

# CALL FOR SELECTION OF INNOVATIVE TOURISM SMEs

## Stage 1

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23 November, 2022



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## Structure of the document

The present document is structured in two main sections. The first section includes details regarding the “Call for Selection” for tourism companies to the EU DigiTOUR High Growth Transformation Programme, e.g. the dates of the publication of the call, deadlines, applicants eligibility criteria, and the scoring system for selecting the applicants.

In more detail, the sub-sections included in the first section are listed as follow:

- A description of the technical and financial support scheme for tourism innovative SMEs, including objectives, details of the programme, main activities as well as the benefits of being part of the EU DigiTOUR Transformation Programme;
- List of activities eligible for receiving the financial support in line with the specific objectives of the EU DigiTOUR project, and the EU DigiTOUR Transformation Academy;
- Eligible applicants;
- Awarding criteria for the financial support;
- Details concerning the publication of the calls and deadlines.

The second section provides:

- an outline of the timeline related to the call and selection process;
- the commitment of the Consortium partners towards the applicants (i.e. third parties/beneficiaries) and;
- the commitment of the applicants concerning confidentiality aspects and communication procedures.

The present document includes 5 Annexes - which constitute an integral part of the call.



## SECTION 1

### 1.1 The EU DigiTOUR Project in brief

The EU DigiTOUR is a project co-funded by the COSME Programme of the European Union, with the scope to support the digital transformation of the European tourism SMEs lagging behind in the adoption and full exploitation of the digital technologies in the tourism industry.

The project scheme was designed to help shape the next generation EU tourism SMEs to untap the potentials of the digital realm, enhancing cooperation in the tourism ecosystem for the development of new, innovative, and smart tourism solutions, products, services, skills, and new business models by the use of AI, IoT, VR and AR, and big data.

The EU DigiTOUR scope is to support the digital paradigm shift in tourism SMEs and help them in:

- **Up-skilling their digital competencies:** overcoming the lack of the necessary technical resources in their workforce to fully realise digital potentials;
- **Accessing to funding:** to facilitate the implementation of digital technologies in their business, opening up new market potentials;
- **Bridging the lack of knowledge:** in identifying required digital skills to limited staffing issues, restricting the time and effort which can be applied to learning new digital processes;
- **Facilitating cooperation:** within the tourism ecosystem, including public-private partnerships, and improve connectivity between tourism enterprises, tech companies and other start-ups;
- **Boost capacity and skills:** to EU tourism SMEs' improve their use of new digital technologies, resulting in new business models in tourism;
- **Stimulating knowledge sharing:** through specialised mentoring support through cooperation to boost innovation, enhance creativity and ideation.



## 1.2 The EU DigiTOUR Transformation High Growth Programme: what's in for tourism innovative SMEs

The programme will select EU tourism innovative SMEs - as digital Champions. When referring to (tourism) innovative SMEs, it has to be pointed out that according to the ESN<sup>1</sup>, a innovative SMEs is an independent organisation, which is younger than five years and is aimed at creating, improving and expanding a scalable, innovative, technology-enabled product with high and rapid growth (please note that five years start from the date of registration in the Business Register).

Companies should operate in the tourism, and must have at the core of their operational activities the following digital technologies:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR)
- Internet of Things (IoT)
- Big Data
- A mix of them all

innovative SMEs and their innovative solutions have to be characterized by high innovativeness, with regards to the product/service and/or the process proposed; concreteness and sustainability on the technical, regulatory, economic, financial, environmental and social side; high market potential, with a strong competitive advantage and a positive impact in terms of digital transformation, sustainability, employment and development in the eligible countries.

Each participant must declare and ensure under its own responsibility the originality of its own business and related innovative solution.

Selected tourism innovative SMEs will access to the EU DigiTOUR High Growth Transformation programme, which will be providing technical support along 3 months incubation / acceleration or scale-up programme (depending on the innovative SMEs maturity stage as resulted from the application) which will be delivered in a hybrid way through mentoring and specialist services consisting of:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://europeanstartupsnetwork.eu/vision/>



- business check-up, aimed to assess the solution state of the art, to detect strengths and weaknesses and to identify interventions focused at improving the product/process/service performance;
- mentoring and coaching services, with specific reference to the design and implementation of a use case tailored to the tourism industry (with a view to the hackathons celebrations);
- public speaking.

The scope is to select the best deep tech tourism innovative SMEs by a dedicated support scheme, to fine-tune an innovative business solution for the tourism industry using the digital techs focused by the EU DigiTOUR project.

At the end of the EU DigiTOUR High Growth Transformation Programme, the DEMO DAY will laureate 30 innovative SMEs as EU DigiTOUR Champions.

### 1.2.1 Programme Content

A blended, hybrid programme including both on-site and on-line participation consisting of webinars and/or online/on site sessions with a focus on:

- Assessment
- Mentoring and Coaching
- Pitching and investor materials
- Strategy (incl. Best practices / Success Stories / Field visits)

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### 1.3 The Consortium Partners

The EU DigiTOUR strategy was created combining the expertise and skills of 10 partners in the field of digital transformation with a focus on AI, IoT, AR/VR, big data; from business support organisations, incubators and accelerators with a long track-record in providing training, promoting digital transformation, and providing business support services to SMEs and innovative SMEs, with a specific focus on innovation and in the social impact as well as in tourism industry.

The transnationality of the programme is also a pivotal element of the partnership, since 5 different EU countries are covered (Italy, Germany, Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia) to facilitate the cross-cooperation.

#### X23 - The Innovation Bakery

##### Leader and Project Manager | Italy



Committed to innovation, research, growth and scale-up, X23 is an independent multidisciplinary, self-sustaining research center founded in 1999, with a long and successful track-record in managing EU co-funded projects (COSME, H2020, Creative Europe, MEDIA, etc.). X23 is catalysing multidisciplinary pioneering projects, applying its own methodology, and committing a blend of specialised skills in R&D, growth and scale-up process to make them unfold into the real world.

Innovation (and in particular social innovation as well as innovative ways of gathering people together) and R&D is our passion and focus, as we are fully convinced this is the unique driver for progress not only in business and economic terms, but ultimately for human life in society and the ecosystem as a whole.

#### ISNART - Italian National Institute of Tourism Research

##### Capacity Building Manager | Italy



ISNART is a Consortium Joint Stock Company in house to the Italian Chambers of Commerce System. Mainly focusing on the studies in the tourism and quality support scheme targeting the tourism SMEs. Its main activities are: Studies and publications on tourism, investigations, surveys and feasibility projects in the tourism fields; data processing, creation and supply of data and observatories, conducting publishing activities, promotion and dissemination by any means of its services; organization of conferences, seminars and debates in tourism; Quality

support scheme (Ospitalità Italiana and Ristoranti Italiani nel Mondo), targeting tourism SMEs, among hotels and accommodation facilities, restaurants, B&B and agritourism, among others, and aimed at improving quality, competitiveness and sustainability of Italian tourism SMEs in Italy and abroad. It also includes empowerment and skills development for tourism entrepreneurs and operators (seminars, webinars, events), and marketing, promotion and communication activities.





### Algebra LAB

#### High-Growth Manager | Croatia

Algebra University College is the flagship of the largest private educational organization in the Republic of Croatia and the region (Algebra group), present today in more than 20 cities across Croatia. Founded in 1998, they currently have more than 150 full-time employees and more than 600 associated experts and higher educational institutions employed also in industry.

Algebra LAB is an open innovation lab and incubator. Algebra LAB helps ensure that every innovative SMEs, small or large, high-tech or not, can grasp the digital opportunities.



### Transformation Lighthouse

#### Hack Manager | Slovenia

Transformation Lighthouse's expertise lies in an individual approach to consulting, caching and mentoring for established companies and innovative SMEs. TL provides knowledge and tools for the companies to step firmly on the path of transformation of business and culture, where organizing hackathons play a major role in it. TL also provides and supports the best talent to keep companies' transformation going.

Transformation Lighthouse has through years become one of the most recognized organizers of on-location and online hackathons in the region.



### ITKAM - The Italian Chamber of Commerce for Germany

#### Programme Enabler Manager | Germany

The Italian Chamber of Commerce for Germany (ITKAM) is a German registered non-profit bilateral association, founded 1911. ITKAM has three offices in Germany, Frankfurt am Main (Headquarter) Berlin and Leipzig (Regional Offices) as well as representative offices in Italy and Austria. ITKAM counts over 500 member companies.



### innovative SMEs Turismo

#### Work Package #5 Leader | Italy

Associazione innovative SMEs Turismo is the only player that represents travel startups in Italy. They build synergies between the old and the new economy to create a network between innovative SMEs founders. They are engaged in building a positive environment per our associates' initiatives thanks to the exchanges with institutional makers. innovative SMEs Turismo encourage the culture of entrepreneurship, promote innovation and the building of a strong network between startups.





### AR/VR Tech

#### Contributor | Serbia

Augmented and Virtual Reality are the core of AR/VR Tech. Their mission is to continuously develop smart and innovative technological solutions across different verticals: marketing, retail, education, tourism, art, entertainment, etc.



### CroAI - Croatian Artificial Intelligence Association

#### Contributor | Croatia

Croatian Artificial Intelligence Association brings together the leading companies and startups in the field of AI in Croatia. CraoAI provides support for SMEs and educates the public about important advanced technologies such as AI. CroAI seeks to position Croatia as a country of unique opportunities for the development of human-centric AI through a culture of dialogue between entrepreneurs and decision makers at the national and European level.



### DunavNet

#### Contributor | Serbia

DunavNET is an innovative technology company engaged in the design and development of IoT solutions. The primary focus of the company's projects is digitization solutions for food production chain from farm to consumer to achieve efficient and higher quality. The company implemented a few scientific innovative projects in cooperation with partners from Europe, the world. Knowledge and experience gained from such projects has been used to create commercial turnkey solutions, for smart cities, agriculture, and production process optimization.



## 1.4 Who Can Apply?

Any tourism innovative SMEs that complies with all the following requirements is allowed to submit their application for funding under this call. It is important to bear in mind that only one application per tourism innovative SMEs is accepted. In case that more than one application is submitted by the same company, the most recent application will be considered.

The **3 compulsory requirements** that have to be met to participate are:

### A). To be a Small or Medium Enterprise (SME) as in EU recommendation 2003/361:

Company category	Staff headcount	Turnover	OR	Balance sheet total
Medium sized	< 250	≤ € 50 m		≤ € 43 m
Small	< 50	≤ € 10 m		≤ € 10 m
Micro <	< 10	≤ € 10 m		≤ € 2 m

### B) To be a legally established tourism innovative SMEs and its main economic activity is in the Tourism sector as reflected in their **NACE codes (I55\* and N79)**:

- Hotels and similar accommodation (Nace code: **I5510**)
- Holiday and other short-stay accommodation (Nace code: **I5520**)
- Camping grounds, recreational vehicle parks and trailer parks (Nace code: **I5530**)
- Travel agency, tour operator reservation service and related activities (Nace code: **N79\***)

### C) Be registered in:

- Italy
- Germany
- Croatia
- Slovenia



### 1.4.1 Eligibility criteria

An application is eligible, if all the following criteria are met:

- A. It must be submitted before the submission deadline date, compliant to the requested submission process;
- B. All the required fields in the Application Form (see ANNEX I) must be completed;
- C. The innovative SMEs qualifies as a Small or Medium Sized company, based on the COM. EC/361/2003 the innovative SMEs submitting the application is based in one of the countries mentioned in section 1.4;
- D. Its main economic activity is in the Tourism sector as reflected in their NACE code and business register;
- E. The legal representative of the company declares that the innovative SMEs actions are in compliance with EU regulations by signing a specific Declaration on Honour. – ANNEX II;
- F. The legal representative declares that the innovative SMEs and/or any member of the board and the shareholders do not incur incompatibility with other EU funding for the same actions. – ANNEX II;
- G. On request, the applicant can demonstrate its technical, operational, and financial capacity. To this extent, for financial evaluation the last consolidated balance sheet will be required, or in case of innovative SMEs/SMEs just founded, a provisional balance sheet; while for technical, operational capacity, last activity report and the organisational chart will be verified.
- H. When filling the application form, applicants (i.e. the legal representative of the innovative SMEs on behalf of all the members of the board and the shareholders) are asked to confirm that “no conflict of interests” could arise in connection with the present Call. This will ensure to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective selection of the applicants is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political of national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest (“conflict of interest”). Applicants failing to that, will be not considered for the selection. The present rule about the prohibition of any “conflict of interest” is extended to every member of the board and the shareholders of the innovative SMEs, as they all (each of them, and all as a whole) are subject to the rule. – ANNEX II;
- I. Multiple applications by the same tourism innovative SMEs are not allowed.



## 1.5 The EU DigiTOUR High Growth Transformation Programme: technical support

The EU DigiTOUR High Growth Transformation Programme is one of a kind as it will offer:

- Advanced mentoring and coaching on go-to-market, with a view to find and maximise market opportunities from the Hackathons and the matching with tourism SMEs needed innovative digital solutions;
- Access to a unique network of intermediary organizations, and to the large TOURINNO Community, benefitting from visibility and the opportunity of new business deals;
- Accessing the Demo Day involving international investors, corporates and media.
- Access to private capital and strategic business partnerships thanks to the involvement of investors and corporations during the DEMO Days;
- Potential win-win collaborations with leading industrial players and more during the Hackathons;
- Get a financial support of EUR 10.000 max to be used to further improve the innovative solution.

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### 1.5.1 Service Package

- Blended program (On site and online)
- Access to mentors (lead, peer/alumni mentors, tech experts, country mentors)
- Access to knowledge
- Access to strategic advice
- Access to private investors (incl. Demo Day)
- Access to public financing options
- Access to customers / markets

Further to that, thanks to the partnership with **AWS**<sup>2</sup>, the selected EU DigiTOUR innovative SMEs will get the opportunity to be further backed by the **Activate** programme, which works with hundreds of accelerators, angel investors, and venture capital firms across the world to provide innovative SMEs with free AWS credits, technical support, training, resources, and more.

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<sup>2</sup> Amazon Web Service Programme



innovative SMEs awarded by the EU DigiTOUR High Growth Transformation Programme will get exclusive benefits designed to help them quickly get started on AWS and grow their business. Being associated with an DigiTOUR as Activate Provider will be a superior added value to tourism innovative SMEs: they could access the “The Activate Console” designed to support them through every stage of the innovative SMEs journey, from your initial idea, to building an MVP, to securing first customers, to scaling business on AWS and beyond. The Console is full of tools and resources to help innovative SMEs quickly get started on AWS and accelerate their growth and development by delivering personalized recommendations on a wide range of topics. The AWS support, which is separate from the financial support of the present call, is a further opportunity the tourism SMEs/innovative SMEs could, at certain conditions not included in the present call, and to be further negotiated basing on real cases, take advantage of to secure up to \$100,000 in AWS Cloud credits.

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## **1.6 The EU DigiTOUR High Growth Transformation Programme: financial support**

This call uses funds granted to the EU DigiTOUR project by the European Union’s COSME Programme under GA no. 101038104.

Therefore, tourism innovative SMEs participation in this programme is free of charge, and there are no registration fees to any of the activities as described in the EU DigiTOUR High Growth Transformation Programme. The beneficiaries will be monitored by a team of external experts and by the Consortium partners internal experts as well.

Conditioned to the positive scrutiny on the candidate compliance of the eligibility criteria, in particular but not limited to the rules under 1.4.1, letters D., E., F., G., H., and I, the selected applicants (EU tourism innovative SMEs) validated by the Consortium will receive a voucher of up to €10.000 each, and they will qualify to access the second phase of the programme, the EU DigiTOUR Hackathons as key players. Please, see the Financial support section for further details.

Based on the total applications received so far (at least 48 eligible applicants from Italy, Germany, Croatia, Slovenia; 12 tourism innovative SMEs per each country minimum), 45 tourism innovative SMEs will have access to the High Growth Programme at the end of the Programme, the Consortium partners will award 30 *tourism innovative SMEs* and will *assigning the vouchers directly to the innovative SMEs as final third parties beneficiaries*.



The Consortium will have the last word on the final list of selected third parties beneficiaries.

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### 1.6.1 Eligible costs

The ultimate objective shall be to support the digital transformation of traditional tourism SMEs by the knowledge sharing, and the use of the disruptive solutions from the tourism innovative SMEs selected, focusing on AI, AR/VR, IoT, big data and cooperating together during the Hackathons. The final purpose is to improve the tourism SMEs competitiveness, mastering digital technologies to improving the quality of their services. With this purpose, the tourism innovative SMEs could use the voucher to improve their products/services/process according to the following activities:

- **Travel, registration and accommodation costs to attend:**
  - courses around digital transformation, AR/VR, AI, IoT, big data;
  - specialised training for employees skills improvement (e.g. advanced training course about specific vertical topics);
  - participation fees to digital-oriented events at EU level;
  - **Internationalisation missions** for market expansion and networking;
  - **Mission costs** for specialised mentoring and coaching to reach the mentors and coach premises.
- **Consultancy services fee:**
  - consultancy fee from digital professionals and business mentors;
  - advisory consultancy services in the field of digital transformation (digital strategy, implementation of digital systems using disruptive techs such as AI, IoT, AR/VR, predictive analytics or sentiment analysis);
  - consultancy fee for assessing the digital impact of digital transformation at their premises, in managing operations using key enabling techs ensuring sustainability, etc.).
  - consultancy fees for business strategy development and services around digitalisation.
- **Certification Costs:**
  - compliance adaptation for certification schemes;
  - standardisation of fact or law for implementing digital techs at their premises.
- **innovation procurement costs:**



- digital services, product or processes from tourism innovative SMEs, spin-offs, research body
- IPR costs

It has to be remarked that the purchase of physical infrastructure, goods, are **not eligible** for the present call.

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## 1.7 How to apply

### 1.7.1 General Rules And Deadline For Submission Of Applications.

- Applicants are required to complete the application form available through this link: <https://x23eupro.grantplatform.com/>
- The application will consist of a form to provide information about the innovative SMEs profile, the product/process/service proposed using AI, AR/VR, IoT, big data, and a pitch deck to be submitted as an attachment.
- Application is also possible through the project website, a link will be re-directing to the GG Platform.
- Only proposals submitted in English will be accepted.
- Submissions written in another language will not be evaluated.
- Only applications submitted before the deadline will be accepted.
- Only proposals submitted via: - the Good Grants on-line platform, complete with all the templates annexed will be accepted. Paper/printed versions submitted by post or other means will not be accepted. Hand-written applications will not be accepted.
- Submission opening date: November 23, 2022, 09:00 CET
- Submission deadline: February, 15 2023, 17:00 CET.
- During this period, questions about the application process can be addressed at: [info@eudigitour.eu](mailto:info@eudigitour.eu)
- The participation to the EU DigiTOUR Transformation Academy will be an asset.
- Please note that only the Application Form (Annex I) which has to be filled in will be evaluated at the submission phase. It is therefore of utmost importance that this document contains all the relevant information concerning the action. Applicants are expected to provide complete and accurate applicant information



and data via the Good Grants on-line platform, as provided in the “Guide for Applicants”.

- Each application received will be sent over an “Acknowledgment of Receipt” email. No late submissions will be accepted and in case will be returned via email re. "call closed"

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### 1.7.2 Evaluation Round

Rules for selection will be based on the following **five key criteria, PLUS (6)** the scrutiny and validation process by the Consortium related to the compliance by the candidate to rules under 1.4.1., D., E., F., G., H., I.:

- A. **Excellence.** The application(s) selected for funding must demonstrate a high quality in the context of the topics and criteria set out in the call;
- B. **Transparency.** Funding decisions must be based on clearly described rules and procedures, and all applicants should receive adequate feedback on the outcome of the evaluation of their proposals;
- C. **Fairness and impartiality.** All applications submitted to a call are treated equally. They are evaluated impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants;
- D. **Confidentiality.** All applications and related data, knowledge and documents are treated in confidence;
- E. **Efficiency and speed.** Evaluation of applications and award of the financial support should be as rapid as possible, commensurate with maintaining the quality of the evaluation, and respecting the legal framework;
- F. **Validation of compliance of 1.4.1. Rules, in particular under D, E, F, G, H, I.**

At the call closure, the submitted applications will go under a first screen with respect to the basic eligibility requirements. The applications in line with the requirements, will be then handed over to 2 members from the Consortium partners who will be evaluating the applications with the support of the External Experts in 2 weeks time (by February 24, 2023). the Experts will be assigned randomly (post an accurate conflict of interest check) a sustainable number of applications. In case of ex-quo score, a Consensus meeting will be celebrated to decide on the final applicant/s to be selected.

**External Experts will be appointed formally once the call is closed.** During the evaluation process, External Experts and the partner representatives will record his/her



individual score on the evaluation form (ESR), which will be signed and dated. At the end of the evaluation round they will meet for a “consensus” meeting: cases of companies ranked with an equal score, and/or pending conditions to validate the eligibility under one or more of the rules under 1.4.1. under D., E., F., G., H., I., to select the final one(s), will be managed until completion.

The criteria for the ranking of the applications will follow the rules below:

- Rule 1: the proposals will be ranked based on their overall score (based on the Consensual Evaluation Report).
- Rule 2: in case of ex-equo(s), i.e. two or more applicants with the same final score, a final Consensus meeting will be celebrated with the External Experts to identify the final applicant(s) assessing decisions honourably and conscientiously which of the applications matches better the objectives of this call.

At the end of the evaluation round, a minimum of 30 applicants will be selected to access the EU DigiTOUR Transformation High Growth Programme, and up to additional 15 applicants will remain in a reserve list, following the score ranking resulting from the evaluation phase.

In the event of selection of a lower number of applications and total amount of funding available, the EU DigiTOUR Consortium may reopen the Call at a later date.

The quantitative evaluation criteria (numerical score) are listed below-mentioned:

● <b>Evaluation of the proposed innovative solution (max 25 points)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ level of innovation (process or product innovation): e.g. use of AI, AR/VR, IoT, big data for the tourism industry, Freedom to operate, secured patents, organizational methodology aimed to pursuit innovation purposes;</li> <li>○ TRL and BRL of the product/service;</li> <li>○ market size and potential;</li> <li>○ Network and current partnerships.</li> </ul>
● <b>Coherence (max 15 points).</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Level of coherence with the field of the present call, innovation capacity of the tourism sector, impact of the solution applied to the tourism industry</li> </ul>
● <b>Economic and financial evaluation (max 10 points).</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Traction</li> </ul>



<p>● <b>Evaluation of the Entrepreneurial team (max 30 points).</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Coherence of technical and scientific skills as well as professional experience with respect</li> <li>○ To the proposed innovation (product, process, service);</li> <li>○ Complementarity of skills and entrepreneurial potential of the team;</li> <li>○ Network and possible relationships with qualified subjects outside the company.</li> </ul>
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**The minimum numeric score threshold for selection is set at 65 points.**

Once the evaluation process is completed, all applicants will be informed via e-mail about the evaluation results even in case of acceptance or rejection together with an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR).

The following cases may only be possible:

- **NO SELECTION**

- The notification will be sent together with an ESR. Applicants will have 7 days to file a complain.

- **NO SELECTION (IN RESERVE LIST)**

- The notification that the applicant has not been selected, but is in the reserve list, will be sent together with an ESR.

- **SELECTION**

- The notification will be sent to the selected applicant along with the ESR and further instructions about the next steps in the process.

A Letter of Acceptance shall be signed by the selected applicant within 7 days after receiving the notification, otherwise the applicant's interest in participating in the Programme will be considered withdrawn and its spot will be offered to the next ranked applicant from the reserve list.

According to the final ranking, the shortlisted applicants who confirmed their participation in due time will be informed and called out to start the EU DigiTOUR Transformation programme: a 3 months (hybrid) incubation, acceleration and scaling-up paths each running in parallel (2 cohorts; innovative SMEs will be assigned to the right path according to their maturity stage).

Max 2 members of the staff from the tourism innovative SMEs will be accepted to the programme.



At the end of the cohorts (June 2023), an Advisory Board will be called out for selecting the best innovative SMEs from the cohorts during a DEMO Day (July 2023) organised for the purpose and gathering together all the tourism innovative SMEs attending the programme from the different participating countries (Italy, Germany, Croatia, Slovenia).

Based on the pitch presented so far during the DEMO Day, and the evaluation from the Advisory Board, a list of winners (up to 30 tourism innovative SMEs) will be consolidated, and winners announced over the social media and by the dissemination of press releases.

Under the conditioned of a positive scrutiny on the candidate compliance of the eligibility criteria, in particular but not limited to the rules under 1.4.1, letters D., E., F., G., H., and I, the selected applicants (EU tourism innovative SMEs, as specified in 1.4 A), B1), B2), C)) validated by the Consortium will get the funds in the percentage of the 60%, as soon as the Financial Agreements (Annex IV) will be duly signed, after the DEMO-DAY celebration AND no later than end of July 2023.

**Conditioned to the evaluation of the Consortium, in order to receive the funds upfront, the selected applicants awarded may be requested to:**

1. anticipate a bank or insurance guarantee. Conditions will be negotiated with the Consortium basing on criteria of transparency, fairness and proportionality, with the aim of ensuring the public fund in its safest and proper use. However, the validity of the guarantee will cover the period until the validation of the reported expenses. The consortium is obliged to the release of the guarantee at the time of the payment of the balance, i.e. as soon as all the costs will be reported by the innovative SMEs and validated by the Consortium (by 90 days from the reporting submitted)

**OR, in alternative**

2. leave a deposit in cash of the value of 60% of the voucher total value, and until final reporting/validation of expenses. The deposit will be returned together with the balance, and will be paid as soon as all the costs will be reported by the innovative SMEs and validated by the Consortium (by 90 days from the reporting submitted).

At the funds will have to be used by 90 days starting from the sign of the Financial Agreement (by October 2023 au max).



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## 1.8 Tourism innovative SMEs commitment

Throughout the EU DigiTOUR High Growth Transformation Programme's lifespan, the applicants shall comply with the following requirements:

- Each applicant will attend the 3 months programme on an-ongoing basis, attending all the webinars/mentoring sessions and the DEMO DAY. Failing to that, the selected applicant will be disqualified and a new tourism innovative SMEs will be selected from the reservoir list.
- The applicants will not transfer or assign directly or indirectly any portion of the financial support to any other legal entity.
- The applicants will attend the programme in accordance with the rules and requirements of the call and in accordance with the Programme Agreement.
- Aside the 2 staff members participating the programme, the applicants will designate a person to lead the communication between the applicant and the EU DigiTOUR Consortium throughout the duration of the programme, and in charge of replying to any request of information within the scope of the Programme Agreement, with specific reference to the reporting of use of funds.
- The applicants will supply any information requested by the EU DigiTOUR Consortium partners to ensure the requirements are compliant with any written request received from the European Commission concerning the proper use of funds.
- The applicants will comply with dissemination and communication requirements as described in the Confidentiality and Communication Rules (next chapter) relating to the Call.



## SECTION 2

### 2.1 Declarations and Obligations of the Participants

Participants must respect the following declarations and obligations:

- I. Declare not having received funding from other public entities for the same item of costs;
- II. Declare not having received financial support under other Projects/initiative; co-funded by the Call for Proposals under **COS-TOURINN-2020-3-04 GRO/SME/20/C/07** Projects: CULTOURDATA; SMARTER AOE; TOURISM 4.0; RESETTING; TOURBIT; DIGITOUR; TOURINN-ACT; EURO-EMOTUR;
- III. Obligation to submit timely the reporting of all the costs incurred;
- IV. Obligation to keep records and other supporting documentation related to claimed costs for at least 5 years;
- V. Not failing under the cases provided by laws regulating the "in difficulty" [entity-ies], according to the point 14 of the Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014;
- VI. To be operating in one of the registered Business Activities listed in the Call Announcement;
- VII. Not falling into any of the exclusion criteria apply for participation in the Call Announcement;
- VIII. Declare to be compliant to the prompt responsibility on accuracy and veracity of data and documents submitted or shared with the EU Tourism SMEs, and with all the conditions and obligations laid down in the Call Announcement;
- IX. Declare not being or to have been declared in bankrupt or have initiated bankruptcy procedures in any of the EU countries;
- X. Declare not being or to have been being in a matter of the convictions for fraudulent behaviour or other financial irregularities, unethical or illegal business practices;
- XI. Declare not being or to have been under liquidation or an enterprise under difficulty according to the Commission Regulation No 651/2014 art. 2.18.)
- XII. Declare not being or to have been part of any economic group (shareholding, Equity Structure, company shared ownership or control, etc.) falling under the cases provided in IX, X, XI;
- XIII. Obligation to permit the EU DigiTOUR Consortium partners to process the data for management and statistical purposes only (including publishing of general information) even through digital devices in compliance with the security and



privacy within the law on data processing by the EU DigiTOUR High Growth Transformation Programme. Consortium Partners will be made by the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and the subsequent transposing laws (jointly the “GDPR”);

- XIV. Declare on behalf of each single member and shareholder of the applicant and to all of them as a whole, that no conflict of interests could arise in connection with the present Call.
- XV. Declare not having submitted alone or in combination with other entities, other applications under this Call Announcement. The aforementioned tourism innovative SMEs can submit only one application to the open Call for Participation; in the case of multiple submissions, only the last application received will be considered.

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## 2.2 Liability, disputes, reduction and revocation of the grant

**2.2.1. Liability of the Consortium.** The Consortium cannot be held liable for any damage caused to the Third Party Beneficiaries as a consequence of implementing the action, including for gross negligence.

**2.2.2 Liability of the Third Party Beneficiaries [European Tourism SMEs, European Tourism innovative SMEs].** Except in the case of force majeure, the Third Party Beneficiaries must compensate the Consortium for any damage sustained as a result of the implementation of the action or because the action was not implemented in full compliance with the Programme Agreement (template Annex III).

**2.2.4 Reduction and Revocation.** The contribution is reduced, rejected or revoked by the Consortium in the following cases:

- Under the “continuous checking” criteria (2.2.5), any Third Party, even if already declared eligible, would result uncompliant to one of the eligibility criteria, in particular but not limited to the rules under 1.4.1, letters D., E., F., G., H., and I.;
- The awarded Third Party fails under prohibitions and conditions provided in 2.3 “Conflict of Interests”;
- The Quality and Financial reporting along with the use of funds and claiming of costs was submitted after the deadline posed by the Consortium;



- The implemented activities do not comply with quality standards required by the Consortium and set in each Programme Agreement (template Annex III);
- Reporting does not comply with the requirements set.

**2.2.5 Continuous checking.** At any moment of implementation of the action and afterwards, the Consortium has the right to carry out checks, reviews and audits, to ascertain:

- The proper use of funds concerning the eligible costs;
- Compliance with all the selection criteria and the obligations laid down in the Call;
- The truthfulness of the declarations and information produced by the Third-Party Beneficiary [European Tourism SME; European Tourism innovative SMEs]. Occurring the above situations or in case of impossibility of carrying out the checks, reviews and audits for reasons attributable to the Third Party Beneficiary, the contribution may be reduced, rejected or revoked and may lead to criminal prosecution under national law. The contribution will be revoked in case of express renunciation of the contribution by the Third Party Beneficiary. In case of revocation, any up-front instalment / pre-financing received by the Third Party Beneficiary must be reimbursed, legal interests included, to the Consortium within 15 calendar days from the official communication.

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## **2.3 Conflict of interests.**

The present set of rules about the prohibition of any “conflict of interest” is extended to each member of the board and the shareholders of the innovative SMEs, as they all (each of them, and all as a whole) are subject to such rule.

### **2.3.1 Obligations to avoid a conflict of interests.**

The Consortium beneficiaries and the Third Party Beneficiaries must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the action is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest (“conflict of interests”). In further particular, the application to the Programme and the consequent participation in the selection phase, are strictly forbidden to any applicant which, at the time of the present Call publication, have any of the Consortium partners playing as a shareholder in the applicant’s capital table.



### **2.3.2 Consequence of non-compliance.**

If a Consortium beneficiary or a Third Party Beneficiary breaches any of its obligations under the Call, the grant may be reduced and the Agreement or participation may be terminated. Such breaches may also lead to any of the other measures such as rejection of ineligible costs, reduction of the grant, recovery of undue amounts and potential administrative and financial penalties, opening of an infringement (legal) procedure.

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## **2.4 Confidentiality**

**2.4.1 General obligation to maintain confidentiality:** During the implementation of the action and for five years after the payment of the balance from the EISMEA to the Consortium, all parties must keep confidential any data, documents or other material (in any form) that is identified as confidential at the time it is disclosed ('confidential information'). The confidentiality obligations no longer apply if (a) the disclosing party agrees to release the other party; (b) the information becomes generally and publicly available, without breaching any confidentiality obligation; (c) the disclosure of the confidential information is required by EU or national law.

**2.4.2 Consequences of non-compliance:** If a Third Party Beneficiary breaches any of its obligations under this Call, the grant may be reduced. Such breaches may also lead to any of the other measures such as rejection of ineligible costs, reduction of the grant, recovery of undue amounts and potential administrative and financial penalties.

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## **2.5 Promoting the action — visibility of EU funding.**

### **2.5.1 Communication activities by the Third Party Beneficiaries. General obligation to promote the action and its results.**

The awarded SMEs are obliged to promote the action and its results. The Consortium of partners, and/or one of the organisations belonging to it, will lead and drive the awarded organisations with a timescale/detailed-rules to implement such dissemination and promotion of the Programme in the proper way. Contents specific to this will be circulated to the awarded organisations and will be followed by the winners.



### 2.5.1.1 Information on EU funding — Obligation and right to use the EU emblem graphic purpose.

Unless the EISMEA requests or agrees otherwise, any communication activity related to the action (including at conferences, seminars, in information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via social media, etc.) and any infrastructure, equipment or major result funded by the grant must: - display the EU emblem - include the following text: “This [insert appropriate description, e.g. report, publication, conference, infrastructure, equipment, insert type of result, etc.] was co-funded by the European Union’s COSME Programme.” When displayed in association with another logo, the EU emblem must have appropriate prominence. For their obligations under the Call, Third Party Beneficiaries may use the EU emblem without first obtaining approval from the EISMEA. This does not, however, give them the right to exclusive use. Moreover, they may not appropriate the EU emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means.

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## 2.6 Financial Support

- **Maximum amount of financial support for each tourism innovative SMEs qualifying for the Programme (Third-Party Beneficiary).**
  - The maximum amount of financial support (grant) per tourism innovative SMEs cannot exceed ten thousand euros (EUR 10.000).
- **Number of selected "tourism innovative SMEs as Digital Champions.**
  - 30 European tourism innovative SMEs from Italy, Germany, Croatia, Slovenia will be selected for the support scheme implemented by the EU DigiTOUR High Growth Transformation Programme.
- **Validation of applicants status.**
  - To validate their status as EU Tourism innovative SMEs, **AND/OR** to validate the status of legally established innovative SMEs whose main product(s) is/are demonstrably applied to the Tourism sector, **the applicant must submit** to the Consortium partners during the selection process:
    - A) a formal and updated Business Register extract provided by the Chamber of Commerce where the activity status is demonstrated;**PLUS**



- B1) a formal and updated Business Register extract provided by the Chamber of Commerce where the NACE code, the Company Structure  
**OR**
- B2) a formal specification contained in a technical document defining the characteristics of a product applied to the Tourism sector, owned, produced, marketed, or licensed to the applicant with the legal power to market it for profit, such as the description, the levels of quality or ownership of use, safety, size, including applicable terminology, symbols, test methods, packaging, marking and labelling requirements, etc.

**The Consortium reserves the right to evaluate, admit or reject, or request further documentation in order to complete the evaluation and the final scrutiny of the above documents.**

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## **2.7 Reporting (Periodic Check; Report; Costs; Transfer of Funds)**

A periodic report will be performed directly on to the Good Grant on-line platform, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the use of funds and monitoring of the different claiming of costs, supporting documents and transfer of payment to the beneficiaries. The awarded tourism innovative SMEs will have 90 days to use the funds granted starting from the sign of the Financial Agreement (Template IV), and in any case by October 31st, 2023.

A guide to the reporting will be delivered to the awarded tourism innovative SMEs at the sign of the Financial Agreement for guidance on the correct reporting.

It is remarked that in case of any request for clarification or incoherences in the costs claiming and related proof of expense, the 30 days will be stopped and resumed as soon as the clarifications will be provided to the Consortium partner and validated accordingly.





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