

# Online Info Session

13 April 2026, 11:00 – 12:30 CET

## Call for Proposals

Supporting sustainable competitiveness of  
tourism SMEs

# Agenda

**11:00** Welcome & introduction

*Igor KALINIC, Head of Sector EISMEA I.02.2 Competitiveness & Internationalisation*

**11:05** Presentation of the call

*Darjan PERIC, Project Adviser EISMEA I.02.2 Competitiveness & Internationalisation*

**11:20** Q&A via Slido

**12:30** Closing

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# Purpose of the Call

***Support the establishment of thematic and/or  
geographic touristic routes***

***and***

***development of associated tourism ecosystems***

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# Timetable, deadlines, budget

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	3 March 2026
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>20 May 2026 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	June-July 2026
Information on evaluation results:	Aug-Sep 2026
GA signature:	Oct-Nov 2026

Budget: 6.9 M€

Ca. 5 projects

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# Presentation of the call

Darjan PERIC

Project Adviser EISMEA I.02.2 Competitiveness & Internationalisation

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# Scope (1)

- Establishment of **thematic** and/or **geographic** touristic **routes** and development of associated tourism **ecosystems**.
- **Configuration:**
  - a) Minimum one **transnational route**;
  - b) In case of no transnational routes, **minimum two national routes** implemented in **two eligible countries**.

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# Scope (2)

## Thematic vs. Geographic Routes

**Thematic** - organised around a shared theme connecting sites through a common narrative regardless of geographical proximity.

**Geographic** - linking geographically connected sites within a defined territory, which may extend across regional or national borders (physical continuity).

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# Scope (3)

## Route ecosystem

- Actors: DMOs, BSOs, SMEs (accommodation providers, restaurants, supply chain actors, etc.), cultural and heritage institutions, environmental and civil society organisations, transport and mobility providers, public authorities, innovation hubs, CSOs, etc.

**! Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) as driving force**

**! Ecosystem along the routes – twin transition (digital/green), resilience, innovation competitiveness, sustainability, innovation**

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# Work packages

- WP 1. Establishment or Redesign of the Route and the Ecosystem
- WP 2. Development and engagement of the route's ecosystem
  - 2.1 - Stakeholders' engagement and capacity building
  - 2.2 - Direct Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP)
- WP 3. Communication, promotion and branding of the route ecosystem
- WP 4. Production of best practices and case studies for future improvement

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# FSTP (Financial Support to Third Parties)

1. Entities eligible to receive the third-party support
2. Eligible activities for which a third party (SME) may receive financial support
3. Criteria for calculating the exact amount of the financial support
4. Conditions for participation of SMEs
5. Criteria for awarding financial support

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# Criteria to meet - Admissibility

## What to submit (complete application):

- Application Form Part A
- Application Form Part B
- + **mandatory annexes:**
  - Detailed budget table
  - List of previous project
  - Potential letters of Intent

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# Criteria to meet – Eligibility

## Eligible participants (eligible countries)

- **EU + listed EEA countries and countries associated to the Single Market Programme**

## Consortium composition

- ✓ 5 – 8 independent entities
- ✓ minimum 3 DMOs from minimum 2 eligible countries.
- ✓ minimum 2 BSOs from minimum 2 eligible countries.

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# Criteria to meet – Operational Capacity

Minimum criteria related to the team:

- Project Manager/Coordinator;**
- Deputy Project manager/Coordinator;**
- Communication experts;**
- Capacity building expert;**
- SME tourism sector consultant**

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# Criteria to meet – Award

- Overall threshold: 70 / 100 points
- Individual criteria:
  - Relevance. Threshold 16 / 30 points – **See Background and Call Objectives**
  - Quality – project design and implementation. Threshold 16 / 30 points
  - Quality – project team and cooperation arrangements. Threshold 16 / 30 points
  - Impact. Threshold 6 / 10 points

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# Budget categories – Article 6 Grant Agreement

A. Personnel costs

B. Subcontracting costs

C. Purchase costs:

- C.1 Travel and subsistence (Unit costs)

- C.2 Equipment (Depreciation)

- C.3 Other goods, works and services

D.1 Financial support to third parties

E. Indirect costs

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# Payment arrangements

- Signature of Grant Agreement > **Prefinancing 70%**
- **One interim payment – interim report (with detailed costs report)**
- **Final report - > Payment of the balance**

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# Tips for a good proposal (1)

- Read the call and the Q&A on the Funding & Tenders Portal. Carefully.
- Write a clear, concise, coherent proposal that reflects the logic and structure
- Address all activities in the call...be aware of the scope.
- Present a clear implementation strategy that explains how you will implement the project and address key principles. Do not simply repeat what is written in the call.

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# Tips for a good proposal (2)

- Set clear and measurable objectives
- Clearly describe the division of tasks and responsibilities
- Prepare a complete and realistic budget based on tasks that are necessary for the implementation of the project
- Get a 2<sup>nd</sup> pair of eyes to proofread your proposal
- **Submit early** and **don't wait** until the day of the deadline.

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# Check IT and get support

- The Funding & Tenders Portal is the only way to submit a proposal. Make sure you understand its procedures. If you need help:
  - [Online manual](#) for ALL explanations of procedures and workflows needed to apply
  - [IT Helpdesk](#) for lost passwords, access rights, technical aspects of submission
  - [EISMEA-SMP-COSME-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EISMEA-SMP-COSME-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu) for non-IT questions about the content of the call, replies in the [Q&A section of the Portal](#)

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# Thank you!

**Got questions? Contact us at**

[EISMEA-SMP-COSME-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EISMEA-SMP-COSME-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu)

[Single Market Programme webpage](#)

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