * BASIC * INTERMEDIATE * ADVANCED |
| 1. Foreign relations: if YES, what type? describe briefly |
| 1. Interest in establishing relations with foreign countries: if yes, what type? describe briefly |
| 1. With which country of the partnership |
| 1. Interest to know more about the target green: from 1 (min) to 4 (max) |
| 1. Participation in similar programmes: if yes, when and with what results from |
| 1. What motivates you to participate and what you expect (max 200 words) |

*By submitting the application, the undersigned declares to be aware that his personal data will be processed by the partner of the project exclusively for the implementation of the actions envisaged in the project. The data may be provided to Eurochambres and the European Commission for the purpose of monitoring the results achieved and matchmaking actions.*

*The rectification or cancellation of data may be requested by writing to the contact persons listed in art. 5 of the call.*

*https://www.eurochambres.eu/privacy-policy/*

Date and signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_